

Cultural Factors and Career Advancement of Women in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated cultural factors and career advancement of women in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the relationship between cultural belief, religious belief, in-law interference and career advancement of women in Ekiti State. The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population for this study consisted of all the female employees in private tertiary institutions, public tertiary institutions and Government Ministries in Ekiti State. A total of 572 female workers spread across private tertiary institutions, public tertiary institutions and Government Ministries in Ekiti State were selected for this study using multistage sampling procedure. The instrument used for collection of data was a self-designed instrument tagged "Cultural Factors and Career Advancement Questionnaire" (CFCAQ). The instrument was validated by experts of Tests and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81. The data obtained through the instrument were tested using inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that cultural belief and in-law interference were related to career advancement of women in Ekiti State. However, there was no significant relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that women should not be discriminated in the society because of cultural belief that put wife under the authority of her husband.

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Introduction

Career is the continuous progress, experience and skill acquisition of a person in a specific profession (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). Baker and McKenzie (2011) stated that career advancement is the activities individuals participate in to improve themselves in their profession. Career advancement is the objective measurement of being successful in one's own work or profession (Ilhaamie, Sharifah Hayaati & Siti Arni, 2012). Career advancement could be used to close the gap between current performances and expected future performance.

Nigerian women seem not to be represented in various professions in equal proportion with men. This could be as a result of the Europeans that brought education to Nigeria who at first only needed men who will learn the three Rs (reading, writing and arithmetic) so as to assist them. In view of this, Nigerian men seem to have upper hand in education. This was regarded as the culture of being over protective towards their women.

In Ekiti State, women appear to be grossly under-represented in certain management positions where major decisions are made and it appears to remain one of the states where women are still struggling to make progress in their career mobility to management positions. Ekiti State appears to be a highly patriarchal society therefore the status of women appears to remain relatively low compared to that of men. Women still appear to remain marginalized and gender inequality prevails socially, academically, economically and professionally. Women play a key role in the society, therefore, they need to be in the fore front when it comes to management.

Hence, it seems that women have been culturally socialized to adopt certain behaviours and traits that drive them to fulfil assumed roles, such as their obligation to deal with domestic responsibilities, leaving the managerial positions to be filled by men (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Owing to distinct gender roles, women appear to have been believed as lacking the skills needed for engaging in professional careers and essentially perceived as second rate to men and, thus, naturally unsuitable for certain senior positions.

Cultural factors seem to account for reasons why women are excluded from advancing their career. There is still this perception among Ekiti populace that women cannot lead and some see it as a taboo for women to lead men. The culture of Ekiti people seems to separate the roles of men and women. Women areas are in the private sphere which includes their home and family while that of men is the public sphere. This issue seems to have affected career advancement of women. The cultural practices of Ekiti State seem to be biased as it undermines and subjugates the self-esteem of women. The overall effect of cultural practices has caused sense of inferiority in women and put them behind in their career advancement. There are several cultural practices but selected cultural factors such as cultural belief, religious belief and in-law interference were considered as related to career advancement of women.

The cultural belief held by people appears to be unhealthy for women in Ekiti State because it seems to overwhelm their needs which may include career advancement. Some people appear to still hold the traditional view mandating women to be a house-keeper; house wives and wait for the man to bring money to the family (Oplatka, 2006). The researcher observed that women's duties are believed to be limited to giving birth, fostering and bringing up of children and hence, the kitchen is belief to be the right place for them. The same belief applies today in most organisations, which could be the reason why many

organisations are operated or dominated by men. However, current trends have shown and indicated that women, after all, are not as weak as may be perceived.

Religious belief could also determine career advancement of women. It appears that the influence of religion on career advancement of women could be negative or positive. Some religious doctrine does not support women heading a particular position in the society. Such doctrine may hinder career advancement of women. The researcher further observed that Islamic doctrines and Biblical commandment bar women from some political and social happenings such as public speaking that could facilitate their career ambitions

In-law interference could be a cultural factor that may affect career advancement of women. It appears that some men are known for their inability to properly manage extended family issues. The researcher observed that some in-laws often collude with their son to support interests are only on the betterment of their own relations. From observation, it is noted that some in-laws, most often, prevent their daughters-in-law to have career edge than their sons. Such interference from mostly the families of the husband could end up having negative effects on career advancement of women.

This study therefore investigated cultural factors and career advancement of women in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined:

- i. the relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women;
- ii. the relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women; and
- iii. the relationship between in-law interference and career advancement of women.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were generated:

1. There is no significant relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State
2. There is no significant relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State.
3. There is no significant relationship between in-law interference and career advancement of women in Ekiti State.

Methodology

The descriptive research of the survey type was used in this study. The population for this study consisted of all the female employees in private tertiary institutions, public tertiary institutions and Government Ministries in Ekiti State. A total of five hundred and seventy-two (572) female workers spread across private tertiary institutions, public tertiary institutions and Government Ministries in Ekiti State were selected for this study using multistage sampling procedure.

A self-designed instrument titled "Cultural Factors and Career Advancement Questionnaire" (CFCAQ) was used to elicit information from the respondents. The instrument comprised of three sections, A, B and C. Section A sought for demographic data of the respondents while Section B contained 12 items on cultural factors such as cultural belief, religious belief and in-law interference. Section C consisted of 16 items on the extent of women's career advancement in Ekiti State. Likert type rating scale was used as follows: Strongly Agree (SA) - 4, Agree (A) - 3, Disagree (D) - 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1.

The instrument for the study was validated by experts of Tests and Measurement. The reliability of the instrument was determined through a test re-test method which yielded reliability co-efficient of 0.81. The data collected through the instrument were analyzed using inferential statistics. Hypotheses 1 - 3 were tested using inferential statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State

In testing this hypothesis, data on cultural belief sub-variable of cultural factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of CFCAQ (item 1 – 4) in the questionnaire. Data on career advancement were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of CFCAQ (item 1 – 16) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Correlation between cultural belief and career advancement of women

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab	Remark
Cultural Belief	572	12.14	2.14	0.324*	0.086	Significant
Career Advancement	572	35.32	5.02			

*P<0.05

Table 1 showed that the r-cal value of 0.324 is greater than r-table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State Hence, cultural belief is positively and lowly related to career advancement of women.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State

In testing this hypothesis, data on religious belief sub-variable of cultural factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of CFCAQ (item 5 – 8) in the questionnaire. Data on career advancement were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of CFCAQ (item 1 – 16) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between religious belief and career advancement of women

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab	Remark
Religious Belief	572	11.16	2.09	0.017	0.086	Not Significant
Career Advancement	572	35.32	5.02			

P>0.05

Table 2 showed that the r-cal value of 0.017 is less than r-table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there was no significant relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between in-law interference and career advancement of women in Ekiti State

In testing this hypothesis, data on in-law interference sub-variable of cultural factors were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section B of CFCAQ (item 9 – 12) in the questionnaire. Data on career advancement were collected from the responses of the respondents to items under Section C of CFCAQ (item 1 – 16) in the questionnaire. Both were compared for statistical significance using Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in table 3.

Table 3: Correlation between in-law interference and career advancement of women

Variables	N	Mean	Stand Dev	r-cal	r-tab	Remark
In-law Interference	572	12.29	1.66	0.594*	0.086	Significant
Career Advancement	572	35.32	5.02			

*P<0.05

Table 3 showed that the r-cal value of 0.594 is greater than r-table value of 0.086 at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there was significant relationship between in-law interference and career advancement of women in Ekiti State. Hence, in-law interference is positively and moderately related to career advancement of women.

Discussion

The study revealed that there was significant relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State. The probable reason for this finding could be because of the patriarchal Nigerian society which supports cultural practices that are negatively related to the emancipation and career advancement of women. Bari (2005) revealed that among the cultural factors that affect career advancement of women is cultural belief and patriarchy system. In support of this finding, Fayomi and Igbelina-Igbokwe (2006) found a significant relationship between cultural belief and career advancement of women.

The study however revealed that there was no significant relationship between religious belief and career advancement of women in Ekiti State. This finding implies that religious practice of a woman does not influence her career advancement. This finding is in consonance with the submission of Oyuga (2011) who concluded that religious belief had no influence on career advancement of women.

The study further revealed that there was significant relationship between in-law interference and career advancement of women in Ekiti State. The probable reason for this finding might be due to the level of motivation a mentee could be exposed to during mentorship. Oyuga (2011) concluded that in-law interference could make women be at the lowest level of career advancement. Nwobodo (2009) also found a significant relationship between in-law interference and women's career advancement. It could be inferred that there will be hindrances in career advancement of women if in-laws keep interfering in family issues.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that cultural belief and in-law interference were related to career advancement of women in Ekiti State.

Recommendations

- Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made.
- 1) Women should not be discriminated in the society because of culture belief that put wife under the authority of her husband
 - 2) Married women should be given an enabling environment that can motivate them toward advancing their career.
 - 3) In-laws should not see daughters-in-law as servants in their household.

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