

**AN EVALUATION OF FEMALE LABOUR INPUT IN  
THE UNIVERSITY EDUCATIONAL  
SYSTEM IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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**2006**

## CERTIFICATION

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Title Page	i
Certification	ii
Authorization	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Table of Contents	ix
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xvi
Abstract	xvii

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1	Background to the Study	1
1.2	Statement of the Problem	5
1.3	Research Questions	7
1.4	Objectives of the Study	8
1.5	Research Hypotheses	8
1.6	Significance of the Study	9
1.7	Scope and Limitation of the Study	10
1.8	The Evolution of Nigerian Universities	12
1.9	Women and Education in Nigeria: A Historical Perspective	16
1.10	Personnel issues in the Administration of Nigerian Universities	21

1.10.1	Recruitment, Selection and Promotion Practices in Nigerian Universities.	22
1.11	Outline of Chapters	27
1.12	Definition of Terms	28
1.12.1	Participation	28
1.12.2	Evaluation	29
1.12.3	Labour input	29
1.12.4	Gender Equity	29
1.12.5	Administrative Staff	29
1.12.6	Academic Staff	30
1.12.7	Technical Staff	30
	<b>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	31
2.1	An Evaluation of Female Labour Input as academic staff in Universities	32
2.2	An Evaluation of Female Labour Input as Non-Academic Staff in Universities	37
2.3	Barriers to the Advancement of females in academia	39
2.3.1	Discriminatory Practices	39
2.3.2	Lack of Role-models	41
2.3.3	The Academic Reward System	43
2.3.4	Family and domestic responsibilities	44
2.3.5	Education	46
2.4	An overview of women's experiences, challenges and productivity level in academia	48
2.5	The Environment and Institutional Practices in Universities	54

2.6	Strategies for Promoting and Empowering Female Staff in the Nigerian University Labour force	57
2.7	Mainstreaming Gender in Universities	60
2.8	Female Participation in the Labour Force and the world of work	63
2.9	Theoretical Framework	68
2.10	Application of the framework	81
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>		84
3.1	Research Design	84
3.2	Population and sample selection	84
3.3	Sampling Technique	85
3.4	Data Collection Techniques and Research Instruments	86
3.5	Validation of Research instrument	87
3.6	Distribution and retrieval of questionnaires	88
3.7	Data analysis	89
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS</b>		90
4.1	Introduction	90
4.2	Demographic and Socio-Economic Characteristics of Respondents	90
4.3	Female Staff Participation in the Nigerian University Educational System	108
4.4	The Economic and Socio-cultural Factors which affect female labour input in Nigerian Universities	112

4.5	The experiences and contributions of females to research, teaching, technical services and administration in Nigerian Universities	120
4.6	Test of Hypotheses	136
	<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	149
5.1	Summary	149
5.2	Conclusion	154
5.3	Recommendations	155
5.4	Suggestions for Further Research	158
	Bibliography	159
	Appendix I – Staff Questionnaire	178

## LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1	88
Table 4.1	91
Table 4.2	93
Table 4.3	94
Table 4.4	96
Table 4.5	98
Table 4.6	99
Table 4.7	101
Table 4.8	102
Table 4.9	103
Table 4.10	105
Table 4.11	107



Table 4.12	Percentage distribution of female academic staff in Nigerian Federal Universities (2003/2004).	109
Table 4.13	Percentage distribution of female non-academic staff in Nigerian Federal Universities (2003/2004).	111
Table 4.14	Percentage distribution of the perception of female administrative staff on the economic and socio-cultural factors which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	113
Table 4.15	Percentage distribution of the perception of female academic staff on the economic and socio-cultural factors which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	115
Table 4.16	Percentage distribution of the perception of female technical staff on the economic and socio-cultural factors which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	118
Table 4.17	Percentage distribution of the experiences of female staff respondents by their nature of job.	121
Table 4.18	Percentage distribution of female staff contributions to teaching, research, technical services and administration by their nature of job.	123
Table 4.19	Percentage distribution of female staff contributions to teaching, research, technical services and administration by the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.	125
Table 4.20	Percentage distribution on the number of annual publication of female staff in twelve federal universities in Nigeria.	127
Table 4.21	Percentage distribution of the number of annual publication of female staff by the six geo-political zones in Nigeria.	128
Table 4.22	Some selected variables affecting annual publications of women in academia in Nigerian universities	130
Table 4.23	Percentage distribution of female staff contributions to administrative job schedules in Nigerian Universities.	133

Table 4.24	Percentage distribution of female staff contributions to technical job schedules in Nigerian Universities.	135
Table 4.25	Percentage distribution of female staff opinions on whether gender has significant effect on the low level of female labour input in Nigerian Universities.	136
Table 4.26	Percentage distribution of female administrative staff on selected variables which affect their performance on the job in Nigerian Universities.	138
Table 4.27	Percentage distribution of female academic staff on the selected variables which affect their performance on the job in Nigerian Universities.	139
Table 4.28	Percentage distribution of female administrative staff on the selected variables which affect their performance on the job in Nigerian Universities.	140
Table 4.29	Percentage distribution of female staff opinions on whether certain economic and socio-cultural factors affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	141
Table 4.30	Percentage distribution of female staff opinions on whether the environment and certain institutional practices in Nigerian Universities affect their labour input.	142
Table 4.31	Percentage distribution of female administrative staff opinions on the environmental factors and institutional practices which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	143
Table 4.32	Percentage distribution of female academic staff opinions on the environmental factors and institutional practices which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	145
Table 4.33	Percentage distribution of female technical staff opinions on the environmental factors and institutional practices which affect their labour input in Nigerian Universities.	146

## LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 2.1	80
An Adaptation of Gender-Organisation - System model to the Evaluation of Female labour input in the University educational system in Nigeria.	

## ABSTRACT

This study examined the labour input of female university staff and the extent of their participation in the various job schedules in academic, administrative, and technical units of the Nigerian university system. It also examined the factors which had impact on the labour input of females with a view to determining their effectiveness in the university system.

The study adopted the survey research design utilizing both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaire administered on female staff using the purposive sampling technique. In order to compare labour input within each occupational category, questionnaire was administered on 730 females grouped into 381 academic, 225 administrative and 124 technical staff. Data gathered through the questionnaire bordered on the labour input of females, their job schedules and patterns of work, their experiences on the job and factors which affected their labour input. The secondary data were obtained from the official records of the universities, the National Universities Commission, academic journals, textbooks and the Internet. The data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics

The study revealed that female non-academic staff outnumbered their counterparts in academia, comprising 81.0 % of the entire female labour force in Nigerian universities. The study further revealed that 27.6 % of the female administrative staff claimed that attending to files was a major job schedule they

performed. Also, 42.7 % of them performed clerical duties while 55.6 % claimed that they do not chair committees.

The female technical staff who indicated that the preparation of laboratory materials for practical classes was their major job schedule was 88.7 %. Those of them who did not perform duties related to the operation, maintenance and repairs of laboratory equipment was 15.3 %. The female academic staff who contributed more to teaching was 71.3 %, while 19.7 % combined teaching and research duties effectively. In addition, 22.4 % of the female academic staff who made much impact in research were from southern universities. Regarding publications, 59.9 % of the female academics published a paper annually, 23.6 % published up to two papers, 1.0 % published three papers, while 15.7 % did not publish on an annual basis. Although a higher percentage of the female academic staff published a paper annually, they wished they could increase their publication rate. Results of the test of hypotheses showed a significant relationship between the gender attributes of females and their labour input in the Nigerian university system ( $X^2 = 13.47$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Secondly, economic and socio-cultural factors significantly affected female labour input ( $X^2 = 4.12$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Also, the environment and institutional practices in the university system significantly affected female labour input ( $X^2 = 13.64$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). Although 4.9 % of the female staff in all the three job categories found their various jobs interesting and challenging, 81.6 % of them experienced overcrowded work schedules, 9.3 % experienced subtle discrimination, while 2.1 % reported that

their job schedules were stressful and difficult due to lack of adequate working facilities.

The study concluded that female staff in academia made modest contributions to teaching than research and the female administrative staff did not make much input in decision-making in their various units.

## **1.1 Background to the Study**

Prior to the coming of Europeans, various Nigerian people had their own indigenous educational systems aimed at maintaining continuity of culture. However, with the growth of British commercial and colonial interest in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, British missionaries established institutions of formal education in Nigeria. Many parents were skeptical about this form of education and mostly sent their male children. The girls were brought up in the traditional family set-up to be passive, obedient and always submissive to men. The education of girls was tailored to meet the objectives of the traditional society and it was primarily to prepare them for family life (Fafunwa, 1974). Girls were socialized to be passive, affectionate, supportive and non-competitive. Consequently, the investment for girls' education was negligible, particularly in a poverty ridden family. The grim cumulative effect for such practices is that females have lowered their expectations and desires and they have affirmed this status quo (Sivard, 1995).

University education in Nigeria began as a result of the quest by Nigerians for a higher educational institution where the Nigerian Youth could receive higher training without having to go abroad. This led to the setting up of the Asquith and Elliot commissions whose report

1945, resulted in the establishment of the University College, Ibadan in 1948 as a College of the University of London. The Nigerian University System has witnessed tremendous growth since then, particularly during the oil boom years of the 1980s and '90s (Oribabor, 2003).

Today there are over forty-seven Federal, State and Privately owned universities in Nigeria. The University educational System is one of the major labour sectors in Nigeria. Women's acquisition of University education play a vital role in a nation's economy and it also contributes to the better utilization of a country's human resources. Consequently, in Nigeria, there has been an increase in recent times of female participation in the workforce. Generally, one economic trend in recent times worldwide is the consistent increase in participation of all categories of women in the labour force. The labour force being an extremely important resource is the key to a successful economy, if it consists of trained and skilled personnel. President Bush of the United States once acknowledged that a sophisticated workforce of skilled personnel is the key to a nation's ability to be competitive in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Morris, 2004). In Nigeria, women constitute 49.9 percent of the entire population. Although they make up half of the total population, they constituted only 36 percent of the total labour force and are therefore unable to consolidate their position in the labour



market (Aina, 1998). In Nigeria majority of the women are in agricultural and informal sectors of the economy accounting for about 60 percent of Nigeria's farm labour and producing over 90 percent of the domestic food supply. Although in recent times, educated women are entering the paid labour force, the segregation of sexes across occupation is a basic feature of the world of work. This implies that there is great variability across societies as to which gender is expected to do what job?

The university educational system is one of the labour sectors in which sex segregation is glaring in Nigeria. It is interesting and surprising to note that since the inception of the university educational system over 50 years ago in Nigeria, just 6.9 percent female professors currently make up the professorial cadre and over 70 percent of these are in the humanities. In all, females make up 13 percent of the entire academic staff population in Nigerian Universities. Female non-academic staff (administrative and technical staff put together) is currently 30 percent of the entire population of staff in Nigerian universities (Okebukola, 2002). These figures clearly establishes the fact that female academic and non-academic staff in Nigerian universities are few. This trend is mostly evident in academia. The few women in the universities are concentrated in certain disciplines. They feature less prominently in the sciences and technology related disciplines. Alao (1998) indicated that female academics in the