

**GENDER INEQUALITY AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT IN UYO, AKWA IBOM STATE, NIGERIA**

By

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of gender and social responsibility for sustainable development in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. To achieve the aim of this study, two hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. Literature was reviewed accordingly. Ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. A sample of two hundred respondents was used for the study. The selection was done through the simple random sampling techniques. The questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts in Research and Statistics. The reliability estimate of the instrument was established through Cronbach alpha reliability method. Independent t-test analysis was adopted to test the study hypotheses. The hypothesis was tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that gender and social responsibility significantly influence sustainable development in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Based on the results and findings of the study, it was recommended that women should be treated the way she should be treated.

Key words: Gender, gender inequality, social responsibility, sustainable development.

Introduction /Background of the Study

From the beginning, God created man and woman and fused them together for the development of themselves and the society. In the bible, God said, let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over other creations. He created them male and female (Genesis 1:26-27). Gender is a term that has psychological and cultural connotation. If the proper terms for sex are male and female, the corresponding term for gender are masculine and feminine; these later might be quite independent of (biological) sex (Harlambos and Holborn, 2008)

From the moment of birth, gender expectations influence of boys and girls are created. Fausto-Stelling (2000), asserts that gender is not to divide between male and female but to foster unity for the growth of the society. There is no society that could function well without the ability of both sexes. Males have their duties in the society, so also the females. Since God created them male and female they have to fulfill God's mission on earth.

Male and female social responsibility varies from culture to culture. Fausto-Stelling (2000), writes about sex differences, that it is biologically determined. He said this determinism is attributed to biological make-up of persons. Every person has his area of interest and what they are made of. Man is said to be aggressive and does hard work and females are said to be gentle and does what is simple. In all, each person has what it takes to keep the society going. It is always believed that, female because of giving birth to young ones, she should not do hard work. This seems to make women dependents on man. Because of this seeming weakness of women, female groups have come to say that women should no longer depend on men rather they should work and contribute to the growth of the family.

Social responsibility is the role played by individual in the society. Thus individual must have been found worthy both in character and in learning before such responsibilities is given to him or her. A meanie person cannot be given responsibility. This is the reason everybody should try to be responsible. Today we are proud to have males and females who are capable of handling any responsibility given to them. Denisi and Griffin (2005) put it, that recruiting is the process of developing a pool of qualified applicants who are interested in working for the organization and from which the organization and from which the organization might reasonably select the best individual or individuals to hire for employment.

This is to say that, social responsibility of individual is a process of preparing oneself today for tomorrow utilization. This also confirms that it is only gender of proven integrity that should be given responsibility. In the churches for instance, before one grows to the position of an elder, he or she must grow from ordinary member to an active member and grow to the stage of a deacon. After being assessed, and found to be responsible both in character, discipline, humility and obedience before he or she could be recommended to the responsibility position of an elder. Anything one does in life count for that person in the society. There is always an unidentified watch-dog group to check who is capable of responsibility. In the society, we have observed with dismay that, politicians in Nigeria are still talking about the Nascent democracy. This is to say that, politicians here do not have experience and therefore lack social responsibilities to perform. Integrity does the job.

Sustainable development, according to Offiong (2013), writes that, in 1987, the Brundland commission defined it as the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. For something to be sustained, it must stand the test of time. If a project is proposed, it must be a project that can strive or survive for a long time. People who man it must be people of proven integrity. They must know their onions. The person(s) must be someone who has an experience for such job(s). This takes or entails a process. It is only gender of proven integrity that can drive for sustainable development. Gender must be moulded in character through educational career to be able to handle responsibility. Pearce and Warford (2005) defined sustainable development as increasing the wealth of the present without decreasing that of the future; that, it is a process and not an event. It is this future development that gender should be responsible for the sake of sustainable development.

Statement of the Problems

Responsibility is given to any persons provided he has the grace to carry on the responsibility. Social responsibility is a duty one is given in the society to handle, based on his/her ability. Some times people are disappointed because of their inability to handle assigned duty given to them. Some responsibilities are given based on gender bias. Some duties are claimed to be an exclusive duty, based on sex differences. Some countries believe that hard work should be given to persons based on sex differences. It should not be so, because God created male and female the same. Men and women suppose to put hands together in order to move the society to a sustainable developed society.

Once there are divisions of sexes, sustainable development can only be a mirage. We still have sex discrimination in many work places. In some work place, women are given time limit to give birth otherwise quite the job. While male can marry the same day he starts work. Women are barred from handling certain duties. Women themselves agreed that they are weaker sex and should be handle with care. They do not even accept hard work. For sustainable development, women should be made to be equal to men and not to be compared. In politics, economy, culture and even religious there should be no discrimination of anybody because of sex differentiation. All over the world, we have seen men and women who have succeeded the same in line of their duties.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to examine the influence of gender and social responsibility for sustainable development in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Specifically,

- (1) To determine whether gender has social responsibility for sustainable development..
- (2) To examine gender inequality for social responsibility and sustainable development.

Research Questions

The following research questions were postulated

- (1) What influence does gender have on social responsibility for sustainable development?
- (2) What does gender inequality have to do with social responsibility for sustainable development?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested

- (1) There is no significant influence of gender on social responsibility for sustainable development.
- (2) There is no significant influence of gender inequality on social responsibility for sustainable development.

Literature Review

Gender inequality and Social responsibility

Gender according to Macionis (2007), refers to the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female or male. He went on to state that gender operates as a dimension of social organization, sharing how we interact with others and how we think about ourselves. Inequality in the other hand refers to the state of being unfair to either a people or a group. The case of gender, it is the different and unfair treatment of either male or female, particularly, as a result of sex difference.

Anderson and Taylor (2004) put it, that sex refers to biological identity of male and female. But to the sociologist, he said the most significant concept of sex is gender. This refers to both male and female. Despite these differences, it is believed that for sustainable development to be a reality, both male and female must joint hands, together to develop the society. Erring (2012), highlighted the importance of women in the development process of the society. He said that women performs two thirds of the world's work. But only receive ten percent of the world income. This is to say that women are not treated the way she should be treated. Moses (1993), writes that prior to 1970, development was assumed to benefit women through a trickle-down process of the economic growth. He said due to the depression on the world economy, these affect women as most of them are still playing the second fiddle to men.

Gender differences triggered some feminist to rise up to the challenge. Some even think that females should not have anything to do with men. They even advocated for a new reproductive technology which will renders conventional heterosexual parenting unnecessary (Umoh, 2013). This was actually advocated by the radical feminism to bring to an end the male dominant. When the feminist philosophy finally became an organized movement in the nineteenth century, the notion of religion was central to its agenda. Solomon (2010) asserts that the reform consciousness grew greater and greater until it reached its peak. In John Stuart Mills's assertion, that the legal subordination of one sex to another was wrong and it was also the chief hindrances to human development (Somonon, 2010).

With many reforms, female or feminist fighters had hope that gender equality has come to stay. These reforms actually brought about sustainable development. In all the development in the societies women have been playing fatal role. At home, women are everything, they prepare children to schools and maintain the family. Now in many government offices, women take active part. In Nigeria for instance, during the government of Goodluck Jonathan, the wife of the

president, Mrs. Patience Jonathan fought and got 35% affirmative action for women. Women actually took active part in the running of government matters, without discrimination. This really brought peace in the country. Once there is peace in the society, every hand will be joined to bring about the sustainable development.

The formation of different feminist groups like the liberal, social and radical feminism, made united nation to meet and discuss and made declarations of 1975, 1980, 1985 and that of 1995 which looked into women problems and how to proffer solutions to the problems. Alexander Wright (1994), observes that the reform has brought positive progress to women and men who were also oppressed by those he called bourgeois. He said even in religion these groups of people are there. The reforms have actually brought hope for the women equality. When all hands are put together, the result is the sustainable development. Therefore gender equality is the pre-requisite for sustainable development.

These acknowledgements that men and women are not equal and that gender affect an individual's life experience. Szariton (2005), alleged that the differences arose from distinction in biology, psychology and cultural norms. She went on to state that the distinction are empirically grounded while others appears to be socially constructed. Studies shows the different lived experiences of gender across many domains including education, life expectancy personality, interest especially in politics, religion and cultural existence of the society. Others are family life, careers and political affiliations.

Gender inequality in relationship has been growing over time but majority of relationship and the power lies with the male (Simerly, 2005). He went on to say that even now men and women present themselves as if there is no division along gender lines. A study carried on by Sxymanowiez and Furnham, revealed that there are cultural stereotypes of intelligence among men and women. The study showed inequality in self-presentation. That is, females shows more self-preservation than males. That female like to reveal their secret to a very close friends only while male can reveals their secret to anybody at anytime, anywhere.

This kind of inequality are created by the females themselves. In the society, there are duties females themselves will reject and turned it out to males. In Nigeria for instance, you can hardly see females climbing palm fruit trees. Digging somebody's grave. Even when most of these preferred work are for males only few females will venture to try. In fact, this research fellow, sees inequality as self-creation and not gender matter. Most of the things females tries to do, does it, out of frustration. That is to say, females do not do some things willingly. My grandfather once told me that the reason we did not have big military officers in this part of the world before was that, people that were sent to join army was rejected individuals. That, they were sent to go and die but not to be killed by their people. Females were since then pampered as house wives so cannot go to war. War was meant for makes. Even in the religious circle, it was only males that could be killed during war. Females excluded from death. Hence, the inequality.

Females do certain things, not to compare themselves with males but does that because she has no other options. This could be the reason the fight for inequality of gender remain a utopia. An attempt in equalizing household work still also remain unachievable. Samaras (2007), says even in America, women still expected to put their educational and career goals on hold in order to raise children. Their husbands will work and probably continue their education. The reason is that the men supposed to bring money to feed the family and not the woman. The Bible

says, a man that cannot take care of his family is worse than infidel. This is to believe that any woman that takes care of her family is automatically the head of the family. The woman herself will think that the husband was doing her a service to allow her to stay at home and raise children and rest to enable her remain a babysitter at home. A study by Van Hooft showed that modern couples do not purposefully divide things like household chores along gender lines, but instead rationalize it less excuses. The study showed that one excuse made is that, women are more competent at household chores and have motivation to do them. Another excuse is that the demand for male jobs are higher.

For property inheritance study show that many countries in the world have laws that gives less inheritance of the ancestral property to women compared to men. In Akwa Ibom State, Ancestral properties are always tie to men who may not leave the family even when he marries.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was ex-post facto. The design, ex-post facto was suitable because inferences about the variables would be made without manipulation of the independent variables to produce an effect on the dependent variable. The researchers employed a simple random sampling technique. This was done through the process of balloting. The sample size for the study is 200 respondents. The instrument that was used is the questionnaire. Copies of the questionnaire were face validated by three research experts in University of Calabar. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using fifty (50) respondents’ who were not included in the real study. The data generated was analyzed to establish its internal consistency using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Method. The result showed that the reliability estimates of the sub-scales ranged from 0.71 to 0.88.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypothesis one

Gender does not significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development. Independent variable is gender, while the dependent variable is social responsibility for sustainable development. Independent t-test analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender on Social responsibility for sustainable development (N=200)

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
Male	110	18.81	1.98	9.98*
Female	90	15.94	2.06	

* Significant at .05 level, critical t=1.96, df = 198.

The result in Table 1 revealed that the calculated t-value of 9.98 is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 of degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that gender does not significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development was rejected. This implies that gender significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development.

Hypothesis two

Gender inequality does not significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development. Independent variable is gender inequality, while the dependent variable is social responsibility for sustainable development. Independent t-test analysis was adopted to test this hypothesis. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of gender inequality on Social responsibility for sustainable development (N=200)

Gender inequality	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value
High	100	18.58	2.18	6.72*
Low	100	16.46	2.28	

* Significant at .05 level, critical t=1.96, df = 198.

The result in Table 2 revealed that the calculated t-value of 6.72 is higher than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 of degrees of freedom. With this result the null hypothesis that Gender inequality does not significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development was rejected. This implies that Gender inequality significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development.

Discussion of Findings

This section is primary concerned with the discussion of findings that emerged from the results of the analysis. The discussion is presented according to the variables of the study.

The result of the first hypothesis revealed that gender significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development. The findings of this hypothesis is in line with the views of Macionis (2007) who sees gender as the personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female or male. He went on to state that gender operates as a dimension of social organization, sharing how we interact with others and how we think about ourselves. Inequality in the other hand refers to the state of being unfair to either a people or a group. The case of gender, it is the different and unfair treatment of either male or female, particularly, as a result of sex difference.

Anderson and Taylor (2004) also noted that sex refers to biological identity of male and female. But to the sociologist, he said the most significant concept of sex is gender. This refers to both male and female. Despite these differences, it is believed that for sustainable development to be a reality, both male and female must joint hands, together to develop the society.

The result of this hypothesis revealed that gender inequality significantly influence Social responsibility for sustainable development. The findings of this hypothesis is in line with the views of Solomon (2010) who asserted that the reform consciousness grew greater and greater until it reached its peak. And that the legal subordination of one sex to another was wrong and it was also the chief hindrances to human development.

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Conclusion

Based on findings of the study it was concluded that gender and social responsibility significantly influenced sustainable development in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

1. Women should be treated the way she should be treated.
2. Women should be educated in order to be able to be counted worthy of any job or position she is given to ensure that they are not looked-down upon.
3. Male should stop to engage females in early marriage and rape.

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