

Attitudes of Employees towards Female Leadership in Nigeria: A Study of Government Workers in Dekina Local Government of Kogi State

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Full Length Research Paper

Abstract

This study examined the attitudes of employees towards female leadership among Dekina local government workers in Kogi State, Nigeria. The objectives of the study included examining the attitude of employees towards women leadership and identifying the factors that influence women in leadership. Survey research design was employed while purposive sampling technique was used to sample 234 out of the estimated population of 684 employees at Grade Level 10 and above in Dekina Local Government Council was taken. WAMS (women as a managerial scale) used for data collection. Accordingly, data were analyzed using SPSS version 20. one-sample t-test shows that there is a statistically significant mean difference ($t(233) = 24.87, p < 0.05$) between the sample mean score and the hypothesized mean score of the instrument and the result shows that most of the respondents have a positive attitude towards females in leadership. Independent sample t-test also indicated that there is a significant mean difference in the level of attitude towards women leadership ($t(232) = 3.16, p < 0.05$) between male and female respondents. However, the One-way ANOVA result indicated that there is no statistically significant mean difference in the level of attitude towards women leadership ($F = 0.94, df(4,230), p > 0.05$) among respondents of the study across age groups. One-way ANOVA also revealed that the level of attitudes towards women leadership ($F = 3.33, df(3,231), p < 0.05$) was found to be significant across the marital status of respondents. One-way ANOVA result also indicated that there is a significant mean difference in the level of attitudes towards women leadership ($F = 3.05, df(4,230), P < 0.05$) among respondents across the educational status. The major factors influencing the attitude of employees towards female leadership were traditional gender roles, socio-cultural, psychological, martial, political and constitutional provision in the study area.

Keywords: Attitude, Employees, Leadership, Female leaders, Nigeria

Introduction

All through history, women have held leadership positions worldwide. Female leaders can be found in almost every society, culture, organization, government ministry and parastatals over the years, from the Egyptian pharaohs to the British monarchs. However, male leaders outnumber female leaders in almost all circumstances, particularly in the patriarchal societies of African nations including Nigeria. Additionally, there have always been traditions and regulations prohibiting female leadership, most notably in all major religions

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and traditions (Alexander, 2012). Women have served as leaders in social movements, world organizations among others; for example, prominent Nigerian women such as Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala was appointed as the Director-General of the World Trade Organization in March 2021. Funmi Badejo who was born in Kogi State of Nigeria currently serves as a Special Assistant to the United States' President, Joseph Biden and also an Associate Counsel in the White House Counsel's Office. Olukemi Badenoch is another Nigerian woman blazing the trail on the international scene and in public service. And Amina Mohammed, a diplomat and politician is currently the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations to mention but a few (Abiodun, 2002).

Aina (2012) avers that, there are sufficient evidences to prove that women are a veritable access in public offices. In the military sphere, women play prominent leadership roles, not only in the military exploit of the Amazons of Greek legend, but also in those of the Amazons of South America and Dahomey, in modern times. Similarly, the heroic exploits of Queen Amina in the military and political ascendancy of Zaria in the sixteenth century were paralled by those of Joan of Arc who led her French country men to record notable victories against the invading English forces in 1429. Queen Amina conquered as far as Nupe and Kwararafa, collected tribute from far and wide and ruled for 34 years (Aina & Olayode, 2012).

The leadership roles played by both Mrs. Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti and Mrs. Margaret Ekpo in the Nigerian pre-independence political struggles of the 1950s are incontrovertible (Sklar, 1963). Mrs Kuti1 was a strong advocate and campaigner for women's rights across the country. Mrs. Margret Ekpo, on her part, was the only female member of the seven-man committee set up in 1951 to organize a national political organization geared toward achieving self-government within five years. She became the Vice-President of the Eastern House of Chiefs in 1959. Indeed, it may well be that the women who spearheaded the 1929 Aba Women's Riots in South-Eastern Nigeria were the precursors and role models of the two better known female political activists (Nduka, 2001).

Professor (Mrs.) Grace Alele-Williams not only distinguished herself in the field of mathematics education, but also rose to become the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Benin-the first female Nigerian academic to be so honoured (Nduka, 2001). Similarly, late Prof. Dora Nkem Akunyili1 (OFR), who was the former Director of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control reduced the incidence of fake drugs from about 90% to 68% of drugs in 2001 (Akunyili, 2006). Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, successfully transformed the Nigerian economic platform when she succeeded in negotiating a debt relief package for Nigeria as the Finance Minister (July, 2003-June, 2006) under the Obasanjo regime and also spearheaded the unpopular fuel subsidy removal policy by the Nigerian government, which led to protests in January 2012 under the Goodluck Jonathan regime (Aina, 2012). Also, she stressed the need to reduce the country's recurrent expenditure, which is currently 74% of the national budget, and embark on capital projects which could improve the 14% unemployment rate in the country (Osa-Okunbor, 2012).

In all developing countries, women leaders abound, not just in politics, but also in academia, and private and public sector/organizations (Okafor et al., 2011). Women keep on seeking leadership situations in all circles of administration both in general society and private areas. However, the vast majority of them are not given the top positions they apply for (Owolabi, 2007). In Africa everywhere, it is perceived that men lead and women follow (Olayode, 2016). It isn't uncommon in country towns in Africa to discover the man in a real sense strolling in front of the female. Various reasons might be proffered for this however ultimately, it outlines the profoundly held thought of authority as a manly area.

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Traditionally, men have been seen dominating the primary employment sector, with their employment histories remaining unbroken from school to retirement (Owolabi, 2007). In contrast, women predominate in the secondary employment sector which is usually unstable offering poor career prospect and working conditions. There was also a gulf in paid employment associated with child rearing during the mid-twenties to early thirties.

Women in Nigeria and generally in African society have come to accept some positions and responsibilities as womanly or mainly base on the cultural definition of gender role in African societies. One of the typical circumstances that have entrenched this mental set dated is dated to the early existence and religious belief of our forefathers. For instance, for instance, it's a taboo for a woman to offer sacrifices to the gods and goddesses when a male is present, irrespective of the age of the male child. Female are meant to be in control only if there are no male. To this end, female have come to see the world as that of male. As a matter of fact the roles of female are considered complementary to that of male (Adesina, 2002).

But today, there are more female administrators and ministers in Nigeria than there were twenty to thirty years ago and these women who have rose through ranks to the positions traditionally dominated by men now tend to advocate for more leadership positions. For example, being an advocate of gender equality and women inclusion in governance, Kogi State Governor Alhaji Yahaya Bello, appointed the first female aide-de-camp (ADC) to a governor in Nigeria's history. The secretary to the state government (SSG) is also a woman. In December 2020, he swore in elected LG council chairmen and 21 vice-chairpersons — all the vice-chairpersons are women including Dekina Local Government Area the home of Prince Abubakar Audu University, Anyigba with the first female Vice-Chancellor (Prof. Marietu Tenuche) appointed by the Governor.

Meanwhile, no study in the body of literature to the best of the researcher's knowledge have been carried out on this topic in the study area, therefore, the research work pitched interest in studying the attitudes of employees towards women in leadership positions especially in Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State in order to bridge the gap.

Objectives of the Study

The study addressed the following objectives:

- i. To examine the attitude of employees towards women leadership
- ii. To identify the factors that influence women in leadership

Literature Reviews

The reviews of relevant and related materials on this study were done under the following subheadings:

Conceptual Framework

Attitude

Attitude is considered as a concept of social psychology. Attitude is a belief about something good or bad. It is a tendency to behave toward the object so as to keep or get rid of it. An attitude can be defined as an enduring organization of motivational, emotional, perceptual, and cognitive processes with respect to some aspect of the

individual's world (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). As used in this study, social scientists believe attitude to be usually a measure that doesn't always square with actual behaviour. Attitude is a hypothetical or latent variable rather than an immediately observable variable.

Female Leadership in Nigeria

In today's Nigeria, women are grossly underrepresented in politics and other sectors of our body polity. Just three per cent of people elected to public office in 2003 were women. By 2007 that figure increased to about seven per cent, but in 2015, the numbers declined to 5.6 per cent. Before the 2019 elections, women's representation in the House of Representatives was 5.5%; the Senate was 5.8% (Peterside, 2022).

The author was also of the opinion that the statistics in more developed societies tell better stories for the womenfolk. In the United Kingdom, 19.4 per cent of Members of Parliament and 30.8 per cent of local councillors are women. Simultaneously, in the United States of America, 12 per cent of governors and 17 per cent of the mayors of the 100 largest American cities are women. America just elected a female Vice President. These numbers may not be ideal, but they are at least encouraging for women aspiring for leadership positions in their respective work places.

Factors that influence women in leadership

On the whole, governance in most African nations bear a masculine face, with women merely serving as stooges, and often manipulated by men. Women would need concerted exposure and training to understand fully the rules of the game, and the undertones of governance. Integrating more women into public office as a potential anti-corruption remedy without addressing the collectivist culture, and the inherent masculine manipulations existing in the public sphere, may prove futile, as women may succumb to the social ethics of their godfathers at the expense of public sector ethos, as in the case of Patricia Etteh (Aina, 2012). There are some factors which are likely to encourage women to participate in politics leading to leadership positions. These are discussed according to Okafor and akokuwebe (2015) as follows:

i Reducing extreme poverty and economic empowerment of women:

This could be done by ensuring equal factors that can aid women's participation in politics. Access of the woman and man to critical resources and reducing extreme poverty among women, including ensuring gender equitable access to capital and large-scale investment opportunities; removing gender discriminatory practices on access to landed properties; facilitating women's access to improved technology; building women's entrepreneurial skills. Involve women in the execution of empowerment programmes. Government should enhance the business environment through provision of infrastructures and accounting for the value of women's work in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Building the capacity of the women and men in low-poverty groups on investment opportunities, by enlightenment on investment opportunities, providing access to institutional credit facilities, supporting and encouraging the development of small- medium-and large-scale enterprises, and providing extension services for those in poverty group to enhance information.

ii. Eliminating employment discriminatory practices against women and addressing labour issues affecting women:

This is achievable by building the human capital of women to allow comparable opportunity in the modern labour market by encouraging equal access to education and skill acquisition for women to increase their participation at the managerial level, and making vocational education and adult literacy programmes available to all. It is necessary to eliminate all discriminatory practices against the employment of women in the public and private sectors of the economy, that is, by eliminating all gender-based discriminatory practices in recruitment, wages and promotion, with particular reference to the private sector. Personnel policies and practices must comply with the principle of equitable representation of both sexes to ensure effective implementation of national and international labour laws, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Equal Treatment for men and women workers. Government should create reward systems for organizations in the public and private sectors of the economy that operate based on gender equity and equality principles.

iii. Empowerment of women in politics:

So as to increase the level of women participation in politics, there is the need for sensitization of women to political participation, creating enabling environment for women to participate in politics by economic empowerment and adequate education of women for political participation. It is important to eradicate all discriminatory policies against women, by reviewing the structure and operational guidelines of political parties. Financial support should be provided for women political aspirants. To increase the number of women in elective positions and decision-making processes, there is need for affirmative actions in politics (for example, 30% of political posts to be reserved for women). The existing traditional structures which exclude women from participating in decision-making, should also be reformed. Since the return to democracy in Nigeria in 1999, women have made a lot of impact on the political landscape of the country. They have occupied and continue to occupy high and sensitive positions in both executive, legislative and judiciary arms of government. For instance, under the current democratic dispensation, the first woman Speaker of House of Representative, Hon. Patricia Ette, was produced. The first woman governor, Dame Virgy Etiaba was produced in Anambra State. Also, the first female Chief Justice of Nigeria (CJN) Aloma Mariam Mukhtar was also produced.

iv. Constitutional Provisions:

This could be done by ensuring that women and men have equal legal and human rights by eliminating all gender discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations including, by persons, organizations and enterprises. It is also achievable through customary laws with gender equality principles through advocacy, sensitization, equal access to the laws, irrespective of wealth and gender. Introducing human rights education into school curricula at all levels and building the capacity of the legislative, the judiciary and other law enforcement agencies to uphold gender justice and gender equality principles are also crucial. The use of quota and proportional representation assists in the promotion of gender balance in public life. Phillips (1995) notes that quotas do not discriminate but compensate women's actual barrier that prevent women from pursuing a political career. Relevant stakeholders, such as Independent National Electoral Commission and political parties should be engaged in introducing quota. Related to the above is the necessary legal framework that

guarantees the rights of women especially in achieving the provision of international and domestic instruments for more participation in social, economic and governance processes.

v. Greater enrolment of girls into educational institutions:

Over the last three decades, there has been greater enrolment of the girl-child into higher institutions in some parts of Nigeria. For instance, in the eastern part of Nigeria where most male children have gone to the lines commerce and trading even at quite early age, girls have taken over the spaces left by male. As a matter of fact, most boys' secondary schools have been changed into girls' secondary schools or community secondary schools to accommodate high enrolment of girls into the schools. This has been made possible by the changing positive perception of most Nigerian parents on the role of women in the society. Also, there has been greater enrolment of the girl-child in both private and public universities in Nigeria.

vi. Inspiration for women who occupied and are occupying positions of authority:

Some of the few women (Dr. Okonjo-Iwela, Prof Dora Akunyili, Mrs. Margaret Ekpo, and Mrs. Obiageli Ezekwesili and so on) that have occupied political and decision making position since in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era have demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities and outstanding track records of achievement. This will enhance, build women and put women on a good pedestal thus giving a promising signal of high prospects of more roles for Nigerian women in public affairs. These women exhibited exceptional qualities that endeared them to the hearts of most Nigerians, thereby giving credence to that maxim that whatever positive thing a man can do a woman can do even better.

However, there are factors that discourages women from aspiring for leadership positions in organizations. On the whole, the factors and issues of women marginalization and low participation in leadership and decision making have been attracting a lot of attention from scholars. Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) postulated that although women and men have different biological and physiological make-up, women may share common features with men in terms of educational qualifications, socio-economic status and occupation, among others. Yet, they are marginalized in virtually all spheres of public life. In emerging democracies, there are several factors that prevent women from participating fully in political leadership and governance in all forms of government and political positions/offices. Some of the factors include but are not limited to the following:

1. Obnoxious socio-cultural practices such as widowhood practices, female genital mutilation (FGM), restrictive religious practices (as observed in the Northern geo-political zone), and purdah system (observed in the northern part of the country). Many of these socio-cultural practices create barriers to women empowerment and gender equality, thereby placing a clearly greater burden on women. The shrouding different exclusions and deprivations faced by women in cultural and traditional beliefs often deprive them access to information, education and wealth-creating assets, such as land, capital (including credit facilities), labour, and entrepreneurial skills (Aina, 2012). These restrictions created by socio-cultural practices can be blamed for the poor participation of women in politics and organizational decision-making processes.
2. Dehumanizing treatment of widows, wife-battering and other subjugating tendencies that can eventually make a woman to lose self-confidence. Such practices keep women 'silent' in the public sphere and also private domain (Aina, 2012).

3. Stereotypical constraints against women in striving to attain political and organizational leadership roles to the top (Okafor et al., 2011).
4. Exclusion of girls from obtaining their share of family inheritance (this is common in the South-East of Nigeria). In almost all the states of the federation, women have no right over land and landed property, as they cannot, under customary laws, inherit land/landed property, neither directly from their fathers nor from their husbands (Aina, 2012).
5. The traditional role of the women and the girl-child in carrying out household chores, which often leaves them with little or no time for formal education and self-development.
6. Poor access to education and scholarship facilities in various professions: These restrictions also affect women's access to education and professions, which also limits their capacity to compete effectively with their male counterparts in the labour market for lucrative and more fulfilling jobs (Aina, 2012).
7. Patriarchal settings in African family societies: The low status of the Nigerian women is generally reproduced by the culture of male supremacy inherent in local traditions and cultures, including religious idiosyncrasies (Aina, 2012).
8. Crimes and corruption prevalent in emerging democracies do not provide favourable environment for women leaders to play their roles. Women may also be in less powerful positions to challenge corruption when it occurs. Alternatively, they may face gendered forms of corruption, such as the demand for sex in return for particular services or resources.
9. High rate of maternal mortality: The Nigerian health sector is plagued by a number of problems including mal-distribution of health facilities, poor management of the health systems, poor referral systems and the neglect of the rural areas, where a larger proportion of the population resides, especially women and children (Odebiyi & Aina, 1998; Adewuyi et al., 1999; Aina & Adewuyi, 2002). The issue of women's health did not attract much attention both in health policies and in health research until in the recent times, when maternal mortality ratio (MMR) is 545 per 100,000 live births (Aina, 2012). For a long time, health research, especially in the area of maternal and child health in Nigeria, focused more on child health to the neglect of the woman's health. Even when the health of the woman is targeted, it remains at the level of reproductive health, with particular emphasis on family planning.
10. Non-extension of equal rights to all citizens, especially women, because they are seen as second-hand citizens in some parts of the country. In such cases, they are not allowed to participate in anything even at the grassroots levels. Women are made to see that their permanent position which they could occupy fully is in the kitchen.

The above problems often contribute to the ability of many women in emerging democracies to acquire the knowledge and skills which will make them realize their rights and inspire in them the confidence necessary for leadership positions. The situation is made even more difficult by the fact that the girl-child is usually prepared for a second place position right from the home where the focus of her training is on how to be a good wife, a good mother and a good home-maker (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015). Consequently, women are hardly equipped with public leadership tools, especially in the areas of education and social exposure.

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Emergence into public leadership position by Nigerian women is just as tough in Nigeria as it is in any nation in the same league. The situation, therefore, that will enable women to explore their full potential so as to be able to play leadership roles, and thereby contribute their bits to their countries' socio-economic development and nation building (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015).

Liberal Feminism Approach to Women Leadership in Nigeria

The major expression of gender inequality theory is liberal feminism, which argues that women may claim equality with men on the basis of an essential human capacity for reasoned moral agency, that gender inequality is the result of a sexist patterning of the division of labour, and that gender equality can be produced by transforming the division of labour through the patterning of key institutions – law, work, family, education, and media (Ritzer, 2008; Schaeffer, 2001).

Historically, the first element in the liberal feminist argument is the claim for gender equality. This claim was first politically articulated in the Declaration of Sentiments drafted as Seneca Falls, New York, in 1848, with the express purpose of paralleling and expanding the Declaration of Independence to include women. Women are a major force behind people's participation in the life of society today. Not only do they comprise the majority in terms of population, but they also play a crucial role in society as procreators of posterity as well as producers of goods and services. Although women have made great strides in obtaining a vote and right to be elected to political offices in many countries, they comprise less than 15 percent of the members of parliament, and less than 5 percent of heads of state worldwide. They hold only a fraction of other leadership positions nationally and internationally.

In Nigeria, traditional perceptions of women as inferior to men prevail, as many people uphold cultural practices which enhance the subordination of women. Consequently, men continue to dominate women in political, economic, social, and religious realms. The latter's political endeavours, achievements and roles in society are hardly recognized or acknowledged. This situation has necessitated the clarion call that women should be empowered by giving them due status, rights, and responsibilities to enable them participate actively in decision making at the political level (Kasomo, 2012).

Liberal feminism is relevant to this study because achieving gender equality is important for workplaces not only because it is 'fair' and 'the right thing to do', but because it is also linked to a country's overall economic performance. Workplace gender equality is associated with both improved local and national productivity and economic growth.

Empirical Reviews

Owolabi (2007) conducted a study on employees' perceptions of women leaders in Nigerian public and private organizations. A total of 250 participants were used for the study (125 workers from public and 125 workers from private sector). An attitude towards women Leader scale were administered and scores were analyzed using the independent t-test and 2/2 analysis of variance. The results of the study found that there were negative attitudes towards women leaders but there were no significant difference in the attitudes of private and public sector employees towards women leaders. Sex and marital status also predicted employees' attitudes female leaders, with males and married people having a favourable attitudes towards female leaders.

Abdalla, I. I. (2003) conducted a study to assess the determinants of attitudes toward women in management at various organizations in Kuwait among 278 participants. Findings from the study indicated a significant positive attitude towards women manageresses. Gender of the participants was found to significantly influence attitude towards women in management with females being more supportive to women in managerial roles compared to males. A recent study conducted with the aid of Alexander (2012) in a few selected businesses in Ghana to discover the attitudes of male personnel in the direction of lady managers located that of the 122 respondents who had been sampled from 17 corporations, the majority of males (69.51%), preferred to work below male managers and labeled managerial positions as a masculine function.

Studies with Nigerian examples (Adeyemi-Bello & Tomkiewicz, 1996) discovered men to have more stereotype observations and to hold good attitudes towards women as supervisors. Negative sex generalizations about females endure and influence women in organizations (Deal & Stevenson, 1998). In a Gallup survey directed in 2002, 31% of Americans expressed that they would like to work for a man instead of a lady and 19% expressed that they would want to work for a lady as opposed to a man (Moore, 2002). Just 13% of male respondents wanted to have a female leader, while 23% of female respondents liked to have a woman leader. Worldwide Gallup Poll led in 22 distinct nations in 1995 found that there was a solid inclination for male managers in numerous nations (Deal & Stevenson, 1998).

Sakalli-Ugurlu and Beydogan (2002) examined how patriarchy, sexism, and gender influence Turkish college students' attitudes toward women managers. Turkish undergraduate students (N = 183) from Middle East Technical University completed questionnaires measuring attitudes toward women managers as well as attitudes toward the concepts of hostile and benevolent sexism and support for patriarchy. Participants were of upper- or middle-class Turkish backgrounds. The results showed that male participants exhibited less positive attitudes toward women managers than did female participants. In addition, participants who held more favorable attitudes toward patriarchy and who scored high on hostile sexism also held less positive attitudes toward women managers than those who held less favorable attitudes toward patriarchy and who scored low on hostile sexism.

From the above empirical reviews, it could be possible that there are circumstances where the male subordinates may considerably divert down the guidelines from their female heads, and generally, negative remarks are frequently passed among guys in such a way that...what is this female saying? Sometimes, the male doesn't commend the activities of females, since ladies are consistently women; and regardless of how instructed they are, their notorieties are as yet restricted by their male partners (Owolabi, 2007).

So far, there has been no scientific study about public servants' views on women's leadership broadly especially in Dekina Local Government Area. However, when we go to the rural part of the country, culture is strongly understating women's leadership and glorifies male-domination. Therefore, Dekina Local Government and its surrounding areas are mostly rural, and there is a gap in the community's attitude towards women's leadership. Based on this, the study was carried out to investigate attitudinal differences of employees towards women's leadership positions. Besides, it also tried to assess social, psychological, and cultural factors that influence the attitude of employees towards women's leadership.

Research Methods

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In this study, an explanatory sequential mixed methods was adopted. It is a design that appeals to individuals with a strong quantitative background or from fields relatively new to qualitative approaches. The overall intent of this design is to have the qualitative data which helps in explaining in more detail the initial quantitative results. A typical procedure might involve collecting survey data in the first phase, analyzing the data, and then following up with qualitative interviews to help explain the survey responses. Sequential explanatory studies can be particularly useful when trying to explain relationships in quantitative data and provide more detail on the mechanisms of those relationships, particularly for surprising or unexpected results. Other strengths of the explanatory sequential design include its straightforward nature conceptually easy to design, logistically simple to implement, and ease of reporting.

Study Area

Dekina LGA is one of the local government areas in Kogi with Dekina town as the council headquarters. The LGA forms a federal constituency with Bassa local government area and is currently made up of Three (3) districts (Biraidu, Dekina, and Okura/Egume) and Twelve (12) electoral wards which are under the control of each of the elected councilors in the wards. According to Idris (1989), Dekina Local Government Area was part of the great former Igala Native Authority. As a result of socio-economic and political restructuring to pave way for faster and more meaningful development, Dekina was carved out as a Local Government Area by the then Kwara State Administration in 1969. Dekina Local Government Area had six Districts then, namely; Dekina, Bassa, Mosum, Gboloko, Biraidu and Okura. Further Geo-political restructuring robbed Dekina LGA of three of her Districts, namely – Bassa, Gboloko and Mosum to become Bassa Local Government leaving Dekina with Dekina, Okura/Egume and Biraidu Districts. Ankpa, borders the Local Government Area on the east on the west by Ajaokuta, Omala and Ankpa, on the north by Bassa and on the south by Ofu. It is divided into 12 political wards, over 185 villages, 199 settlements with about 148 numbers of public health facilities, numerous private health facilities, and 202 schools as well as over 33 markets.

As part of economic development in Dekina Local Government Area, markets are put in place for commercial activities. Agricultural products produced by the local farmers such as yam, maize, cassava, palm oil, palm kernel, beans, millet, guinea corn, bambara nuts, oranges, cashew nuts etc. are sold mostly in the local markets. Dekina LGA was chosen for this study because it is the largest local government area in Kogi State by population.

Study Population

All government top workers from Grade Level 10 and above who were working under Dekina Local Government Council in across various departments with Dekina LGA as its delivering authority: General administration, education, social welfare, public health, housing and town planning, transport, environment and public sanitation, culture, leisure and sports, which as the period of this report has about a total of 684 employees (Desk of Personnel Department).

Sample Size Determination

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Given the purpose of the study, nature, and complexity of the population under investigation, Krejcie and Morgan statistical formula was used to select 246 local government officials from the population of 684 workers across the eight departments with the local government council using $n = \frac{x^2NP(1-P)}{e^2(N-1) + x^2P(1-P)}$ formula.

Sampling Technique

Dekina Local Government Council has eight (8) departments. 30 respondents were purposively (non-probability sampling technique) selected randomly from each of the 8 departments. i.e General administration (30); Education (30); Social welfare (30); Public health (30); Housing and town planning (30); Transport (30); Environment and public sanitation (30); Culture, leisure and sports (30) to give a total of 240 respondents. While 6 Grade Level 10 and below workers were randomly/systematically selected and interviewed respectively to give a grand total of 246 respondents in all.

The participants were selected based on the number of workers in the departments randomly from the stratum. The stratum in this case were the departments and gender of employees in each department. In each department, there were males and females, that is in the General administration, Housing and Town Planning, Transport, Environment and public sanitation, Culture, leisure and sports (M=92, F=110 & T=202), and employees in Education, Social welfare, Public healthcare (M=23, F=21 & T= 44). From each department, samples were taken according to the available numbers of employees. Therefore, since the sampling technique was simple random sampling, each employee in each department has a clear probability to be selected as a participant in each stratum.

Instruments of Data Collection

Women as Managers Scale (WAMS) was designed to identify and measure stereotypical attitudes towards women managers (Peters, et al., 1977). The scale contains 21 items in a Likert scale format. Each item had five response alternatives ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. 10 items were worded to portray women as managers favourably and 11 items were worded to describe women managers unfavourably. The favourably worded items portray men and women managers as equal and the unfavourable items depicted women as inferior to men. The 11 unfavourably worded items were reverse scored because disagreement with a negative item would indicate a favourable response. The total score is the sum of all the responses and can range from 21 to 105 or taking the average, from 1 to 5 because, the average of each score is analyzed, with high scores, 4 to 5, indicating favourable attitudes towards women as managers and low scores, less than 4, indicating fewer positive attitudes. The Scale was categorized as 1. Strongly Disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neutral 4. Agree 5. Strongly Agree, the average score of 4 is the expected score to conclude that the workers have a favourable attitude towards female managers. Any score less than 4 shows that the respondents tend to hold a less favourable attitude. To come up with the average score of each respondent's attitude, the total score is divided by the 21 items; which gives it a range of scores from 1 to 5.

Interview: In this study, semi-structured interview was used to assess the attitude of the government workers toward women leadership in the study area. The interview guide was prepared by the researcher through a focus on government workers under supervision from Grade level 10 and below.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

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To ensure the validity and reliability of data collection instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study on the adopted instrument on employees working with women leaders across departments in Dekina and Anyigba towns for 25 respondents before collected the actual data. Participants in the pilot study were selected randomly. The researcher made pilot testing for adopted women as a managerial scale (WAMS) to check the Inter-item consistency (reliability), then Cronbach alpha was computed. The Cronbach alpha internal consistency of WAMS results showed ($\alpha = 0.83$). And also, in order to ensure the validity of the instruments, the measures were assessed with expert opinions. The experts have judged the items in the scales regarding the content validity, clarity of meaning, and relevance of the measures to the Nigerian context. Then, to perform the actual data collection, orientation was given to research assistants who were working in Dekina Local Government Area so as to help during administration of the instruments. And then, the researcher set the discussion for not more than thirty minutes on the basic skills, ways of participant's freedoms of speech or expression, how to collect data, how to interact with respondents and then these data collectors were collecting the data and check the flow of data collection. After that, the questionnaire distributed were retrieved, computed, and summarized for data interpretation.

Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 20) software was employed to analyze quantitative data using descriptive and inferential statistics. The researcher employed descriptive statistics (percentage, Frequency, Mean and Standard Deviation) to check the distribution of demographic data (sex, age, marital status, and level of education) in the study area. The researcher employed inferential statics such as one sample t-test to identify the attitudes of employees towards female leadership. Independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA (analysis of variance) were employed to examine whether a significant difference exists in attitude towards female leadership across gender, age, marital status, and educational level. The qualitative data content analysis was used to explore the socioeconomic, personal, political, psychological, and cultural factors that influence the attitude of employees towards female leadership.

Ethical Considerations

During conducting scientific research, it is highly important to consider various ethical issues in order to reduce the harms on the participants. Hence, all the participants were provided details of the study's aim and objectives and also the researcher informed them about the confidential nature of all the information given including the steps that would be taken to maintain the confidentiality. They were also informed that they have the right to agree or object to participating, or withdraw from the study at any time if they think so. Finally, due consideration were taken to protect the personal and social values of the participants during report compilation.

Results

Descriptive statistics

The instrument (questionnaire) were distributed to a total of 240 employees and the interview was conducted with 6 employees across the various departments. From the distributed 240 questionnaire 234 were properly attended to. This makes the response rate of 95%. At the time of data screening for accuracy and completeness, 6 questionnaires were found to be unusable, the reason behind this was that the respondents were not given enough time to reply to all parts of the items completely.

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Table 1: Socio-Demographical Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency N = 234	Percentage 100
Sex	Male	110	47
	Female	124	53
Age in years	30 and below	158	43.6
	31-40	88	24.3
	41-50	50	13.8
	50 and above	66	18.2
Marital Status	Single	71	30.3
	Married	159	61.9
	Divorced	04	1.8
	Widow/Widower	00	00
Educational Level	Primary	07	8.0
	Secondary	16	6.8
	Diploma	76	32.5
	Degree	135	57.7
Years of Working Experience	0 - 5 years	39	16.5
	6 - 8 years	45	19.2
	9 - 10 years	51	22
	11 and above	99	42.3

Source: Field Survey Research, 2022

As indicated in Table 1 above, out of the total 234 research participants 110 (47%) were males and the rest 124 (53%) were females. Regarding the age of the respondents, 128 (54.7%) were at the age group of 30 years and below, 82 (35%) the age group of 31-40, 16 (6.8%) of them in the group of 41-50, and 8 (3.5%) respondents were 50 years and above. Relating to marital status the table above shows that 71 (30.3%) respondents were single, 159 (61.9%) were married, and 4 (1.8%) were divorced. Concerning the educational level of respondents, 7 (3%) were primary school, 16 (6.8%) were secondary, 76 (32.5%) were diploma, and 135 (57.7%) respondents have a degree and above educational level. Finally, table 1 also indicated that the working experience of respondents below and 1years up to 5 years accounted for 39 (16.5%), 6-8 years were 45 (19.2%), 9 - 10 years were 51 (22%) while those whose years of working experience ranges from 11 years and above were 99 (42.3%) respectively. This can be interpreted to mean that majority of the respondent were experienced employees with good knowledge of attitudes towards women leadership.

The Attitude of Employees towards women Leadership

Table 2: One Sample t-test on the general attitude of employees towards women leadership

Variable	HM	Mean	SD	Df	T	sig
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Attitude	63	78.99	9.83	233	24.87	.000*
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towards

female leadership

P<0.05; HM-hypothesized mean

From the above table 2, the result of the one-sample t-test shows ($t(233) = 24.87, p < 0.05$). This means that there is a statistically significant mean difference between the sample mean score (mean= 78.99, SD=9.83) and the hypothesized mean score of the instrument which was 63. Since the sample mean score which refers to employee's attitude score is significantly greater than the hypothesized mean score. It then means that the employees in Dekina Local Government Area have positive attitude towards female leadership.

Gender difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Table 3: Gender difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Variable	Group	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	sig
Attitude	Male	110	76.87	10.09	232	3.16	0.002*
	Female	124	80.87	9.23			

P<0.05

Table 3 summarized results of the independent samples t-test investigated to see whether a significant mean difference exist in attitude towards women leadership between male and female employees. From the results, there is a significant mean difference in attitude towards women leadership between Male (mean=76.87, SD=10.09) and Female (mean=80.87, SD=9.23); ($t(232) = 3.16, p < 0.05$) employees. This shows that female employees have more of a positive attitude towards women's leadership compared to male employees in Dekina Local Government Area.

Age Difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Table 4: One-way ANOVA among employees by Age

Variable	age groups	N	Mean	SD	df	F	sig
Attitude	≤ 30	128	78.58	10.05	230	0.94	0.42
	31-40	82	80.26	9.34			
	41-50	16	76.93	10.95			
	≥51	8	76.50	8.88			

One-Way ANOVA between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the level of attitude towards women leadership among employees as compared with age groups less than or equal to 30 years (mean=78.58, SD=10.05), 31-40 years (mean=80.26, SD=9.34), 41-50 years (mean=76.93, SD=10.95) and 51 years and above (mean=76.50, SD=8.88). As shown in the above Table 4, there were no significant mean differences in the level of attitude towards women leadership ($F= 0.94$, $df (4,230)$, $p>0.05$) among respondents of the study across age groups. The outcome revealed that across age groups of respondents they showed an alike attitude towards women leadership in Dekina Local Government Area.

Marital Status Difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Table 5: One-way ANOVA on attitude of employees towards women leadership across Marital Status

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	F	sig
Attitude	single	75	78.15	10.79	231	3.33	0.037
	Married	147	78.86	9.09			
	Divorced	12	85.90	10.41			

One-way ANOVA between groups analysis of variance was performed to investigate the level of attitude towards women leadership, as compared with the marital status of employees. As the above table 5 indicated, there is a statistically significant mean difference in the score of respondents' attitudes towards women leadership across marital status with the results of those who were single (mean=78.15, SD= 10.79), married (mean=78.86, SD=9.09), and divorced (mean=85.90, SD=10.41), $F=3.33$, $df (3,231)$, $p<0.05$).

Tuckey Post hoc comparisons test was conducted to compare participants' attitude score towards female leadership in terms of marital status. And the result showed that the mean attitude score of those who were divorced (mean=85.90, SD=10.41) was significantly higher than those who were married (mean=78.86, SD=9.09) and single (mean=78.15, SD= 10.79). Also, the mean attitude score of employees who were married (mean=78.86, SD=9.09) had a significant mean difference slightly higher than those who were single (mean=78.15, SD= 10.79).

Educational Status Difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Table 6: One-way ANOVA on attitudes of employees towards female leadership across educational level

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	F	sig
Attitude	primary school	9	71.66	12.87	230	3.05	0.029
	Secondary school	15	75.46	8.99			
	Diploma	98	78.72	9.88			
	Degree and above	112	80.28	9.36			

One-way ANOVA between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the attitudes of employees towards female leadership as comparing with educational status. Table 6 above shows that there is statistically significant mean difference with the mean scores of attitudes of employees across primary school (mean=71.66, SD=12.87), secondary school (mean=75.46, SD =8.99), diploma (mean=78.72, SD =9.88) and degree and above (mean =80.28, SD= 9.36), $F = 3.05$ df (4,230), $P < 0.05$) among respondents.

Tuckey post hoc test was also computed to see the mean difference in attitudes of employees among educational status. The educational level of participants for those who had Degree and above scored the highest mean score of attitudes towards female leadership (mean=80.28, SD=9.36). Participants who obtained primary educational level had lower mean score (mean=71.66, SD=12.87) than those who had secondary educational level (mean=75.46, SD=8.99) and Diploma educational level (mean=78.72, SD=9.88) respectively. This shows that when individuals advanced in educational level it helps enlighten their views and make them develop objective attitudes about issues and co-workers.

Working experience Difference in attitude towards women leadership among employees

Table 7: One-way ANOVA among employees working experience

Variable	groups	N	Mean	SD	df	F	sig
Attitude	≤1 to 5 years	39	79.48	8.26	3	2.84	0.038
	6 to 8 years	45	79.49	9.51			
	9 to 10 years	51	75.54	10.20			
	≥11 years	99	80.34	10.07			

One-way ANOVA between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to examine the attitudes of employees towards female leadership as comparing with working experience. Table 7 above shows that there is statistically significant mean difference in the mean scores of attitudes of employees across employee's experience ≤1 to 5 years (mean= 79.48, SD=8.26), 6 to 8 years (mean=79.49, SD =9.51), 9 to 10 years (mean=75.54, SD =10.20) and ≥11 years (mean =80.34, SD= 10.07), $F = 2.84$ df (3,230), $P < 0.05$) among respondents.

Tuckey post hoc test was computed to see the mean difference in attitudes of employees among working experience. Working experience of participants, those who were working for ≥11 years scored the highest mean score of attitudes towards female leadership (mean=80.34, SD=10.07). Participants who were working for 6 to 8 years had lower mean score (mean=75.54, SD=10.20) than those who were working for ≤1 to 5 years (mean=79.48, SD=8.26), 6 - 8 years (mean=79.49, SD=9.51), and ≥11 years (mean =80.34, SD= 10.07). This implies that employees who were more experienced have more of positive attitude towards women leadership than those with less experiences in Dekina Local Government Area.

Respondents view on factors that influence women in leadership

Respondents were interviewed about factors that influence women in craving for leadership positions. Participants responding as follows:

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"Traditional gender roles, perception, marriage and competence are major influencing factors that may women crave for in leadership positions. As for me I can lead well in any position that is not gender sensitive as far this local government is concern after my menopausal period i.e. when I am done with child bearing to avoid distractions". (39years old Grade Level 14, female).

"Societal factors like family responsibilities, childcare and eldercare responsibilities, and other social responsibilities influence women in leadership, and also the cultural label of leaders as male dominated is another intervening factor for some women in rising up to higher management levels." (41years old Grade Level 15, Female).

"What discourages some of us women to aspire for leadership position is sexual and gender based harassment by male employees who see it as awkward for women to lead them. This patriarchal mindset scare some of us women away from leadership" (40years old Grade Level 13, Female).

"I thank God for our gender equality conscious Governor of Kogi State, Alhaji Yahaya Bello who gave an executive order that all the 21 vice chairperson must be female and eventually sworn them in. You see, that is an encouragement for us women to aspire for leadership positions, instead of leaving for men and men alone" (42years old Grade Level 13, Female).

The summary of findings from these respondents interviewed is that the factors which influence women to aspire for leadership positions categorically include traditional gender roles, social, cultural and psychological factors, executive order, marriage, perceptions and competence.

Discussion of findings

The discussions emphasize relating the major findings of this study in line with the previous research findings on the issue. Procedurally, the discussions are presented as follows. First, discussions are made on results showing the general attitudes of employees towards female leadership among respondents of the study. Second, discussion on the results showing the significant mean difference in the level of attitudes of employees towards women leadership across socio-demographic variables. Discussions on results showing social, psychological, and cultural factors that influence the attitude of employees towards female leadership respondents.

The general Attitude of Employees towards women Leadership

As its first objective, this study assessed the general attitudes of employees towards women leadership in the study area. In this study, the general attitudes of employees are positive towards females in leadership. The result of the one-sample t-test shows that $t(233) = 24.87, p < 0.05$ and there is a statistically significant mean difference between the sample mean score (mean = 78.99, SD = 9.83) and the hypothesized mean score of the instrument which is 63. This result revealed that most of the respondents were having a positive attitude towards women leadership in the Dekina local government area of Kogi State.

The result of this current study opposed the finding of a local study carried out by Owolabi (2007) who found that there were negative attitudes towards women leaders by employees, although there were no significant difference in the attitudes of private and public sector employees towards women leaders.

Attitude towards women leadership across Socio-Demographic Variables among employees

This study also examined whether or not attitudes of employees towards women leadership differ across the selected socio-demographic variables. Therefore, the mean score of employee's attitudes for female respondents was higher than male respondents. The difference was also statistically significant. Hence, Results of employee's attitudes towards women's leadership vary between males and females in Dekina local government area. The current result consistent with the findings of a study among Turkish college students (Sakalli-Ugurlu & Beydogan, 2002) had shown that male students had a more negative attitude towards women as managers as compared to women.

However, there is no statistically significant mean difference in the level of attitude towards women in leadership among respondents across age groups. Hence, the present result was inconsistent with a previous local study by Adeyemi & Tomkiewics (2017) who found men have more attitudes towards women supervisors than women. Among the demographic variables age, the study found to behave in an insignificant effect on the attitude level of employees towards female leadership. On one hand, the present result found a significant differences among the employee's age groups in their attitude towards women managers (F stat 3.24, significance level 0.008). There are significant differences of the mean score of age group 36 years to 40 years with those of all other groups, and there are significant differences of the mean scores of the age group above 50 years with those of other groups.

On the other hand, in terms of educational status, the findings indicate that there were statistically significant mean differences in the score of attitudes towards women in leadership among respondents. Tukey's post hoc test analysis indicates that respondents who are a degree and above level of education significantly scored a higher degree of attitudes towards women in leadership than those who had a Diploma, secondary educational level, and primary educational level of respondents. The researcher hypothesized that those who have a degree and above level of education scored higher scores of attitudes towards women in leadership due to the reality that being advanced in education might add favorable attitudes for female managers among employees in Dekina Local Government Area.

The current finding consistent with a recent study found that a male employee who is highly advanced in terms of education shows higher resistance towards accepting the female. The present study revealed that individuals with a Bachelor's degree or post graduate education had higher mean scores than primary school graduates in the attitudes towards female managers

Regarding marital status, results indicate that there are statistically significant mean differences in the score of attitudes towards women in leadership among respondents across the marital status. Tuckey Post hoc comparisons test was conducted to compare participants' attitude score towards female leadership in terms of marital status. And the result showed that the mean attitude score of those who are divorced was significantly higher than those who are married and single employees. Also, the mean attitude score of employees who are married had a significant mean difference slightly higher than those who are single respondents. This study is

consistent with the local study by Owolabi (2007) on the attitude of employees towards female managers which were more favourable with married workers than with those of the single ones.

Respondents view on factors that influence women in leadership

The respondents interviewed had diverse views on the factors that influence women employees into aspiring for leadership position in Dekina Local Government. Some mentioned traditional gender roles, marriage, perceptions, childcare/eldercare responsibilities, executive order, sexual and gender base harassments were revealed to be the factors influencing women employees into aspiring for leadership position in the study area. These findings were more or less in conformity with the postulation of Okafor and akokuwebe (2015) who mentioned encouragement of women in politics and constitutional provision through executive order as propellers of women craving for leadership positions in Nigeria, particularly in Dekina Local Government of Kogi State.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study concluded that women has the right to lead, be nominated and voted for but they're afraid of stereotypes. If they act consistently with gender stereotypes they are considered as too soft but if they go against the stereotypes they are considered as too tough. The same is true with regard to negotiation, pay, and promotion. It is commonly assumed that women do not ask for a promotion or for more money but wait to be noticed and nominated.

This current study similarly consistent with gender roles is connected to a set of stereotypical beliefs that influence every aspect of social life. However, gender roles and stereotypes are subject to change. Hence, women are more encouraged to actively participate in every sector of society and many new opportunities have opened up to them in the 21st Century.

Based on the findings of the study, special consideration should be paid to studies specifically focusing on the difficulties experienced by females working as leaders in any government sector and when people see women as capable, they should also support them in their managerial roles.

The education sector should be focused on women empowerment in organizations, and Leadership training should be introduced in the education system to enable more women in leadership positions. Also, government sectors should be giving special attention to employees who have low educational status regarding their attitude towards women in leadership.

Psychological training and motivational course of action should be conducted by the government organization to avoid the stereotypical attitude the employees hold towards female managers and support the development of females in all aspects.

Government sectors are better to communicate and providing training for employees regarding traditional, psychological and sociocultural issues with responsible bodies to minimize unfavourable attitudes of employees towards female leadership in government organizations. And also, the public sector should focus on changing the narrative of negative attitude through training and development and encourage competent female managers with positive reward as role models.

Limitation of the Study

In this study, the researcher tried to deal with the basic limitations that could arise from observation. However, this doesn't mean that this study is free from limitations. The following are some of limitations. In a study on topics such as attitude towards women, it is hard to avoid biases from women respondents who are the subjects of discussion in this study. The study sample was selected based on convenience. So, unbiased responses might not be represented in total 100%. Perhaps the attitude towards female managers can be assessed better by taking into account both private and public sectors together but instead, the study was limited to only government workers.

Direction for further research

Future researchers can make comparisons between respondents with no formal education and those with formal education to provide a clear view on the influence of education on attitude towards female in leadership position and including other factors like religion, and types of organization. Those studies may employ different methods like deeper interview, Focus Group Discussion and quantitative analysis in detail beyond this study.

Competing interests

The author states that he has no competing interests regarding this research.

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