

PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP ON SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN OBIO/AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA IN RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined perceived influence of women leadership on sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, Nigeria. Three research questions and three corresponding hypotheses guided the work. The study adopted descriptive research design. 235,835 women in the Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, constituted the population of the study. A sample size of 400 participants took part in the study. This sample was randomly selected from the population. The rationale for the use of the sample was justified by applying the Taro Yamane's formula to the population to obtain a minimum sample size. The research instrument used for the study is a questionnaire titled: "Influence of Women Leadership on Sustainable Community Development Questionnaire (IWLSCDQ). The 4- point Likert method of summated ratings were used in drafting the questionnaire for the study. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation department in Rivers State University. The test-retest method was applied to ensure that the instrument is reliable. The instruments were administered to women respondents in Abia State, who were not part of the study area. The results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to ascertain the co-efficient at 0.81. The research questions were answered using the mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses were tested using the z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that women ability to inspire and motivate, display accountability and decisiveness and ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Rivers State, Nigeria. The paper recommends that for there to be greater participation of women in all spheres of Nigerian communities, government and other stakeholders should engage in programmes and policies that would empower women politically, socially and economically for sustainable community development.

Keywords: *Community Development. Influence, leadership, governance, marginalization, Nigeria, politics, Sustainable Women*

Introduction

Throughout the ages and in all countries, specifically Nigeria, women in leadership

positions have impacted positively on the society and various communities at large. The history of mankind is replete with such

women. The last century saw the emergence of great women leaders in various spheres of human endeavours, notably were achievers in leadership roles in Nigeria. Suffice it to say that the present Nigerian government has given more women opportunities to serve as leaders in various capacities than any other previous administration. There are women who blazed the trail in their various professions and continue to excel in their endeavours in areas such as medicine, pharmacy, public administration and other professions. The emergence of democracy in Nigeria is a positive step, not just for Nigeria and Africa, but also for the world as a whole. With an estimated population of 178 million (CIA World Factbook, 2013), Nigeria is the most populous black nation in the world and has, from historical times, produced women leaders and achievers.

Globalization has led to discourses on development having different perspectives. One of the major recent development discourses puts gender and governance on the fore front of these (Shamim and Kumari, 2012). In this context, the existence of leadership as a universal phenomenon with its uniqueness connected with either the persons involved or the circumstances of their interaction. This arises from the fact that leadership, as defined by leading scholars in the social sciences, is a process (Nduka, 2011). Burns (2010), for instance puts it thus: "Leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilising by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources...in order to realise goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers". Further analysis of the concept will involve the unravelling of such factors as the connection between leadership and power, personality traits or qualities of

individual leaders, leadership roles, styles, and types of leaderships (Nduka, 2011). The factors identified above are found within the conditions/grounds of the two basic types of leadership: the transactional and the reforming (Burns, 2010). It is within this backdrop that we shall endeavour to situate women's participation in leadership in Nigeria. Women are a major stakeholder in the development project of any society.

Aina (2012) avers that there are sufficient evidences to prove that women are veritable assets in public offices (Aina and Olayode, 2010). 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 paralleled 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 (Palmer, 1908). 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 Kuti 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 Akunyili (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; McGroarty, 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, Fagbemi and Hassan, 2011). The foregoing are appropriate clarion calls for action, the rationale of which is the development of leadership and leadership culture in Nigeria. Development and its related terms remain fundamental to contemporary thinking. There is no agreement among developmental

thinkers regarding a common concept of development. Some said it is a process of growth in the direction of nation building and socio-economic progress (Weidner, 1970) while others lay emphasis on the quality of life (Bernstein 1973; Belshaw, 1977) and provision of basic needs happiness, and wellbeing (ILO, 1976). But the concept of development has been implemented by different countries in different ways.

Literature Review

Concept of Sustainable Community Development

Community development has been defined as a social action process in which people of the community organise themselves for planning and action. They identify their common and individual needs and problems, make group and individual plan to meet these needs, execute these plans with a maximum reliance upon community resources. Many researchers and authorities (Olarinde and Ayanwuyi, (2007) have defined community development in various ways. Ekong defines community development as a process by which efforts of the people themselves are united with those of the governmental authorities to improve economic, social and cultural conditions of the communities, to integrate those communities into the life of the nation and to enable them contribute fully to national progress.

Sustainable Community Development from this definition combines the idea of community with development. A simple definition of community refers to it as a group of people living in a geographic location having common origin and customs and is considered as a whole. Researchers Marcia, (1974), Flora and Flora, (1993), Christen and Robinson (1989) and others

had given various conceptual explanations of a community. Marcia (1974), for example, looked at it as a solidarity institution, primary interaction and as institutionally distinct groups. As solidarity institution, community defined those spheres or institutions of the society whose functions are to produce solidarity. Such institutions could include the family, ethnic groupings, voluntary organisations and residential groups. Community may always refer to interpersonal interaction characterised by informal relationship. Thus, the most basic criteria or element that defines a community are common ties and solidarity and these elements exist in both the rural and urban areas.

However, communities in rural areas are simple and face to face contacts are possible while in the urban areas they are multi-dimensional. Development on the other hand involves change, improvement and vitality which call for a directed attempt to improve participation, flexibility, equity, attitudes and quality of life. Development as noted by Shaffer (1989) is the creation of wealth, which means adding value to people's lives, not just money. Therefore, the basic elements of community include common ties and solidarity. These elements encourage communal or citizen participation in all facets of sustainable community development project. Normally, Sustainable Community Development activities and actions are aimed at promoting, sustaining, supporting and maintaining community action. Such activities and actions involve a broad range of issues such as housing, information acquisition and dissemination, provision of social services (like roads, water, etc), establishment and sustaining financial institution and so on (Agbola, 1997). As always the case, the project

embarked upon by any community is a function of many variables most especially the severity of the absence and deprivation of that service to the community at that time. Not only are women majority in rural communities, they are responsible for well over 50% of all productive activities, (80% of food production – Africa and 60% of food production in Latin America) yet they received only one-tenth of the world's total income (Annabel, 1994, Anikpo, 2000). For any meaningful development in the rural communities, rural women would have to be highly motivated and encouraged to become actively involved. Since women form the bulk of the rural populace (49.6%) in most cases and since they are the most intimate with the home (Anikpo, 2000) and the entire environment (Annabel, 1994), they are in a better position to articulate the most pressing needs of the community. Most often, women's views have been trampled upon with severe consequences for the welfare of the womenfolk. Women, therefore, formed themselves into groups thus for the sole goal of initiating and executing their own development projects without the necessary domineering intervention of the men – women form groups and cooperatives.

Women's Participation in Leadership

In the pre-colonial and colonial, Nigeria women never enjoyed parity with men in issues of governance; the same is witnessed in the post-colonial era. The history of political transformation in Nigeria is replete with issues of male domination, and women tokenism in participation in public affairs (Aina and Ukeje, 1998; Aina and Olayode, 2012b). The political system in Nigeria remains male-centric as witnessed under military dictatorship and in the emerging democratic civilian governance structures and practices. The military era provided

women with the least opportunity to challenge the structure of gender inequalities, as military promoted female subordinate position in the society through the 'First Lady' syndrome (a process which hindered the 'woman's question' from being addressed within the mainstream development praxis) (Aina, 2012). Under such arrangements, the 'women's question' was treated within the private interests of wives of political leaders (a mentality which is almost difficult to erase even within the party politics and democratic governance).

Shamim and Kumari (2002), one of the significant goals set out by the Fourth World Conference on Women, 1995, in Beijing was adequate representation of women in all decision-making bodies (Beijing Platform for Action 1996). It was suggested that in any representative body, there should be a 'logical balance' of men and women to voice the concerns of the society en masse. Good leadership and governance connote being participatory, accountable, predictable, and transparent, which reasonably call for a gender balance in political decision-making. It is accepted that women's insights and values of governance can enhance and enrich the overall decision-making process. It is also typically observed that women at the local level are more sensitive to community issues (Shamim and Kumari, 2002).

The country is yet to implement its commitment to women's political participation through the 30% affirmative action mandate provided for in the National Women Policy (2000); and which was later increased to 35% in the National Gender Policy (2006). Women's political participation continues to be inhibited by socio-cultural factors that relegate women to the background in leadership discourse and decision-making processes.

Thus, the wide gender gaps in governance and politics have been blamed for the gross discrimination faced by the Nigerian women irrespective of regional/urban-rural location, ethnic origin, and religion (Aina, 2012). Before now, women did take part in the political process at the national, regional, and local levels, and their presence was significant. However, in the 1960s, the glaring lack of representation of women's participation started emerging and can be attributed as a factor of the larger socio-cultural and politico-religious dimensions of the Nigerian structural reality. This then meant that in a democratic set-up where numbers were crucial, women and their issues were always marginalized. The emerging trend of women's poor participation in leadership is a result of the young women being forced out of school to get married early (such cases are found in the Northern Nigeria) and are mostly subsistent farmers or traders by occupation.

Also, the discourse on women's participation in leadership roles must be situated in a global milieu. Women are considered inferior and their participation at all levels of government, discouraged. In fact, some communities consider it a taboo for women to take active roles in governance. Many qualified women are forced to play minor roles in the margins or are frustrated out of governance. This is in spite of several institutional conventions and treaties that encourage woman participation in economics, politics and governance (Ekpe, Aloba and Egbe, 2014). Notably, corruption drains public resources and takes the much-needed funds away from national economic and community development or social services, while it disproportionately affects women and the poor who are mostly dependent on these structures. Women may

also be in less powerful positions to challenge corruption when it occurs. They may also face gendered forms of corruptions such as the demand for sex in return for particular services or resources (Aina, 2012). A relationship is gradually being established between gender responsive governance and anti-corruption practices in public office (World Bank Development Research Group, 1999).

There is the argument that women may be more relationship-oriented, have higher standard of ethical behaviour and may be more concerned with the common good than men. Gender differences are attributed to socialization, or to differences in access to networks of corruption, or knowledge of how to engage in corrupt practices, among others (Aina, 2012). However, some authors have criticized the gender-responsive argument as antidote for corruption. One of such is Anne Marie Goetz (2003), who questions the notion that women in governance will result in lower levels of corruption.

To Goetz (2003), these studies failed to acknowledge the extent to which gender relationship may limit the opportunities for corruption, particularly when corruption functions through all-male networks and in forums from which women are socially excluded. Goetz believes that as the workplace becomes more feminized and women take the top leadership jobs, it cannot be assumed that women will choose less corrupt behaviour. Evidences from Nigeria also present a paradox of gender and corrupt practices in public office (Aina, 2012).

In Nigeria, there are notable women who have transformed their roles as leaders. Yet, other women have been found to be guilty of corrupt practices like their male counterparts. Examples are found in the

scenarios that took the first Nigerian Female Speaker of the House of Representative (Mrs. Patricia Etteh) out of office; and Adenike Grange, the first female Nigerian Minister of Health in 2007 (Aina, 2012). These two cases do not merely point to women's culpability for corrupt practices, but also that they are viewed as the by-product of the system which brought such women to power. It is, therefore, argued that the few token women who have served in political offices are often reflection of the male oligarchy that brought them to power (Aina and Olayode, 2010). 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).

Statement of the Problems

The factors and issues of women marginalisation and low participation in political leadership and decision making have been attracting a lot of attention from scholars. In emerging democracies, there are several factors, which are problems that prevent women from participating fully in leadership and governance in all forms of government and political positions/offices. Some of the factors include but are not limited to the following: (i) Obnoxious socio-cultural practices- such as widowhood practices, female genital mutilation (FGM),

and restrictive religious practices. 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. (ii) 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). Other factors include exclusion of girls from obtaining their share of family inheritance, 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), poor access to education and scholarship facilities in various professions.

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, non-extension of equal rights to all citizens, especially women, because they are seen as second-hand citizens in some parts of the country, Rivers State in particular. 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, is the reason this study is being carried out to ascertain, to the extent to which women leadership influence sustainable community development in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of the study is to examine the perceived influence of women leadership on sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Determine the extent women's ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.
2. Examine the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.
3. Ascertain the extent women's ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. To what extent does women's ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent does women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?

3. To what extent does women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

- H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of Urban and Rural women on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of Urban and Rural women on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.
- H₀₃: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of Urban and Rural women on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive research design. 235,835 women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, constituted the population of the study. A sample size of 400 participants, which consisted of 220 Urban and 180 Rural women in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State took part in the study. This sample was randomly selected from the population. The rationale for the use of the sample was justified by applying the Taro Yamane’s formula to the population to obtain a minimum sample size. The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire titled: “Influence of Women Leadership on Sustainable Community Development Questionnaire (IWLSCDQ). The 4- point Likert method of summated ratings were used in drafting the questionnaire for the study. The instrument was validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation Department in Rivers State University. The test-retest method was applied to ensure that the instrument is reliable. The instruments were administered to women respondents in Abia State, who were not part of the study area. The results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to ascertain the coefficient at 0.81. The research questions were answered, using the mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses were tested using the z-test statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

Result Presentation

RQ. 1: To what extent does women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent women’s ability to inspire and

motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/ N	Questionnaire Items	Women (Urban) N= 220		Women (Rural) N=180		Average mean	Std	RMK
		\bar{X}_1	Std 1	\bar{X}_2	Std 2			
1.	It will change the negative behaviour in attitude of women and encourage them into sustainable community development.	4.03	0.56	4.11	0.64	4.07	0.60	VHE
2.	It will develop in women competencies to participate fully in sustainable community development projects.	4.05	0.92	3.96	0.96	4.01	0.94	VHE
3.	It will bring out the creativity in the women and allow them set their goals which will lead to sustainable community development.	4.32	1.22	4.35	1.17	4.34	1.19	VHE
4.	It will enable women to grow interest in community activities and make plans on sustainable developments that can better their community in general.	3.14	0.73	3.17	0.72	3.16	0.72	HE
5.	It will develop women talents in various services and boost their engagements and participation in sustainable community development activities, capable of singling them out as good leaders.	4.50	1.02	4.55	0.97	4.53	1.00	VHE
Aggregate Mean/SD for Urban and Rural women		4.01	0.89	4.03	0.89	4.02	0.89	VHE

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 1, in response to research question 1 which states to what extent does women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria, had the following opinion scores for both urban and rural women. Mean scores of the urban women to questionnaire items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were

4.03, 4.05, 4.32, 3.14 and 4.50 with standard deviations of 0.56, 0.92, 1.22, 0.73 and 1.02 while the mean scores of the rural women were 4.11, 3.96, 4.35, 3.17 and 4.55 with standard deviations of 0.64, 0.96, 1.17, 0.72 and 0.97. Furthermore, the mean set representing the average mean scores for both urban and rural women were 4.07, 4.01, 4.34, 3.16 and 4.53; with standard deviation

of 0.60, 0.94, 1.19, 0.72 and 1.00 respectively. The readings which were higher than the criterion mean of 3.00 indicated that women ability to inspire and

motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

RQ. 2: To what extent does women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/N	Questionnaire Items	Women (Urban) N= 220		Women (Rural) N=18		Aver age mean	Std	RM K
		\bar{X}_1	Std ₁	\bar{X}_2	Std ₂			
6.	It will encourage women to be responsible and improve their performances in their various engagements in the community, which will lead to sustainable community development.	3.70	0.88	3.75	0.84	3.73	0.86	HE
7.	It will lessen the conflicts among women and promote unity which will lead to sustainable community development.	4.35	1.16	4.41	1.11	4.38	1.14	VHE
8.	Women display of accountability and decisiveness will build Trust on the efficiency and integrity of women as leaders which can encourage sustainable community development.	3.68	1.61	3.74	1.48	3.71	1.54	HE
9.	It will inspire confidence in women and help measure the progress of women as leaders which can encourage sustainable community development.	3.57	0.93	3.63	0.90	3.60	0.92	HE
10	Women display of accountability and decisiveness will help the	3.72	0.85	3.77	0.82	3.75	0.83	HE

women to validate their thoughts and ideas as leaders, which can encourage sustainable community development.

Aggregate Mean/SD for Urban and Rural women	3.80	1.17	3.80	1.30	4.56	1.06	VH E
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Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 2, in response to research question 2 which states to what extent does women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area Rivers State, Nigeria, had the following opinion scores for both urban and rural women. Mean scores of the urban women to questionnaire items 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were 3.70, 4.35, 3.68, 3.57 and 3.72 with standard deviations of 0.88, 1.16, 1.61, 0.93 and 0.85 while the mean scores of the rural women were 3.75, 4.41, 3.74, 3.63 and 3.77 with standard deviation of 0.84, 1.11, 1.48,

0.90 and 0.82. Furthermore, the mean set representing the average mean scores for both urban and rural women were 3.73, 4.38, 3.71, 3.60 and 3.75; with standard deviation of 0.86, 1.14, 1.54, 0.92 and 0.83 respectively. The readings which were higher than the criterion mean of 3.00 indicated that women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

RQ3: To what extent does women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria?

Table 3: Mean ratings of respondents on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

S/ N	Questionnaire Items	Women (Urban) N= 220		Women (Rural) N=180		Aver age mean	Std	RM K
		\bar{X}_1	Std ₁	\bar{X}_2	Std ₂			
11	It will reduce extreme poverty and improve the economic empowerment of women which can encourage community development.	3.65	0.89	3.69	0.87	3.67	0.88	HE

12	It will aid the empowerment of women in politics, which will encourage sustainable community development.	4.19	1.33	4.20	1.29	4.19	1.31	HE
13	It will aid Constitutional Provisions: by ensuring that women and men have equal legal and human rights by eliminating all gender discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations.	3.00	0.68	3.02	0.67	3.01	0.68	HE
14	It will help in greater enrolment of girls into educational institutions which will help in sustainable community development.	3.07	0.78	3.09	0.78	3.08	0.79	HE
15	Women ability to delegate as leaders will be an inspiration for women who occupied and are occupying positions of authority to assist in sustainable community development.	3.00	0.75	3.03	0.74	3.02	0.75	HE
Aggregate Mean/SD for Urban and Rural women		3.38	0.89	3.41	0.87	3.39	0.88	HE

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 3, in response to research question 3 which states to what extent does women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria had the following opinion scores for both urban and rural women. Mean scores of the urban women respondents to questionnaire items 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 were 3.65, 4.19, 3.00, 3.07 and 3.00 with standard deviations of 0.89, 1.33, 0.68, 0.78 and 0.75 while the mean scores of the rural women were 3.69, 4.20, 3.02, 3.09

and 3.03 with standard deviation of 0.87, 1.29, 0.67, 0.78 and 0.74. Furthermore, the mean set representing the average mean scores for urban and rural women were 3.67, 4.19, 3.01, 3.08 and 3.02; with standard deviation of 0.88, 1.31, 0.68, 0.79 and 0.75 respectively. The readings which were higher than the criterion mean of 3.00 indicated that women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Hypotheses Testing

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of Urban and Rural women on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 4: Z-test Analysis on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence

sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	Std	DF	z-cal	z-crit	LS	Decision
Urban Women	220	4.01	0.89					Failed to reject
Rural Women	180	4.03	0.89	398	0.99	±1.96	0.05	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 4, above shows z-test Analysis on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table showed that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table further showed a z-

calculated value of 0.99 which was less than the z-critical value of ±1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and with a degree of freedom of 398, since the z-calculated (0.99) was less than the z-tabulated (±1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women’s ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 5: Z-test Analysis on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	Std	DF	z-cal	z-crit	LS	Decision
Urban Women	220	3.80	1.17					Failed to reject
Rural Women	180	3.86	1.03	398	0.36	±1.96	0.05	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

Table 5, above shows Z-test Analysis on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor

Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table showed that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table further showed a z-calculated value of 0.36 which was less than the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and with a

degree of freedom of 398, since the z-calculated (0.36) was less than the z-tabulated (± 1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of Urban and Rural women on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State.

Ho₃: There is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Table 6: Z-test Analysis on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

Respondents	N	\bar{x}	Std	DF	z-cal	z-crit	LS	Decision
Urban Women	220	3.38	0.89					Failed to reject
Rural Women	180	3.41	0.87	398	0.73	± 1.96	0.05	

Source: Field Survey, 2023.

The result on Table 6 shows z-test Analysis on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table showed that there is no significant difference between the mean

opinion responses of urban and rural women on the extent women’s ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result on the table further showed a z-calculated value of 0.73 which was less than

the z-critical value of ± 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and with a degree of freedom of 398, since the z-calculated (0.73) was less than the z-tabulated (± 1.96), the null hypothesis was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the

mean opinion responses of urban and rural women on the extent women's ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

Influence of Women's Ability to Inspire and Motivate on Sustainable Community Development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

The discussion in this study was done according to the findings of this study. The null hypothesis in table 4, was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women's ability to inspire and motivate influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result in Table 1, indicated that women ability to inspire and motivate will change the negative behaviour in attitude of women and encourage them into sustainable community development. It will develop in women competencies to participate fully in sustainable community development projects. It will bring out the creativity in the women and allow them set their goals which will lead to sustainable community development. It will enable women to grow interest in community activities and make plans on sustainable developments that can better their community in general. It will develop women talents in various services and boost their engagements and participation in sustainable community development activities, capable of singling them out as good leaders. The findings also supported the view of Kasomo (2012), in

Nigeria, the low participation of women in leadership positions affects their progress in improving the legal and regulatory framework for promoting gender equality since very few women are influencing the legislative process. The rationale for promoting women's participation in leadership position is based on equity, quality and community development.

Influence of Women Display of Accountability and Decisiveness on Sustainable Community Development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria

The null hypothesis in table 5, was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores of urban and rural women on the extent women display of accountability and decisiveness influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result in Table 2, indicated that women display of accountability and decisiveness will encourage women to be responsible and improve their performances in their various engagements in the community, which will lead to sustainable

community development. It will lessen the conflicts among women and promote unity which will lead to sustainable community development. It will build trust on the efficiency and integrity of women as leaders which can encourage sustainable community development. It will inspire confidence in women and help measure the progress of women as leaders which can encourage sustainable community development. It will help the women to validate their thoughts and ideas as leaders, which can encourage sustainable community development. The findings also supported the view of Asaju & Adagba (2013), the role of these women in display of accountability and decisiveness has no doubt lifted the pedigree and profile of Nigerian women as hardworking, dedicated, disciplined, thorough, creative, and entrepreneurial. The enormous contribution of these women to National and International development is gradually redefining their role and capabilities in a positive light. However, despite the above achievement, it is still conclusive that women's participation in leadership and decision making is still very low and inadequate. Women have the potential and ability to lead but they often lack opportunities, resources and finance to support and realize their potentials as this is applicable to both the public and private sectors. Given this context, women should be given the opportunity to advance in their chosen areas of endeavours as they have proven to be better leaders (Asaju & Adagba, 2013).

Influence of Women's Ability to Delegate as Leaders on Sustainable Community Development in Rivers State, Nigeria

The null hypothesis in Table 6 was accepted which states that there is no significant difference between the mean opinion scores

of urban and rural women on the extent women's ability to delegate as leaders influence sustainable community development in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The result in Table 3, indicated that women's ability to delegate as leaders will reduce extreme poverty and improve the economic empowerment of women which can encourage community development. It will aid the empowerment of women in politics, which will encourage sustainable community development. It will aid Constitutional Provisions: by ensuring that women and men have equal legal and human rights by eliminating all gender discriminatory clauses in existing laws and legislations. It will help in greater enrolment of girls into educational institutions which will help in sustainable community development. It will be an inspiration for women who occupied and are occupying positions of authority to assist in sustainable community development. The findings also supported the view of Olojede (2010), Nigeria's development record and its demographic composition suggest a need for active involvement of women in key decision-making bodies. There is a clear indication that even though women form the majority votes in Nigeria's last general elections, they are still under-represented in leadership positions. There is need for women to delegate as leaders for sustainable community development.

Conclusion

There is no question that women actually remain exceptionally underestimated in all circles of Nigeria's life. This becomes particularly evident when comparing the ratio of men to women in politics and influential roles. Several factors, such as

socio-cultural norms, limited financial resources and women's empowerment, religious segregation, insufficient political funding, lack of education and awareness, marginalization within political parties, patriarchal societal norms, "early marriages, and stereotypical constraints, among other factors, have been identified" as barriers contributing to women's limited involvement in leadership for supportable local area improvement.

Recommendations

In view of the discoveries of the review, the accompanying proposals are made:

1. That exertion ought to be made to eliminate unjustifiable socio-cultural generalizations and predisposition on women pioneers which include a change in representatives' outlooks as well as the executives' practices, processes and hierarchical culture.
2. There is need for women pioneers to stay away from dread of disappointment, particularly the people who are beginning their administration direction ways. There is need to beat self-uncertainty down by complimenting them to disregard that internal voice that might deter them from taking difficult choices, making some noise and escaping their usual range of familiarity.
3. Existing women strengthening strategy ought to be explored to mirror what is happening. Lastly, government ought to make a women's initiative plat structure network to allow women to share triumphs and difficulties they face in their authority practice.

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