



## An assessment of various strategies to curb Gender Imbalance in Tertiary Institutions in North-Central Nigeria

Daniels Adebayo Adeniyi

Department of Environmental Science, Federal Polytechnic, Ugep, Cross River State, Nigeria

**Corresponding Author:** Daniel Adebayo Adeniyi: [danade4luv@gmail.com](mailto:danade4luv@gmail.com)

---

### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Entrepreneurial Education, Tertiary, Education

*Received :* 20, April

*Revised :* 22, May

*Accepted:* 25, June

©2024 Adeniyi(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



### ABSTRACT

This study assessed the various strategies to curb gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in North-central Nigeria. The research design of this study was a descriptive survey. The population of the study comprises all the academic staff in the North-central zone. The sample size for the study was four hundred and eighty (480) selected from two federal and two state universities in the region using a simple random sampling technique. The instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled "Strategies to Curb Gender Imbalance in Tertiary Institutions in North-central Nigeria Questionnaire). The instrument was face-validated by two experts from Educational Administration and Planning, in the Department of the Educational Management University of Abuja, all from the faculty of Education. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. Mean scores from 2.50 was considered accepted while any mean scores below 2.50 was considered rejected. The study concluded that that full implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and students admission in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria, Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues, Tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality, Rewarding institutions with gender friendly policies and programme

---

## INTRODUCTION

Federal Republic of Nigeria's national policy on education (2013), observed tertiary education is an education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). According to Ogunode and Ayeni (2023), tertiary or university education is an advanced education in teaching, research and community service. Ogunode and Odo, (2023) believed that tertiary institutions are micro sections of the larger society. Tertiary education can also be seen as post-secondary school education that focuses on advanced teaching, research and community service (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Ogwuche, 2024). They are an organized fraction of the whole society curved out for teaching programmes, research and provision of community service. They can also be seen as subsets of the general society that are made of collections of different people, cultures, lifestyles and values. Societies globally have been known to have some peculiar social problems. **University education boosts the flow of funds to the host community (Ayeni & Ezirim, 2023).** Social problems of most societies are migrated into the tertiary institutions because the societies and the tertiary institutions are inseparable to some extent. Thus, it has been further argued that insecurity is a social problem that demands the participation of stakeholders like security institutions, political institutions and tertiary institutions (Ogunode, Ayeni, & Olorundare, 2024). The above implies that when a structure is not performing its function optimally; vices often appear (Joseph, Cinjel & Ayeni, 2017). Thus, the lack of ability of any structure to perform its task will cause the system to malfunction (Ayeni & Nwaorgu, 2018).

## LITURATURE REVIEW

Gender issues have been a focal point of discussion in many regional, national and international forums. Issues bordering on inequality and inequity are often addressed as well as all forms of discrimination against women. The 1999 Nigeria constitution makes provisions for the equality of women, guarantees their rights and protects the interest of women considering the religious, traditional and cultural norms that govern the society. The role of women in nation-building can never be underestimated. This is why the issue of the role of women in nation-building and international development has continued to attract global attention especially relative to the nexus of gender equality and sustainable development (Akanle and Olutayo, 2012, Akanle, 2011, Adebayo and Akanle, 2014; Olaogun, Adebayo, & Oluyemo, 2015)

Gender imbalance is an international and national problem facing both developed and developing countries including Nigeria. This problem of gender imbalance appears to be more pronounced in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, For instance, studies have revealed that their gender gaps in most tertiary

institutions in Nigeria, According to the Nigerian University System Statistical Digest (2019), out of a total of 73,443 academic staff in 2019, only 17,380 were female, emphasizing a significant underrepresentation of women in academic roles. The gender gap extends to non-academic positions, where the report indicates that out of 152,475 non-academic staff, 56,478 were female, further underscoring the systemic challenges faced by women in various capacities within tertiary institutions.

In delving into leadership positions, a study conducted by Dada, Ogunode, and Ajayi (2022) focused on gender equity in the appointment of principal officers in university administration within the North-Central region of Nigeria. Combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, the study utilized data from the National Universities Commission (2019) and uncovered a notable dearth of female representation in key leadership roles. This study sheds light on the persistently low and discouraging presence of women in every facet of tertiary institutions, emphasizing the imperative for comprehensive strategies to address gender disparities and foster a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape.

Ekwukoma's (2018) investigation of selected faculties at the University of Benin highlighted a notable gender disparity, favouring females in the Faculty of Education but revealing a significant gap in the Faculties of Engineering and Environmental Sciences, where male dominance prevailed. Similarly, an exploration of the Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti, by Adegun (2012) and Adebayo & Akanle (2014) underscored a pervasive gender skew, with 87.2% of lecturers being male and only 12.8% female. This trend persists across all academic cadres within the polytechnic. The above gender imbalance in the employment of lecturers in tertiary institutions has implications for the financial security of the female gender. This is why it has been argued that the provision of financial security for people undergoing structural violence is an attempt at peacebuilding (Ogunode & Ayeni, 2024). The marginalisation of the female gender creates structural violence and dissatisfaction among female folks. To address the problem of structural violence where people nurse the feelings of marginalisation in decision-making, there is a need for them to be involved in decision-making processes that affect them. This is why it has been argued that effective communication in an organisation takes place when subordinates are carried along in the decision-making process (Ayeni, Sani, Uzoigwe, 2019). Carrying the female gender along in the decision-making process in an organisation to enhance effective communication requires giving them appointment positions where their voices are held.

Egunjobi, in Olaogun, Adebayo, and Oluyemo, (2015) in a study of Commonwealth nations indicated that the percentage of women employed as full-time academic staff ranges from the highest of 50% in Jamaica to the least of 9.5% in Ghana, with a Commonwealth average of 24%. The smallest percentages were found in Ghana 9.5%, Nigeria 13.6%, Tanzania 11.0%, Zambia 10.9% and

Zimbabwe 9.8% all in Africa, for example, the University of Ilorin also showed a female/male ratio of 11.6% to 88.4%.

Arubayi's as cited in Olaogun et al (2015) extensive study unveils a concerning scenario within Federal and State Colleges of Education, revealing a pronounced gender imbalance among lecturers. The distribution of lecturers by sex emphasizes a bottom-heavy structure, with 50% holding first degrees, and 38% possessing professional first degrees, of which only 24% are females. The study further discloses that 29% of lecturers have postgraduate professional degrees, with female representation at 22%.

According to the National Science Board (2006), the proportion of female chemistry B.S. and Ph.D. candidates was 47% and 33%, respectively, in the year 2000. Clearly as demonstrated by these figures, there is a gender gap in the discipline. In 2005, only thirteen per cent of chemistry faculty members were female, according to research published in Chemical and Engineering News (Marasco, 2005).

From the above literature review, it is clear that women are under-presented in the areas of leadership, recruitment, admission into science programmes and appointment as head of a department. It is important to critically examine the strategies that can be used to address or curb the gender imbalance in Nigerian tertiary institutions using north-central, Nigeria as a case study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The objective of this study is to assess the various strategies to curb gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in North-central Nigeria. The sub-objective includes:

- i. To identify the various strategies to curb gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in North-central Nigeria

### **Research Questions**

Based on this research objective, the researcher formulated the following research question to address the objective:

- i. What are the various strategies to curb gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in North-central Nigeria?

### **METHODOLOGY**

The research design of this study was a descriptive survey. It was aimed at providing the opinions of the respondents on the various strategies to curb gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in North-central Nigeria. The population of the study comprises all the academic staff in the North-central zone. The sample size for the study was four hundred and eighty (480) selected from two federal and two state universities in the region using a simple random sampling technique. The quantitative research method was employed because it is suitable for studying individuals groups or organisations as units of analysis

(Ayeni, Saman, & Sani, 2019). Consequently, the instrument for data collection was the structured questionnaire developed by the researcher titled “Strategies to Curb Gender Imbalance in Tertiary Institutions in North-central Nigeria Questionnaire). It was arranged in two sections. Section one consists of information to the respondents on their status. Section two of the questionnaire contains twenty-two items (10) carefully arranged in clusters. The questionnaire is developed on four (4) point rating scale provided for the respondents to choose from, they are: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) - 3, Disagree (D) – 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) - 1. The instrument was face-validated by two experts from Educational Administration and Planning, in the Department of Educational Management University of Abuja, all from the faculty of Education. The experts were requested to study the suitability and relevance of the instrument in line with the purpose of the study and the research questions as well as the appropriateness of the rating scale. Both the items and rating scale were studied by these experts. Corrections were made which were later effected by the researcher in line with their observations. To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered to fifty (50) academic staff for trial testing in universities outside the sample size. A reliability estimate was computed using the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient which gave the value of 0.85. This value indicates that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics was used for data analysis. Mean scores from 2.50 was considered accepted while any mean scores below 2.50 was considered rejected.

## RESULT

**Table 1: Analysis of Responses on the strategies to reduce gender imbalance in tertiary institutions in the North Central, Nigeria.**  
**N= 480**

S/N	Strategies to Curb Gender Imbalance	X	S.D	Decision
	The strategies include			
1.	Implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and student admission.	3.45	0.52	Agreed
2.	Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues.	2.80	0.92	Agreed
3.	A tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality will help to reduce gender inequality.	3.25	0.85	Agreed
4.	Rewarding institutions with gender-friendly policies and programmes will help to reduce gender inequality.	2.75	0.92	Agreed

5.	Participation of stakeholders of tertiary institutions on gender equality issues will help to reduce gender inequality	3.10	0.86	Agreed
6.	Supervisory agencies of tertiary institutions should direct all tertiary institutions to formulate policies, and programmes and establish monitoring and evaluation teams in all their institutions to create awareness, ensure implementation and report gender policies implementation level annually will help to reduce gender inequality.	3.30	0.79	Agreed
7	Involvement of International organizations, private institutions and Non-governmental organizations on gender issues to participate and establish clubs in various tertiary institutions will help to reduce gender inequality.	3.49	0.92	Agreed
	<b>Average</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>0.88</b>	<b>Agreed</b>

Table 1 and item one shows that the respondents agreed that implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and students admission in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria will help to reduce gender inequality (item 2,  $x = 3.45$ ), Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues will help to reduce gender inequality (item 2,  $x = 2.80$ ), Tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality will help to reduce gender inequality (item 3,  $x = 3.25$ ), Rewarding institutions with gender friendly policies and programme will help to reduce gender inequality (item 4,  $x = 2.59$ ), Participation of stakeholders of tertiary institutions on gender equality issues will help to reduce gender inequality (item 5,  $x = 3.10$ ), Supervisory agencies of tertiary institutions should direct all tertiary institutions to formulate policies, programme and establish monitoring and evaluation team in all their institutions to create awareness, ensure implementation and report gender policies implementation level annually will help to reduce gender inequality (item 6,  $x = 3.30$ ), Involvement of International organizations, private institutions and Non-governmental organization on gender issue to participate and establish clubs in various tertiary institutions will help to reduce gender inequality (item 7,  $x = 3.49$ ).

Table 1 shows that based on the sectional mean of 3.45, respondents agreed that strategies to curb gender inequality in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria include; implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and students admission in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria, Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues, Tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality, Rewarding institutions with gender friendly policies and programme,

Participation of stakeholders of tertiary institutions on gender equality issues, Supervisory agencies of tertiary institutions direction to all tertiary institutions to formulate policies, programme and establish monitoring and evaluation team in all their institutions to create awareness, ensure implementation and report gender policies implementation level annually and involvement of International organizations, private institutions and Non-governmental organization on gender issue to participate and establish clubs in various tertiary institutions.

## **DISCUSSION**

The result collected from table one indicated that implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and students admission in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria, Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues, Tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality, Rewarding institutions with gender friendly policies and programme, Participation of stakeholders of tertiary institutions on gender equality issues, Supervisory agencies of tertiary institutions direction to all tertiary institutions to formulate policies, programme and establish monitoring and evaluation team in all their institutions to create awareness, ensure implementation and report gender policies implementation level annually and involvement of International organizations, private institutions and Non-governmental organization on gender issue to participate and establish clubs in various tertiary institutions are the various strategies to curb gender inequality in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria. This result is in line with the discoveries of Ibrahim and Akudolu, (2010); Afu, Gbobo, Ukofia, and Itakure (2017); Ikwuegbu, (2022); Bergmann, Alban Conto, and Brossard, (2022) and Ogunode, and Salman (2022) that listed sensitization programme on gender equality, full implementation of national policy on gender in Nigeria and participation of government and non-government institutions as ways of addressing the problem of gender imbalance in the tertiary institutions in Nigeria. National Science Board (2006); Gbadamosi, (2014); Olaogun, Adebayo, and Oluyemo, (2015); Ogunode, Ahmed, and Yahaya (2021); Ogunode and Ahmed (2021); Ogunode, Lawan and Yusuf (2021) and Edinoh, Odili, and Nwafor (2023) also recommended that tertiary institutions should constantly organize seminars, conferences and workshops via their various Centre for Gender Studies to teach tertiary institutions communities about the importance of gender equality and discourage gender based violence on the campuses and society generally. Tertiary institution management should make sure that students are being treated fairly in the tertiary institutions where they feel equally about taking part in any conversation. Their syllabus should be made inclusive, which can promote gender equality. They should advocate for scholarships to be created for marginalized women and those who have suffered gender discrimination. Tertiary institutions should come up with suggestions to discourage gender segregation; engage the government on policies to encourage women's empowerment and policies to support the provision of social safety net. Olaogun, Adebayo, and Oluyemo (2015) also concluded that women should be accorded a

much better role than they are allowed to play at the moment. More women should be engaged in academics. This is because access to education empowers people to enable them to provide for their basic needs (Ayeni, Sani, Idris, & Uzoigwe, 2019). Policies that will ensure equal gender representation should be formulated, adopted and enforced by the government. Parents should de-emphasize gender socialization that prevents females from acquiring scientific and technological skills. Gender discrimination based on employers' perception of appropriate work roles for the sexes should be addressed by the government. The pressure of marriage that prevents females from going for further studies to qualify for academics should be addressed and discouraged by parents. Parents should be encouraged to give equal opportunities to their children in educational pursuits irrespective of gender. The socio-cultural stereotype that views women as the 'property' of men should be jettisoned and a level playing field should be allowed for all irrespective of gender. Interventions in the form of making laws that would prescribe the minimum percentage of women in academics should be vigorously pursued.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study concluded that full implementation of gender policies in areas of appointment, recruitment and students admission in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria, Capacity building for tertiary institutions managers on gender issues, Tertiary institution sensitization programme on gender equality, Rewarding institutions with gender friendly policies and programme, Participation of stakeholders of tertiary institutions on gender equality issues, Supervisory agencies of tertiary institutions direction to all tertiary institutions to formulate policies, programme and establish monitoring and evaluation team in all their institutions to create awareness, ensure implementation and report gender policies implementation level annually and involvement of International organizations, private institutions and Non-governmental organization on gender issue to participate and establish clubs in various tertiary institutions are the various strategies to curb gender inequality in all tertiary institutions in North Central, Nigeria.

Based on these findings, the paper hereby recommends the following;

1. The federal ministry of education should direct all regulatory agencies of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to direct all tertiary institutions to develop their gender policies using the national policies as a guide and ensure full implementation in all the tertiary institutions in Nigeria.
2. A monitoring and evaluation unit should be established to monitor gender programmes in all tertiary institutions across the country and annually prepare their reports of progress.



3. Capacity building for tertiary institution managers should be organized annually to develop the skills and knowledge of tertiary institutions on how to fully participate in the gender advocacy programme.

## References

- Adebayo, A. & Akanle, O. (2014). Gender and the academy in Nigeria. *African Journal for the Psychological Study of Social Issues*. 17 (1); pp. 147-154.
- Adegun, A. O. (2012). Gender factor and labour participation among academic staff in tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Educational Studies*, 4(2), 249- 258.
- Akanle, O. (2011). The Sociology of Gender Equality and Development and Development in Democratizing Nigeria. *The Nigerian Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. 9. Pp. 22-36.
- Akanle, O. And Olutayo, A.O. (2012). Gender and Poverty Eradication in Nigeria: Women's Right the Missing Link. *East African Journal of Human Rights*. 18 (1), pp. 227-241.
- Afu, M. O., Gbobo, V. F., Ukofia, I. F., Itakure, Z. S. (2017). Effect of Gender Imbalance in The Enrolment of Students in Public Secondary Schools in Gwagwalada Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria. *International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, 10(2), 200-211.
- Ayeni, E. O., Saman, U. P., & Sani, K. (2019). Facts and fiction in positivism and neo-positivism. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 9(4), 21-33. DOI: 10.7176/RHSS/9-4-03.
- Ayeni, E. O., Sani, K., & Uzoigwe, M. O. (2019). Communication as a tool for peacebuilding in achieving organizational objectives: A Study of Federal Ministry of Women Affairs. *International Research Journal of Human Resources and Social Sciences*, 6(3), 45-60.
- Ayeni, E. O., & Nwaorgu, H. C. (2018). Corruption and national development in the Nigeria Fourth Republic. *Lafia Journal of History and International Development*, 1 (2), 83-100.
- Ayeni, E. O., Sani, K., Idris, A., & Uzoigwe, M.O. (2019). Stomach infrastructure and politics of redistribution in Africa: a study of N-power and vote-buying in Nigeria (2014-2019). *Unilorin Journal of Administration and Development*, 5(2), 54-61.

- Ayeni, E.O., & Ezirim, G.E. (2023). Politics of siting public projects and its developmental effect on host communities in Nigeria 2012-2020. *Zamfara Journal of Politics and Development*, 4 (1), 225-236
- Bergmann, J., Alban Conto, C., & Brossard, M., (2022) Increasing Women's Representation in School Leadership: A promising path towards improving learning. *UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti*, Florence.
- Dada, M. S., Ogunode, N. J. & Ajayi, R. A (2022). Gender Equity in Appointment of Principal Officers in University Administration: Implications for Implementation of Gender Policy in North-Central, Nigeria. *Modern Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, (10), 1-7
- Edinoh, K. Odili, C.A. & Nwafor, A.C. (2023). Analysis of factors responsible for gender gap in the appointment of Vice-Chancellors in Universities in Nigeria. *International Journal on Integrated Education*. 6(7), 32-41.
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2006) Nigeria's National Gender Policy, Situation Analysis/Framework. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) National Policy on Education (6th Edition, reprint). Lagos: NERDC Press.
- Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development (2006) Nigeria's National Gender Policy, Situation Analysis/Framework. The Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja, Nigeria
- Gbadamosi, G.S. (2014). Gender differentials in the management of tertiary institutions in Ekiti State, Nigeria. An unpublished Master's thesis submitted to the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Ekiti State, University.
- Ibrahim, O. & Akudolu, L. (2010) Addressing gender inequality in higher Education through Targeted institutional responses: field evidence from Kenya and Nigeria. Higher education in Africa: equity Access opportunity, New York Institute of international education (IIE).
- Ikwuegbu, T. L (2022) Gender Issues In Nigeria: Women In Elective Positions. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS)*, 5 (3), 217

Joseph, D., Cinjel, D. N., & Ayeni, E. O. (2017). Political party rivalry and the growth of insecurity of democracy in Nigeria (2010-2016). *Wukari Journal of Public Sector Management*, 1 (1), 293-311.

National Science Board (2006). Science and Engineering Indicators 2006. Two volumes. Arlington, VA: *National Science Foundation* (volume 1, NSB 06-01; volume 2, NSB 06-01A).

Nigerian University System Statistical Digest. National Universities Digest, Abuja.

Ogunode, N. J. Lawan A. & Yusuf, M. (2021) Perception of Female Students on the Challenges Facing the Woman Education at the University Level. *Electronic Research Journal of Behavioural Sciences*, Volume 4 (2021), 24-36 37.

Ogunode, N. J., & Ayeni, E.O. (2024). Tertiary Institutions and Peacebuilding in Nigeria. *International Journal of Diplomacy and Political Relations*, 1(1), 1-10. <https://pubjournals.com/IJDPR>.

Ogunode N. J, Ahmed. I, Yahaya D, M. (2021) National Policy on Gender in Basic Education: Challenges of Implementation and Way Forward. *International Journal of Development and Public Policy*, 1(5), 228-136.

Ogunode, N.J., & Ayeni, E.O. (2023). Vice Chancellors and university education sustainability in Nigeria: Challenges and way forward. *European Journal of Higher Education and Academic Advancement*, 1(7), 12-22

Ogunode N., J., & Ahmed, I. (2021). Challenges Facing Teaching and Learning of Gender Education in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal for Intersectional Feminist Studies*, Volume 7(1-2), 19-32

Ogunode, N. J., Ayeni, E. O., & Olorundare, A. S. (2024). Roles of Tertiary Institutions in Curbing Banditry, Kidnapping and Terrorism in Nigeria. *International Journal of Sharia Economics and Financial Literacy*, 1(1), 19-28.

Ogunode, N. J., & Salman, A. A (2022) Gender Imbalance in Nigerian University System Nigeria. *AMERICAN Journal of Public Diplomacy and International Studies*, 01(02), 59- 68.

Ogunode, N. J., Ayeni, E.O., & Ogwuche, J. (2024). Roles of tertiary institutions in curbing corruption in Nigeria. *International Journal of Learning Development and Innovation*, 1 (1), 32-44.

Olaogun, J.A., Adebayo, A.A. & Oluyemo, C.A (2015). Gender imbalance in the academia in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal November*, 294-306.