

**ASSESSMENT OF FEMALE EMPLOYMENT INTO IMO STATE
POLYTECHNIC: IMPLICATION FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION
ADVANCEMENT IN THE STATE**

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Abstract

This paper assessed the trend and pattern of female employment as staff of a polytechnic from 1991-2019. It analyzed the disparity in the employment of both non-teaching and teaching female staff of Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. Three research questions were answered. Secondary data covering the 21 years was collected. This is a descriptive study utilizing the archival method of data collection, descriptive statistics and graphs were used for data analysis via SPSS vs 21. The result of the study showed a high percentage difference (114%) between teaching and non-teaching female staff employment; with more females employed as non-teaching (administrative) staff. The findings also showed that for the period covered, an average of 26.63% teaching and 62.75% non-teaching staff were employed across the years. This study recommends increasing the employment of female teaching staff in the Polytechnic, so as to meet the recommended 30% quota for enforcing gender equality in Nigerian government institutions.

Keywords: Female, Employment, Technical education, Educational advancement, Polytechnic, Imo State

Background

In spite of the beneficial developments following the 1995 Beijing declaration and the provision of the Convention on Elimination of Discriminatory Practices against Women (CEDAW), that a 30% allotment of all work positions in government to women, gender inequality still persists in Nigeria (Ogbogu, 2012). Female employment is any work for pay or profit in which women are engaged (Gemelli, 2014). Globally, over 2.7 billion women are legally restricted from having the same choice of jobs as men, of 189 economies assessed in 2018, 104 economies still have laws preventing women from working in specific jobs (United Nations Women, 2018). Even when they work, most times, women do informal and less paid jobs. The 2017 global unemployment rates for men and women stood at 5.5% and 6.2% respectively, in informal and vulnerable employment in developing countries (International Labor Organization, 2018).

In Nigeria female labour force participation from 2016, 2017, 2018 to 2019 is 48.11, 48.14, 48.18 and 47.87 respectively (The Global Economy, 2020), showing a significant decrease in 2019. According to the 2016 edition of the Statistical Report on Women and Men in Nigeria, the percentage of men employed in the state civil service for 2010 – 2015 was higher than that of women for both senior and junior positions, men were 68.84% while women were 38.16%; and at the federal MDAs men also dominated the civil service, as women at all levels were below 42% between 2014 – 2016. Another data revealed that female teachers in both Polytechnics and colleges were only between 20.6% to 27.88% for 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 sessions (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). In order to achieve the global vision of Millennium Development Goal number 3 which promote gender equality and women empowerment and in view of the fifth and tenth sustainable development goal “gender equality and reducing inequalities”, there is need for adequate female participation in the world of work especially within the education sector. This study aims to ascertain the trend of female employment into Imo State polytechnic, so as to provide guide towards technical education advancement in the state.

A study conducted in the United Kingdom in 2016/2017 revealed that out of a total of 206,870 academic staff 94,475 were females while 112,395 were males; while, out of a total of 212,835 non-academic staff in the institutions studied 133,195 were females while 79,640 were males (Higher Education Statistics Agency, 2018). This report shows that more females were employed as non-academic staff than as academic staff.

Meanwhile, Obiangwu and Unachukwu (2008) study on gender equity in employment in polytechnics in south-east geopolitical zone in Nigeria: implication for affirmative action on both federal and state-owned polytechnics among both academic and non-academic staff of the institutions. Descriptive method was used, and result showed that among the federal polytechnics, there were 32.36% female academic staff and 53.10% were female non-academic staff. Also, in the state-owned polytechnics there were 43.63% female academic staff and 52.63% female non-academic staff. This report also shows that greater number of women were employed as non-academic staff than academic staff in South-East Nigeria. Again, Muoghalu & Ebioyehi (2018) while assessing the implementation of the gender equality policy at Obafemi Awolowo University, found slight increase in female academic staff employment from 23.5% in 2009 to 25.8% in 2017. This finding shows that female academic employment is below the stipulated 30% for female employment.

However, the authors did not discuss employment rate for academic and non-academic female staff.

The above empirical studies reviewed revealed that in employment, non-teaching staff outnumbered women in teaching positions both in federal and state polytechnics in Nigeria. The only study on South East Nigeria polytechnics was not specific, the names and number of the polytechnics studied were not indicated, none was conducted in Imo State and none considered polytechnics situated across the State. Based on these obvious gaps, the present study is therefore considered very necessary in the history of polytechnic education in Imo State as it aims to reveal the state of female employment in this institution. This will help to generate most needed information relating to the development of the state and help to address necessary policies regarding technical education advancement in the state.

Objective of the Study

This study is carried out to achieve the following objectives

1. To determine the percentage of female employment in administrative positions in Imo State polytechnic.
2. To determine the percentage of female employment in academic or teaching position in Imo State polytechnics.
3. To compare the percentage of female employment in academic and administrative position in Imo State polytechnics.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions.

1. What is the percentage of female employment in administrative positions in Imo State polytechnic?
2. What is the percentage of female employment in academic position in Imo State polytechnic?
3. What is the difference in percentage of female employment between academic and administrative position in Imo State polytechnics?

Methodology

Scope of study: The study was conducted using data drawn from Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. The Institution is located at Umuagwo, Owerri West Local Government Area, Imo State with a population of about 30,000 students and 10,880 staff.

Subjects/Participants: Participants were female employees of Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. Data were collected as institution-based records of staff employment spanning from 1991 – 1995, 1998, 2001, 2004, 2007-2019 which were available and accessible at the time of the study. It involved details such as gender, year of employment and class of employment (academic or non-academic) for a period of 21 years.

Sample/Sampling technique: The sample for this study was drawn from the staff of the polytechnic whose data are available and accessible during the time of this research. Purposive sampling method was used to gather data. Only records of employment within the stated years were considered for analysis. As such, incomplete or distorted data were not included during data organization and analysis.

Instruments for data collection: Employment records of the institution dating from 1991 – 2019 was requested for and collected from relevant offices (record units) in the personnel department of the institution.

Procedure for data collection: Approval for this research was gotten from the Research and Development Unit of Federal Polytechnic Nekede, Owerri. A letter of introduction and authorization from Research and Development Unit was presented to the institution selected for this study, for permission to use pre-existing employment data in this study. To carry out the study four research assistants were recruited and trained. Also, a computer assistant, data analyst and two editors were consulted at different points in the course of this study. Once permission was granted, the researchers and research assistants went to the respective record offices/units where staff information for the period under study was collected with the assistance of the record officers of the respective offices/units. The process of Data collection from the institutions lasted for 30 days. All information on data collected were kept confidential. Data collected were organized and presented for analysis.

Design/Statistics: This is a descriptive study (archival method) and descriptive statistics (percentage, frequency, and bar-charts) were used for data analysis.

RESULT

1. *Research Question one:* What is the percentage of female employment as administrative staff in Polytechnics in Imo State?

Table I: Descriptive Statistics showing Percentage of Female Employment as Administrative staff

YEAR	FEMALE	MALE	TOTAL	%Female
1991	50	31	81	61.73
1992	52	30	82	63.41
1993	59	42	101	58.42
1994	59	43	102	57.84
1995	68	34	102	66.67
1998	81	40	121	66.94
2001	89	44	133	66.92
2004	97	49	146	66.44
2007	113	57	170	66.47
2008	114	57	171	66.67
2009	168	84	252	66.67
2010	180	90	270	66.67
2011	165	83	248	66.53
2012	188	94	282	66.67
2013	195	98	293	66.55
2014	237	168	405	58.52
2015	235	181	416	56.49

2016	342	286	528	64.77
2017	375	305	680	55.15
2018	440	350	790	55.70
2019	442	398	840	52.62

The result in Table 1 above and Fig. 1 below show the percentage of females employed as administrative staff. The Table shows that on the average 62.75% of administrative staff employment were females. This finding implies that across the years more female than male administrative staff were employed (see Fig.1).

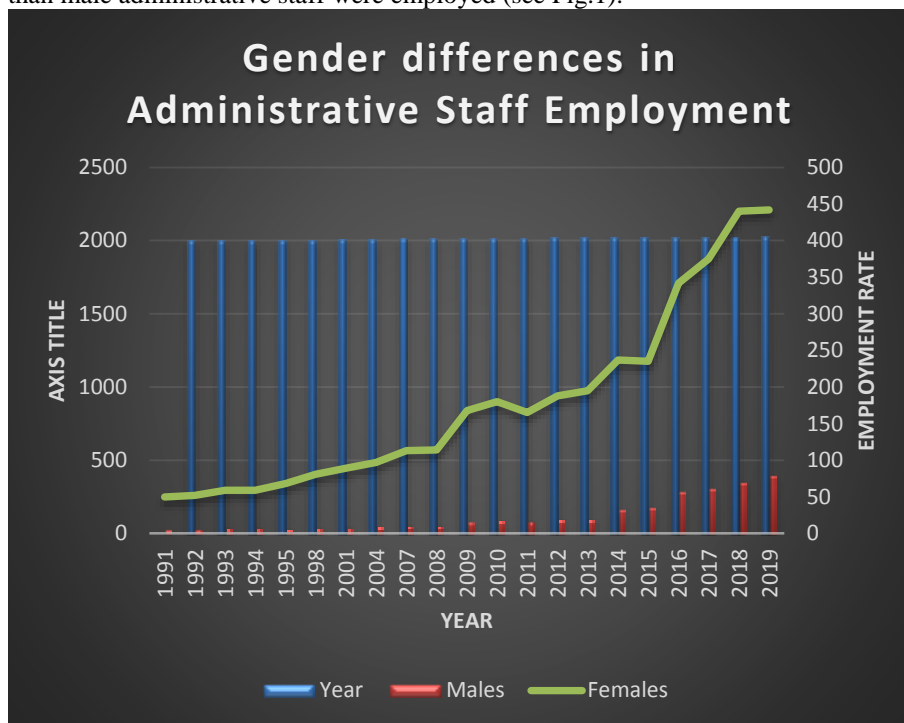


Figure 1: Showing of female employment in administrative positions across the years (1991-1995; 1998; 2001; 2004; 2007-2019)

2. *Research Question Two:* What is the percentage of female employment in academic positions in Polytechnics in Imo State?

Table 2: Showing the Percentage of Female Employment in Academic Positions

YEAR	Female	Male	Total	%Female
1991	3	18	21	14.29
1992	3	20	23	13.04
1993	5	22	27	18.52
1994	5	25	30	16.67
1995	28	56	84	33.33
1998	30	59	89	33.71
2001	34	68	102	33.33
2004	38	76	114	33.33
2007	40	80	120	33.33
2008	43	86	129	33.33
2009	50	100	150	33.33
2010	60	120	180	33.33
2011	69	139	208	33.17
2012	77	153	230	33.48
2013	79	158	237	33.33
2014	82	218	300	27.33
2015	97	412	509	19.06
2016	99	415	514	19.26
2017	102	418	520	19.62
2018	119	418	537	22.16
2019	121	422	543	22.28

The result in Table 2 above and Fig. 2 below show the percentage of females employed in academic positions. On the average, only 26.63% of the academic staff employments conducted in the last 21 years were females. Also, the greatest percentage (a little above 33%) of female employment occurred from 1995 to 2013 but has remained below that since 2014 and the least percentage (13.04%) of female employment occurred in 1992. This finding implies that though academic staff employment increased steadily over the years, fewer females than males were employed (see Fig.2).

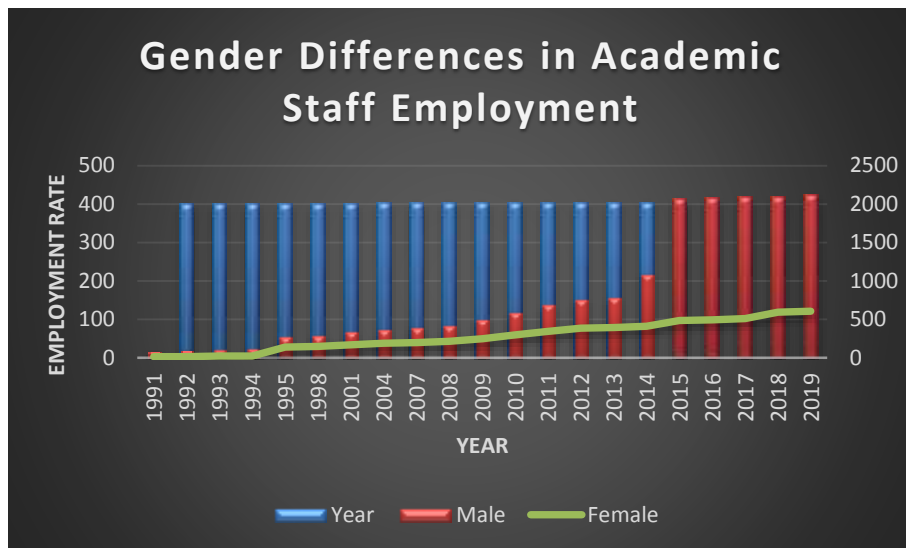


Figure 2: Showing the rate of female employment in academic positions across the years (1991-1995; 1998; 2001; 2004; 2007-2019)

3. Research Question Three: What is the difference in percentage of female employment between academic and administrative positions in Polytechnics in Imo State?

Table III: Descriptive Statistics for the Percentage Differences of Academic to Administrative Female Employment in Imo Polytechnic

YE AR	Academic	Administrative	Total female Staff	%Academics	% Administrative	Percentage Difference
1991	3	50	53	5.66	94.34	177.36
1992	3	52	55	5.45	94.55	178.18
1993	5	59	64	7.81	92.19	168.75
1994	5	59	64	7.81	92.19	168.75
1995	28	68	96	29.17	70.83	83.33
1998	30	81	111	27.03	72.97	91.89
2001	34	89	123	27.64	72.36	89.43
2004	38	97	135	28.15	71.85	87.41
2007	40	113	153	26.14	73.86	95.42

2008	43	114	157	27.39	72.61	90.45
2009	50	168	218	22.94	77.06	108.26
2010	60	180	240	25.00	75.00	100.00
2011	69	165	234	29.49	70.51	82.05
2012	77	188	265	29.06	70.94	83.77
2013	79	195	274	28.83	71.17	84.67
2014	82	237	319	25.71	74.29	97.18
2015	97	235	332	29.22	70.78	83.13
2016	99	342	441	22.45	77.55	110.20
2017	102	375	477	21.38	78.62	114.47
2018	119	440	559	21.29	78.71	114.85
2019	121	442	563	21.49	78.51	114.03

The result in Table 3 above and Fig. 3 below show the percentage difference in academic and administrative female employment. The Table shows high percentage difference of administrative to academic female staff employment, ranging from 82.02% to 114.85%. Generally, the table above shows that across the years more female administrative staff were employed. However, employment of females into academic positions increased in 1995 showing a decrease in percentage difference (83.33%) but has continued to increase, in the last three years (2017-2019) the percentage difference is at least 114% (see Fig. 3 below). This result proves that more females are employed in administrative than academic positions.

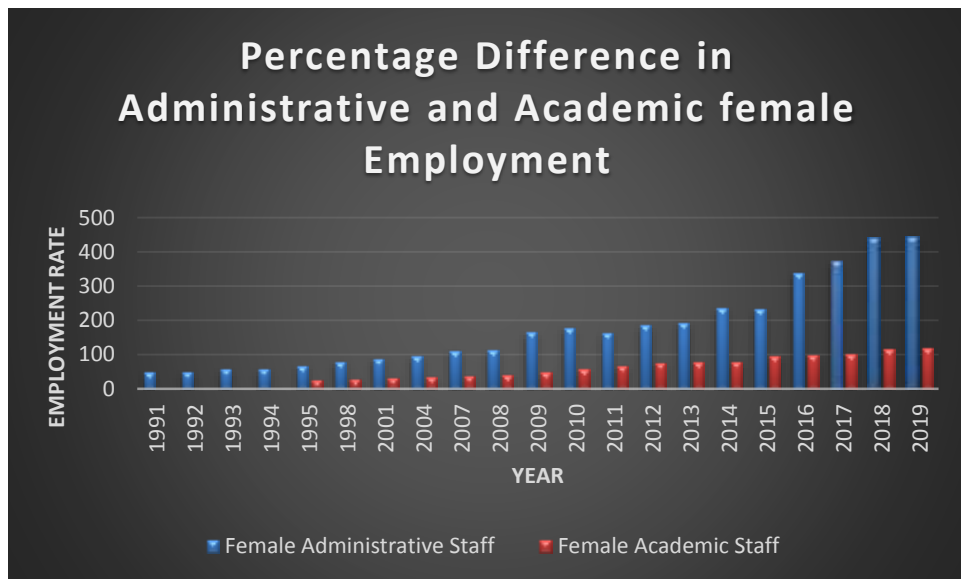


Figure 3: Showing differences in the rate of academic and administrative female employment across the years (1991-1995; 1998; 2001; 2004; 2007-2019)

DISCUSSION

This study investigated female employment into Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo. Three research questions were guided the study, and the result of research question one showed that on the average, a greater percentage (more than half) of the non-teaching staff in Imo state Polytechnics were females. This finding supports the report of Obiangwu and Unachukwu, (2008) that more non-academic female staff were employed in both federal and State polytechnics in South-East Nigeria; Higher Education Statistics Agency (2018) that also reported greater employment of female non-academic staff in the United Kingdom. This finding could be attributed to the fact that many non-academic positions involve duties that are mundane, less skillful, servient, more monotonous in nature and with lower status and lesser pay (salary). These jobs warrant some level of subjection and readiness to serve and as such may agree more with the social and cultural roles in-built in Igbo and Nigerian females. Hence, such jobs are acceptable to female and the duties expected of them. Therefore, in many cases females are found occupying such positions as office cleaners, messengers, office assistants and in lesser numbers as exam officers, secretaries and rarely as security officers.

The findings of research question two, on the percentage of female employment in academic positions in Polytechnics in Imo State indicated that an average percentage of employment of less than 27% in the 21 years studies. This finding agrees with the reports of Muoghalu and Eboiyehi, (2018) and Obiagwu and Unachukwu, (2008) that lesser female academic staff are employed across institutions and years studied. This finding could reflect lesser female involvement in science, technical, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, training, career or profession. Clearly, more female academic staff can only be employed if there is a large pool of female STEM graduates or professionals. Basically, Polytechnics offer STEM courses that are generally perceived as more skilled,

tasking, complex and ambition driven, as such more masculine oriented. This gendered perception could explain the paucity of female involvement in STEM education. This lack of female involvement in STEM is further exacerbated by the unemployment of those who are already trained in this area; thereby sustaining the skewed gender representation in academic staff polytechnics, this continues a blockchain that hinders the advancement of technical education in the state. Therefore, in view of technical education development, it is important that Imo State Polytechnic in particular and Polytechnics in general, increase the employment quota for female academics (those who are primarily technical courses teachers not servicing courses teachers) to at least 35% as recommended for all sectors of the economy in Nigeria; consequent upon the 35% affirmative action by the United Nations Commission on Status of Women (NCSW) which was implemented by the Goodluck Jonathan administration.

Finally, findings of the third research question on the difference in percentage of female employment between academic and administrative positions in Polytechnics in Imo State, showed that female non-academic staff employment was consistently higher than female academic staff employment for all the years under study. Though there was a gradual increase in female staff employment, this increase did not translate to significant employment of female academic staff, rather female academic staff employment remained grossly inadequate. This finding supports the reports of Muoghalu and Eboiyehi (2018) of slight increase but inadequate female academic staff employment in Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

There was incomplete and inadequate data available at the institution. The available data were poorly recorded, stored and protected. Hence, the use of the findings of this study in making future projections or plans regarding gender mainstreaming in Imo State polytechnic must be applied with caution.

RECOMMENDATION

The study recommends that future employment activities must focus on female academic staff employment so as to enhance female education in Imo State Polytechnic.

Further research be conducted in this area and should cover a wider scope, this research is restricted only to Imo State polytechnic.

Institutions should be transparent enough to make records of staff and students available to researchers

Gender specification should be a criterion for documentation of new staff and students

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