Women Advancement and Prospects of Leadership in Pengassan, Port Harcourt Zone, Nigeria

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Abstract
This study investigates the leadership pattern of women in the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN), Port Harcourt District, and examines how women can venture into and thrive in leadership positions. The research adopts a survey design, employing both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was collected through structured questionnaires, while secondary data was obtained from journals, reports, publications, and other relevant sources. A sample of 278 respondents, comprising male and female employees, was selected using the Taro Yamane formula from a population of 909 staff members. Simple random sampling was employed to ensure equal representation across different departments. The questionnaire consisted of demographic information and key leadership-related questions. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to analyze the data, while t-tests were applied to test the study's hypotheses at a 0.05 significance level. Findings revealed that women in PENGASSAN hold significant leadership positions and contribute positively to decision-making and team collaboration. However, there are gaps in terms of the respect and recognition they receive compared to their male counterparts, and in their proactivity in mentoring younger staff. Additionally, both male and female respondents generally agreed that mentorship and networking are crucial for women's success in leadership. The t-test results showed no significant difference between male and female perceptions regarding the leadership patterns of women and the challenges they face in ascending leadership positions. Based on these findings, the study recommends enhancing mentorship programs, providing more leadership development opportunities, and fostering a more inclusive and supportive leadership environment for women in PENGASSAN.

Keywords: Leadership, Women, PENGASSAN & Port Harcourt District

Introduction

From the beginning of the twenty-first century, there has been an increasing consciousness and encouragement internationally for women's development, particularly as it concerns improved leadership in their preferred professions. Though, from the Berlin symposium of 1885 that was piloted in the golden era of womenfolk, they were frequently deprived of the opportunity of high administrative and management posts and the continuous ill treatment when it concerns leadership functions in the private as well as public sectors, notwithstanding the point that many of them were capable and played a credible part in advancing the organizations to which they belonged.

However, the statistics of females in workplaces have increased significantly within the previous decades; women remain enormously identified in some of the highest administrative posts, though not in significant numbers (US Bureau of Statistics, 2011). Globally, women in a given period occupied merely three point eight percent (3.8%) of affluence and five-hundred (500) Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) posts (catalyst, 2012). This represents only three-point-two percent (3.2%), involving heads of boards among the major companies in the European Union (European Union, 2012). Within the political atmosphere, the figures are somewhat enhanced. In 2012, women assumed merely ninety (90) of five hundred and thirty-five (535) positions, which shows sixteen-point-eight percent (16.8%) within the US Parliament (Center for American Women and Politics, 2012) and nineteen-point-one percent (19.1%) of legislative posts globally (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2012). Among nations within the Middle East and North America, women held three-point-two percent (3.2%) of the top-level administrative posts typically within the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Nations Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, as well as the United Arab Emirates (UAE). They represented less than 1% of managerial headship. In Saudi Arabia, even when over half of higher institution students are female, merely four percent (4%) of college and university leaders are females.

Within Africa, the positions of women have meaningfully enhanced within the past seventeenth (17) years as a result of the involvement of African nations as signatories to numerous global, local, and countrywide laws concerning gender imbalance, as well as the fact that many African countries at the moment prefer democracy. Nevertheless, women are still subjected to difficulties in succeeding because of gender-related problems. Within South Africa, which is positioned the number two as a result of women's involvement and representation in policymaking, women are merely twenty-four percent (24%) concerning socio-economic decision-making seats within private and public sectors (SADC Gender Protocol, 2010). In Nigeria, the condition has not been unlikely. The National Bureau of Statistics statement published in 2014 said that women made up forty-nine point five percent (49.5%) of the whole populace, with the labor strength involvement ratio representing sixty-four point five percent (64.5%) for the womenfolk. Nevertheless, if we consider leadership within the Legislature, women stand at six point four (6.4%) (National Bureau of Statistics, 2014). Such is insignificant, particularly if we take into consideration the part women have played in numerous leadership positions during the early colonial and post-colonial eras.

Notwithstanding the point that many women were gaining opportunities for higher education and work experience, in Nigeria and across the world, slight privileges are allocated to them to assume top-level performance leadership. These changes are never substantial to an extent when considering the number of learned women continually suffering from leadership exclusion in and

around their workplaces and governmental organizations. Those establishments exclude them from executive positions as managers. Although few women succeed in occupying some high managerial positions, they still face ample difficulties which could diminish their rate of service delivery in the organizations they are meant to lead. This unfair treatment of women in their organizations may negatively affect the capability of women to perform within high positions of authority and would diminish their chances of gaining ascendancy as well as discouraging efforts at women's empowerment.

Towards the twilight of the 2011 general election, there had been some progress regarding the numbers of females employed in many leadership offices within the federal executive council controlled by President Goodluck, E. A. Jonathan, for out of forty-two (42) ministers engaged earlier before the 13th of September, 2013 kitchen cabinet restructuring, thirteen (13) were females, indicating thirty-one percent (31.0%). For instance, the Ministries of Aviation, Education, and Petroleum were women. The offices of these women have significantly elevated the character and image of ordinary Nigerian women as smart working, committed, self-controlled, comprehensive, resourceful, and commercially disciplined. The huge positive influences of these women nationally and internationally are progressively redesigning their persons and competencies in an encouraging atmosphere. However, the aforementioned accomplishments are still convincing that female involvement in governance, as well as decision-making, is quite significantly minimal and of course insufficient (Asaju and Adagba, 2013).

 Determinations in changing the nation via the acceptance of national reports of progress and socio-economic development continued for women across the private and public sectors. Women possess the prospect and skill of leadership; nevertheless, they are frequently denied the chances, means, and monetary backing. When considering these issues, women ought to be allowed the opportunities to progress in their desired roles of women's endeavors since they have shown to be good fortune-runners. Because of this situation, this research is consequently aimed at studying women's advancement and its prospects of better leadership within the Petroleum and Senior Gas Workers Association of Nigeria (PENGASSAN).

Statement of the Problem

The absence of women in leadership, administration, and decision-making is a global issue, affecting both developed and developing nations. In developing countries, this is often due to a lack of education and societal orientation, while in industrialized nations, the gap has narrowed, especially in the era of globalization. Despite efforts to empower women to take on leadership roles in both private and public sectors, they often remain confined to less significant positions, even though they are critical decision-makers in many real-life situations. Initiatives, such as the 35% affirmative action bill aimed at increasing women's representation in leadership, have not fully overcome the barriers preventing women from achieving their administrative aspirations. A key issue in many African cultures is patriarchy, where women, even those who work, are burdened with domestic responsibilities alongside their professional duties. This dual workload affects their performance, especially in leadership roles. While some men argue that women are not equipped for leadership, women themselves sometimes express doubts about their competence, further hindering their advancement. Cultural and societal norms continue to perpetuate these beliefs, creating significant obstacles to women's progression in leadership, particularly in Africa and other developing nations.

Another challenge is that many women lack the self-confidence and determination to pursue leadership roles as actively as men. Some women do not aspire to leadership positions, which may explain the relatively low number of women in leadership. Additionally, family responsibilities often disrupt women's professional progress, leading them to prioritize household duties over career advancement. In the business world, a perceived lack of determination, leadership qualities, and abilities is often cited as a barrier to women's success in leadership roles. Advocates for female leadership emphasize the unique contributions women bring to leadership, including creativity, innovation, and collaboration. However, there remains skepticism about their capabilities, as these qualities are often misunderstood as weaknesses rather than strengths.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of women assuming leadership and managerial roles. Despite the challenges they face, female leadership is vital in addressing gender stereotypes and overcoming traditional and cultural barriers. However, there has been little research on female leadership in Nigeria, particularly in the private and public sectors. This study focuses on women's advancement and the potential for improved leadership within PENGASSAN's Port Harcourt division. It aims to explore the challenges women face in leadership and the opportunities for better leadership in the organization.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this paper is to access the difficulties women leaders face within Nigeria, study women progress and their prospects concerning good leadership within PENGASSAN. Our research contains the specific objectives below:

1. To examine the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District.
2. To investigate if are there resemblances and variances amongst the leadership pattern of women and the men in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District
3. To examine how women could venture into and thrive in leadership position within in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What is the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?
2. Are there resemblances and variances amongst the leadership pattern of women and the men in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?
3. How women could venture into and thrive in leadership position in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis were formulated for the study

Ho₁: There is no significant different between the responses of the male and female on the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District
Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the responses of the male and female on how women could venture into and thrive in leadership position in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Review of Literature

Women in Leadership in Nigeria

Women in Nigeria being aware of the effect of formal knowledge on a very big numbers of ladies in numerous areas of the global business, this awareness gave rise to many international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This problem of women discrepancy in leadership rates in Nigeria tends to be a very critical factor regarding decision-making and academic research simply because of a significant difficulty which societal responsibilities depend on, if ladies are not permitted their legitimate place around the society, there must be certainty of disparities which might stop women effects over the improvement of the nations. The general awareness designed out because of the global ladies' year in 1975 with respect to the situation of women leadership charted by the United Nations period for ladies, over years 1975-1985 (Aina,1993), and the subsequent United Nation (UN) conferences like the Rio de Jenerio conference on the environment and advancement, in the year, 1993 Vienna Human Rights conference, in the year, 1995 Copenhagen session regarding social growth and the Beijing universal conference which Nigeria participated creditably and involved its legal framework not only fashioned a new overview, but, also created directions for reasonable portion concerning ladies in headship offices. Though, the portion of females within headship positions has created a novel ground within the past thirty (30) years and has equally produced communal discussions within Nigeria. Also, there are dissimilar views if female leaderships end within their homes otherwise they ought to assume leadership responsibilities within the bigger governmental and commercial establishments (Luka, 2012). The positions concerning females within headship levels in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized when we consider women assistances towards nation building goes a long way over the customary notion of their positions within family upbringing, reproduction, and pervades across every side involving the Nigerian socio-economy. Every of these robust views, otherwise expressions in contradiction of female leaderships, came up after numerous journals, sessions and educative conferences and decision have be reached. From ancient times, Nigerian ladies were taken as mediocre habitually and minor(s) such was never simply unusual to Nigeria alone, however, similarly within and around the international communities. The idea of ladies in leadership and empowerment started late within Nigeria, in particular, and Africa in general. Females assuming leadership offices within Nigeria comprise are faced with numerous challenges such as: Commercial prospect, societal fairness, and Individual privileges. While tradition assumes a focal platform within Nigeria, ladies are dispossessed of leadership privileges while the circumstance most horrible within the rural parts where ladies are commonly not allowed to get any significant foundations of revenue. Because of that, women are regularly disenabled and ignored in leadership levels and assigned mostly to house responsibilities and unprofitable employment and without good financial generation, women opinions will not be heard.

Mma (2010) posits that in the colonial period, Nigerian ladies passed through many difficulties for their opinions to be recognized, starting from the rejection of their rights and complete marginalization in leadership offices and material right(s). Additionally, the Aba Women's Riot (1929) was done so that disapproval against the overbearing levy structure involving the past Foreign Administration and was headed by females. In the 1950s, ladies leadership started gaining strength through the engagements of three (3) ladies into managerial and headship offices within Nigeria of which they are: Chief (Mrs) Margaret, Ekpo, Chief (Mrs) Janet, Mokelu (both of the

Eastern Nigeria House of Chiefs), and Chief (Mrs) Olufumilayo, Ransome-Kuti (the Western Nigeria House of Chiefs), were engaged to the council of chief(s). It was simply within the same 1950s, that ladies of the southern part of Nigeria were given the right where ladies' groups of political-parties were fashioned . However they have very slight privileges.

However, this detestable acts and the situation is now the thing of the past. Oranusi (2009) said that, the procurement of western learning has affected males' outlook over women (though not significantly as few still belief in their cultural patriarchal privileges) and women's approach concerning their gifted prospects. Such have caused them very self-assured in themselves and with these confidences, they are very good influences within their performances particularly within headships and other parts of the industries. Nevertheless, Mma (2010), postulates that females are progressively being hired into the customary ruling assemblies within certain areas of Igbo and giving females the chance and environment where they could show their importance. Linking matters with the previous findings, Nzekwe(2011) proclaimed that, the increase of some ladies in noticeable offices that were before now exclusively destined for males through the engagement of Dr. (Mrs.) Ngozi, Okonjo-Iweala, (Minister of finance), Prof. (Mrs.) Dora, Akunyili, (past D. G. NAFDAC and past Minister of Information), Mrs. Obiageli, Ezekwesili, (past S. A. to the President and later Minister of Education), Prof. Ruqquayatu, Rufai, (past Minister of Information), Mrs. Diaziani, Allison Madueke, (past Minister of Petroleum Resources), Mrs. Stella, Oduah, (past Minister of Aviation), Prof. (Mrs) Grace, Williams, (past Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin) and many others are indications that females within Nigeria are ascending to the leadership ladders so quickly though progressively. The above-mentioned women and others have no doubt raised the pedigree and image of the Nigerian women leaders as meticulous, self-confidence, all-inclusive, creative, courageous and productive. Though, it is significant that notwithstanding that these ladies have added values to their leadership roles, their males equivalents still assumed that women should have performed more. The massive influence of Nigerian ladies in leadership and the nationwide growth within every sector of the country are progressively creating the assessment of the roles and abilities of ladies in the public and private in a good trend. The introduction of democracy in Nigeria has created a novel request on government to nurture a better transparent culture and encourage a better part concerning females when it comes to general opinion making (Okoronkwo, 2001). Such is in insightfulness that, till a substantial number of females assume headship seats in the private and public sectors, and saddled with the opportunities to start, design and implement general rule and lawmaking, they can never successfully handle other stereotypes which have troubled women. Within the governmental circle, females themselves reacted to chances within every position where many female groups took opportunities of the novel governmental initiative to emphasize their parts and improve their progression. Nevertheless, it is remains unfortunate that, although, females created a greater amount of recorded voters. In many elections carried out in Nigeria, they are about to get strong symbolic posts (Okoronkwo, 2013). The part ladies play in campaigning and voting procedures, calls for women to assume outstanding offices within governance, when considering ladies efforts to the victories of many political parties in many election(s).

Females involvement in policy and opinion-making has witnessed an important development from the year 1999 across former experience. However, most of the results are very insignificant. The general elections experienced just one hundred and eighty one (181) positions gotten by ladies in

a total of eleven thousand eight hundred and eighty one (11,881) available positions across the country (Samuel and Segun, 2012). During the year 2003, states like Kebbi, Sokoto, Cross River, Oyo, Zamfara, Adamawa, Katsina, Ebonyi, Kano, Nasarawa, Yobe, and Jigawa, not even one female was elected as a parliamentary officer of the House of Assembly; women were only a handful (Agbalajobi, 2010). in April, 2007 election, they were one-thousand-and-two-hundred (1200) female contenders to one thousand, five hundred and thirty two (1532) positions, six hundred and sixty (660) of these contenders secured their primary elections, in a total of six-hundred-and-sixty (660) contenders merely ninety three (93) lastly materialized as leaders and these comprise of six (6) deputy governors (Asaju and Adagba, 2013). Notwithstanding the aforementioned progress that Nigerian ladies had in leaderships, both diplomatically and many more, ultimately the vision of ladies attaining good leaderships within the nation are filled with surplus of difficulties that affected the Nigerian ladies in their active involvement within leaderships and opinion-taking while they are good visions.

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Liberal Feminist Theory. The major proponents of Liberal Feminist theory are Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797), John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), and Harriet Taylor Mill (1807-1858). Many researcher prior to Wollstonecraft, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), said obviously that men and women spontaneously are not usually different in terms of category, nevertheless, dissimilar in traditional enthusiasm with the women being externally weak, rational, and passionate. Males are assumed to be very sensible, while the females are very passionate as well as their individual cultures would show such dissimilarities. Different philosophers, like John Locke (1632-1704), maintained that both sexes ought to get equal learning as well as receive same privileges even accountabilities in consideration to their kids.

Liberal feminist principle proposes and highlights equivalent personal privileges as well as freedoms concerning the females as well as male while restraining gender dissimilarities. Such is the best extensively acknowledged societal as well as governmental viewpoint between women's liberation. Liberal feminists defend equal and level-playing field for the two genders, and speak about the importance of the reformation of the society, industries, and genders tasks a way that should embody woman's sovereign, and individual achievement. Feminists emphasize on the connections between men and women rather than the usual differences between the two gender(s), describe several behaviours and temperamental differences between the them in their social structure which could be sex (male or female) categories as well as the intention to inspire sequences of accountability for both the men and women.

Thematically, the Liberal feminist philosophy is appropriate to this research since it clarifies as well as intends to cover the lapses between men and women that were previously in existence and are practicing these abnormalities as a result of the customary and ethnic policies. They highlight that females ought to be provided with same rights to partake as well as assume leadership positions within the governments and carry out the time after time events in any institution they found themselves as their men equivalents so as to get continued same improvement within the Third World countries. Furthermore, the philosophy also aims to eliminate chauvinism and discrimination against women. Such may be the form to close the discrimination among the males and females within headship posts in the community as well as the globe in general.

Methods

The study made use of the survey research design. The survey design allows the researcher to present data in a graphical and arithmetical manner with the intention for better understanding of the outcome of the research.

Our research used the primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source includes the application of questionnaire with structured and unstructured question(s) which enabled the researcher to obtain information from various respondents in the field. The secondary source comprises data in accessible electronic and non-electronic journal, documents, publications, workbooks, formal papers, study reports as well as other educative sources and files gotten within the libraries.

The population of this work comprises of men and women employees (both senior and junior staff) of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff Association of Nigeria in the period 2015 and 2016 financial year(s) which had a staff strength of nine hundred and nine (909), (NNPC bulletin, 2015). The Taro Yamane technique was applied in determining the sample size. which the formula is shown below as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample sought

N = Total population

e = Level of significance at 0.05

Thus: $n = \frac{909}{1+909}(0.05)^2$

= 277.7692

= 278 (by calculation)

The population was clustered in accordance with the staff positions/levels as shortlisted below, as presented in table 1. The sample size was two hundred and seventy-eight (278) respondent(s) who were male and female staff of PENGASSAN.

Table 1

S/N	Departments	Number of Employees
1	Administrative	85
2	Inspectorate and monitoring	59
3	Finance and accounts	68
4	Planning and statistics	66
	Total	278

The sampling method used for this research was the simple random sampling. The random sample gave conditions which all elements within the targer population (the universe) contain same chance of being selected as well as incorporated into the sampling. The random sampling stands as a subset of statistical population whereby every participant within the subset has the same likelihood of being selected. Data were collected by applying the open ended questionnaires that would be controlled materially. The questionnaire had two (2) parts; part A: Demographic part, part B: Main Items part. The researcher used secondary techniques of data assemblage that involved data from research papers, workbooks, reports, formal papers, national dailies findings, study's reports as well as various educative articles available in the libraries.

The study used descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) in analyzing the data received from the field. The frequency table as well as simple percentage (%) was applied in analyzing the demographic features concerning the respondent(s). The t-test was applied in testing the hypotheses of this research at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 2: Distribution and Return of Questionnaires

Options	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Total distributed	278	100
Response	270	99.9
Non-response	8	1

A total of 278 prints of questionnaire were distributed that represented an estimated sample quantity of two hundred and fifty (270) signifying eighty nine point nine percent (99.9%) of the sample quantity were appropriately completed as well as brought back, while twenty eight (8) prints of the questionnaires were never brought back, that signifies ten point one percent (1%) of the sample quantity.

Result and Discussion

Research Question One: What is the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?

Table 3: Leadership Pattern of Women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

SN	Leadership Pattern(N=270)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
1	Women hold significant leadership positions within PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District.	88	124	43	15	3.06	0.84	**Agreed**
2	The leadership style of women in PENGASSAN fosters collaboration and teamwork.	78	159	22	11	3.13	0.72	**Agreed**
3	Women in PENGASSAN are actively involved in decision-making processes.	64	155	41	10	3.01	0.73	**Agreed**
4	Female leaders in PENGASSAN exhibit strong communication and conflict resolution skills.	92	117	40	21	3.04	0.89	**Agreed**

		SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
5	Women leaders in PENGASSAN receive equal respect and recognition as their male counterparts.	57	171	21	21	2.98	0.77	**Agreed**
6	Women leaders in PENGASSAN are proactive in mentoring younger staff.	70	131	43	26	2.91	0.89	**Agreed**
7	The leadership approach of women in PENGASSAN is innovative and adaptable to change.	88	132	31	19	3.07	0.85	**Agreed**
	Grand Mean					**3.03**	**0.81**	**Agreed**

The analysis of the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District, reveals generally positive perceptions. Women are seen as holding significant leadership roles (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.84) and fostering collaboration (Mean = 3.13, SD = 0.72). They are actively involved in decision-making (Mean = 3.01, SD = 0.73) and exhibit strong communication and conflict resolution skills (Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.89). However, perceptions of women receiving equal respect to their male counterparts (Mean = 2.98, SD = 0.77) and being proactive in mentoring (Mean = 2.91, SD = 0.89) are slightly lower. Women are also viewed as innovative and adaptable to change (Mean = 3.07, SD = 0.85). These results suggest that while women are recognized for their leadership, there may be areas, such as respect and mentoring, where improvement is needed.

Research Question Two: Are there resemblances and variances amongst the leadership pattern of women and the men in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?
Table 4: Resemblances and Variances amongst the Leadership Pattern of Women and the Men in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

SN	Items(N=270)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
8	Female leaders in PENGASSAN are more likely to adopt a participatory leadership style.	88	138	23	21	3.09	0.85	**Agreed**
9	Male leaders tend to be more directive compared to female leaders in PENGASSAN.	78	150	27	15	3.08	0.78	**Agreed**
10	Both male and female leaders in PENGASSAN demonstrate equal commitment to staff welfare.	64	152	43	11	3.00	0.75	**Agreed**
11	There is a noticeable difference in leadership approach between men and women in PENGASSAN.	92	146	22	10	3.19	0.73	**Agreed**
12	Male and female leaders in PENGASSAN have similar levels of leadership effectiveness.	57	151	41	21	2.90	0.82	**Agreed**

SN	Item	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
13	Women tend to focus more on teamwork and collaboration compared to their male counterparts in PENGASSAN.	70	139	40	21	2.96	0.85	**Agreed**
14	Male leaders in PENGASSAN are more likely to take risks compared to female leaders.	88	135	21	26	3.06	0.89	**Agreed**
	Grand Mean					**3.04**	**0.81**	**Agreed**

The analysis of leadership patterns between men and women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District, reveals notable similarities and differences. Female leaders are more likely to adopt a participatory leadership style (Mean = 3.09, SD = 0.85), while male leaders are viewed as more directive (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.78). Both genders demonstrate equal commitment to staff welfare (Mean = 3.00, SD = 0.75), but there is a perceived difference in leadership approach between men and women (Mean = 3.19, SD = 0.73). Male and female leaders are seen as similarly effective, though women tend to focus more on teamwork (Mean = 2.96, SD = 0.85), and men are perceived as more likely to take risks (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.89). These findings highlight both commonalities in leadership effectiveness and distinctions in leadership styles.

Research Question Three: How women could venture into and thrive in leadership position in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District?

Table 5: How Women could Venture into and Thrive in Leadership Position in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

SN	Item (N=270)	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std.	Remark
15	Women in PENGASSAN face more challenges than men when pursuing leadership roles.	85	130	40	15	3.06	0.83	**Agreed**
16	Mentorship opportunities for women are critical for their leadership success in PENGASSAN.	90	120	45	15	3.06	0.82	**Agreed**
17	There are sufficient programs that encourage women to seek leadership roles in PENGASSAN.	70	140	45	15	2.95	0.78	**Agreed**
18	Female leaders in PENGASSAN receive adequate support to thrive in their positions.	75	125	50	20	2.93	0.87	**Agreed**
19	Women in PENGASSAN need to build strong networks to succeed in leadership roles.	80	135	40	15	3.03	0.81	**Agreed**
20	Women in PENGASSAN benefit from role models who inspire them to seek leadership positions.	88	130	38	14	3.08	0.81	**Agreed**

21	Leadership development programs in PENGASSAN should focus more on empowering women.	85	125	45	15	3.04	0.85	**Agreed**
	Grand Mean					**3.02**	**0.82**	Agreed

The analysis of how women could venture into and thrive in leadership positions in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District, shows that respondents generally agree that women face more challenges than men (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.83) and that mentorship opportunities are critical for their success (Mean = 3.06, SD = 0.82). While there is some agreement that programs encouraging women to seek leadership roles exist (Mean = 2.95, SD = 0.78), support for female leaders is seen as slightly less adequate (Mean = 2.93, SD = 0.87). Additionally, building strong networks (Mean = 3.03, SD = 0.81) and having role models (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.81) are viewed as important, while leadership development programs focusing on women are also critical (Mean = 3.04, SD = 0.85). Overall, the responses highlight the significance of support structures for women's leadership success.

Testing of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant different between the responses of the male and female on the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Table 6: T-test Statistics on the responses of the male and female on leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Gender	N	Mean	Std.	df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male	137	3.01	0.98	268	0.567	0.062	**Not significant**
Female	133	3.03	0.97				

The analysis of the T-test statistics reveals no significant difference between male (N=137, Mean=3.01, Std=0.98) and female (N=133, Mean=3.03, Std=0.97) responses regarding the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District. With a t-test value of 0.567 and a p-value of 0.062, which is above the 0.05 significance threshold, the null hypothesis is supported, indicating that both genders share similar perceptions of women's leadership patterns.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the responses of the male and female on how women could venture into and thrive in leadership position in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Table 7: T-test Statistics on the responses of the male and female on leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District

Gender	N	Mean	Std.	df	t-test	Sig.	Remark
Male	137	3.01	0.96	268	0.854	0.097	**Not significant**
Female	133	2.98	1.01				

The T-test statistics indicate no significant difference between male (N=137, Mean=3.01, Std=0.96) and female (N=133, Mean=2.98, Std=1.01) responses regarding how women could venture into and thrive in leadership positions in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District. With a t-test value of 0.854 and a p-value of 0.097, which exceeds the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is supported, suggesting that both genders have similar perceptions on this matter.

Discussion of Findings

This work was designed with the aim of examining women advancement and the prospect of better leadership among members of the Petroleum and Natural Gas Senior Staff association (PANGASSAN).

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the leadership pattern of women in PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District, and how they are perceived compared to their male counterparts. The generally positive perception of women holding significant leadership roles and fostering collaboration aligns with Akinyele and Olagunju (2019), who found that women in Nigerian organizations are increasingly being recognized for their leadership qualities, particularly in fostering teamwork and inclusivity. This supports the idea that women leaders bring distinct, participatory leadership styles that contribute positively to organizational performance. Women's active involvement in decision-making and their strong communication and conflict resolution skills, as indicated by the high mean scores, also correspond with findings by Adeola and Fapohunda (2018), who highlighted the growing recognition of women's strategic decision-making capabilities in Nigerian organizations. This suggests that women in PENGASSAN are trusted with crucial roles in leadership, reflecting broader trends in Nigerian industries where women's involvement in leadership continues to rise.

However, from the second research objective, the slightly lower perceptions regarding women receiving equal respect and recognition as male leaders, and their proactivity in mentoring, reflect ongoing challenges in gender equality within leadership structures. This is consistent with Nwagbara (2021), who noted that, while Nigerian women are increasingly breaking into leadership roles, they still face significant cultural and structural barriers that prevent them from achieving full parity with men in terms of respect and influence. These findings emphasize the need for initiatives that promote gender equality in leadership, including programs aimed at changing perceptions and creating equal opportunities for women leaders to be respected and acknowledged. The study also highlights key differences and similarities in the leadership patterns of men and women in PENGASSAN. Female leaders are more likely to adopt a participatory leadership style, while male leaders are perceived as more directive, a pattern that mirrors the findings of Afolabi and Oke (2017), who identified similar gendered leadership styles in Nigerian organizations. This suggests that women tend to prioritize collaboration and inclusivity, which can be particularly valuable in industries where team cohesion is critical. On the other hand, the directive approach often associated with male leaders might indicate a more hierarchical structure, where decision-making is centralized. Both leadership styles have their strengths, but the growing preference for participatory leadership among women points to the evolution of more flexible and adaptive leadership in PENGASSAN.

Despite these differences in style, the study shows that both male and female leaders are perceived as similarly effective, aligning with Osuji and Chukwu (2019), who argued that leadership effectiveness in Nigeria is not determined by gender but by the skills and competencies of the individual leader. This reinforces the idea that, regardless of gender, leaders who possess strong organizational and interpersonal skills are viewed positively by their peers and subordinates.

The third research objective which its finding showed how women can venture into and thrive in leadership positions in PENGASSAN, reveals a consensus that women face more challenges than men in pursuing leadership roles, which is a common theme in the literature. Onyechi and Nnadi

(2020) similarly identified significant barriers, such as societal expectations and workplace dynamics that make it more difficult for women to ascend to leadership roles in Nigeria. The emphasis on mentorship, networking, and role models as critical factors for women's success supports Ifeanyi and Eze (2022), who stressed the importance of these support structures in fostering women's leadership development. The study also points out that while mentorship and leadership development programs are seen as beneficial, more efforts are needed to empower women to thrive in leadership roles. This is in line with Okeke and Obasi (2020), who advocated for more structured and institutionalized mentorship programs aimed specifically at developing women leaders in Nigeria. Building strong networks and having access to role models were highlighted as essential for women's leadership success in the study, reflecting the broader findings of Afolabi and Adebayo (2016), who noted that women leaders benefit greatly from robust professional networks and inspirational role models.

The study demonstrates that while women in PENGASSAN are recognized for their leadership qualities and have made significant strides, there are still areas where improvement is necessary, particularly in terms of equal recognition and respect. The emphasis on support structures, such as mentorship and leadership development programs, underscores the importance of creating environments that enable women to fully realize their leadership potential, echoing the findings of various Nigerian scholars over the past decade. The absence of significant gender differences in perceptions of leadership effectiveness further supports the notion that leadership success is driven by capability rather than gender, though addressing the unique challenges women face remains crucial for promoting gender equality in leadership roles in Nigeria.

Conclusion

With respect to research findings, it could be resolved that females possess the prospective as well as aptitude to lead and to achieve meaningfully at the uppermost level of public offices the continuous difficulties before their leadership route frequently limit their progress. Aside from the inner influences between women, outside influences like societal as well as ethnic discrimination is also a major cause. The issues of balance generative as well as office tasks and limited network have caused significant constraint on women leadership advancement.

Because women leaders within individual as well as public sectors exploited the transformational method to leadership, it has demonstrated the point that it helps their feminine nature of love as well as care, it is hence vital to improve women empowerment institutions as well as commercial mechanism, methods as well as awareness while changing the negative approaches of the males towards women within organizational/leadership offices, if this is done, many qualified and brilliant woman will be empowered in a friendly working environment, that will be bring out the best prospects in them.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. PENGASSAN, Port Harcourt District, should implement initiatives that promote equal respect and recognition for female leaders. This could include gender sensitivity training, leadership awards, and other recognition programs that highlight the contributions of women in leadership roles, ensuring they are valued equally with their male counterparts.

2. To support women in thriving as leaders, PENGASSAN should expand mentorship opportunities and leadership development programs specifically aimed at women. Establishing formal mentorship programs, where experienced female leaders mentor emerging women leaders, will help women build networks and gain the skills and confidence needed to excel in leadership roles.
3. Leadership development programs should emphasize the strengths of both participatory and directive leadership styles, ensuring that male and female leaders can learn from each other's approaches. This could include training sessions that focus on collaboration, innovation, and adaptability, fostering a leadership culture that values diverse styles and encourages inclusivity.

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