

**International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender  
Studies (LALIGENS), Bahir Dar- Ethiopia**

Vol. 6 (1), Serial No 13, February, 2017: 25-36  
ISSN: 2225-8604(Print) ISSN 2227-5460 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v6i1.3>

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**Gender Issues in Theatre Management: The Cross-River State  
Cultural Centre in Focus**

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**Abstract**

This study examined gender issues in the management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. Three research questions were formulated for the study and eighty-three respondents were used for the study. The researcher made use of questionnaires, interviews and group discussions for collecting data for the study. Descriptive tools in statistics such as tables and simple percentages were used to present the data in a clear manner for empirical analysis to answer the research questions. The study found amongst others that, although women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre have the requisite academic qualifications and experience, appointment to the position of Director of the centre often eludes them as more men have been favoured in the appointments. It was also discovered that appointment to higher Management positions in the centre have been politicized and women in the centre lack the political power necessary for appointment to such positions. The study also found that gender perspectives and the attainment of gender equality were not central to the provisions of the edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. The study recommended amongst others that: The Edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre should be reviewed in order to make gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality central to the activities of the centre and the setting up of a Board to handle issues of recruitment, promotions and appointments in order to do away with

the over politicized methods of appointing staff of the council to management positions in the council.

### Introduction

The Cross-River State Cultural Centre was established in accordance with the Cross-River State Cultural Centre Board Edict of March, 1976. According to the edict for its establishment, the aims and objectives of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre are

- to rediscover, promote and preserve the arts and culture of the various peoples of the state;
- identify and preserve monuments and antiquities of artistic and cultural interest and value either alone or in co-operation with the National Antiquities Commission;
- to forge unity through Arts and Culture amongst the various peoples of the state, and
- to establish in the various divisions of the cultural centre, galleries, museums and theatres amongst other objectives.

David Conte and Stephen Langley have stressed that the word theatre includes all the performing arts due to the fact that from a practical point of view, all the Performing Arts have the same function of representing artistically satisfying works, finding and keeping an audience, providing for the financial and creative wellbeing of a production and maintaining good personal and public relations (1).

What is seen in a theatre is a performance. As Remi Adedokun states that: “a performance is a finished theatrical product manufactured from creative raw materials such as drama, music, dance, poetry, mime or pantomime by theater artists and presented before an audience at a given price, and at a given location and time” (1). For a performance to take place, certain elements must be present. Oscar Brocket, identifies the basic elements of a theatrical performance as – what is performed, the performance, the product and the audience (5). Phylis Hartnoll also agrees with this position (1).

The theatres so established must be managed. Theatre management entails facilitating two or more of the four elements of a theatrical performance and this basically involves: planning, organizing, staffing, casting, supervising and controlling. It is important to note here that, both men and women work in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre and a lot of gender issues are involved in the management of the centre.

A discussion on gender issues in theatre management will not be complete without inference to the coinage; ‘Glass Ceiling’. Linda Wirth explains that “Glass Ceiling” is a term coined in the 1970’s in the United States to describe the invisible artificial barriers created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices which block women from

senior executive positions. The consequences of gender inequalities arising from Glass Ceiling include women being crowded into a narrow range of occupations where there is less responsibility and lower pay (1).

So much interest has been expressed by theatre practitioners on theatre management but there is little research specifically devoted to the gender issues involved in theatre management and the implications these gender issues may have on women's career in theatre management.

This study is therefore designed to investigate the Gender issues in Theatre Management with special focus on the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are:

- (1) To establish if there is any level of discrimination against women in the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.
- (2) To identify the Organizational prejudices that block women from Senior Executive positions in Theatre Management with specific reference to the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.
- (3) To make recommendations on how women can be availed the opportunity of maximum participation in the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were formulated to guide this study:

- (1) What are the Gender issues in the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre?
- (2) Did the Edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre make gender perspectives and the attention to the goal of gender equality central in the operations of the Cultural Centre?
- (3) What are the Organizational prejudices that block women from Senior Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre?

### **Research Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses have been formulated for the study:

- (1) The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by Cultural Stereotypes.

- (2) The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by inadequate education.
- (3) The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by achievement motivation.

### **Methodology**

The population for the study consisted of Staff of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre Calabar. A total of eighty-three (83) Staff of the Cultural Centre were randomly selected for this study.

In order to conduct this study, the researcher made use of questionnaires, interviews, group discussions and system documentation. The responses on the questionnaire were scored as follows:

SA: Strongly Agreed

A: Agreed

D: Disagreed and

SD: Strongly Disagreed.

A questionnaire was scientifically designed and taken to experts in measurement and evaluation for validation. The checklist used for the discussion with respondents was also thoroughly scrutinized. A sample size of eighty-three was used.

Eighty-three questionnaires were randomly distributed to both male and female staff of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre by the researcher and collected back after they had been filled.

Descriptive tools in Statistics such as tables and simple percentages were used to present the data in a clearer manner for empirical analysis to answer the research questions. A chi-square test was also employed to test the three hypotheses formulated for the study.

This study unveils the Gender issues in Theatre management with specific focus on the Cross-River State Cultural Centre with a view to helping Government to make reforms aimed at minimizing gender gaps in Theatre Management in Nigeria. The findings from this study will put the Nigerian Government in a better position to refocus the ongoing struggle for Gender equality in Nigeria. It is hoped that this research will provide activists with data for advocacy and will also be a rich source of data for people undertaking studies in gender and Theatre Management.

### Data Analysis of Gender Issues in Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre

A total of eighty-three respondents representing a response rate of 100% were successfully studied. Below is the presentation of the data in tables.

**Table 1: Sex Distribution of Respondents**

Sex	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Male	43	51.8
Female	40	48.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above shows that 43 respondents (51.8%) were male while 40 respondents (48.2%) were female.

**Table 2: Designation of Respondents**

Designation	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Administrative	25	30.1
Technical	12	14.5
Performer	46	55.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that 25 respondents (30.1%) were administrative Staff, 12 respondents (14.5%) were technical Staff and 46 respondents (55.4%) were performers.

**Table 3: On the Job Experience Distribution of Respondents**

Years of Experience on the Job	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1-5 years	30	36.1
6-10 years	18	21.7
11 years and above	35	42.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 3 shows that 30 respondents (36.1%) have worked with the Cross-River State Cultural Centre for between 1-5 years, 18 respondents (21.7%) have worked with the Cross-River State Cultural Centre for between 6-10 years while 35 respondents (42.2%) have worked with the Cross-River State Cultural Centre for 11 years and above.

**Table 4: Educational Qualification of Respondents**

Highest Academic Qualification	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
PhD	0	0
Master's Degree	4	4.8
First Degree/HND	34	41.1
Diploma/NCE	15	18.0
School Certificate Holder	30	36.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 4 shows the highest academic qualification distribution of respondents. No respondent had a PhD as the highest academic qualification, 4 respondents (4.8%) had master's degree as their highest academic qualification, 34 respondents (41.1%) are holders of first degree/HND, 15 respondents (18%) have diploma/NCE while 30 respondents (36.1%) are school certificate holders.

**Table 5: Analysis of Cultural Stereotypes**

S/No.	Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
		R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
1.	There should be equal opportunities for management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre	46	55	25	30	4	5	8	10
2.	Men are better Heads of Department than women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre	29	35	17	20.5	27	32.5	10	12
3.	Women are better leaders than men in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre	10	12	20	24	41	49.4	12.0	14.4

About 85% of respondents are of the opinion that there should be equal opportunities for the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre while the remaining 15% do not. This result may imply that the opportunities for Managing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre are not equal. While 55.5% of responses show that men are better Heads of Department than women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre and the

remaining 44.5% have the opposing view. This view may not necessarily be the result of the superiority of the ability of men but the less opportunities women have had being in leadership positions which is necessary before they can be judged. 64% of respondents opined that women are not better leaders than men. When women do not have the opportunities to show their potentials, the men who dominate the positions are the ones assessed.

**Table 6: Analysis of Educational Qualification of Women**

S/No.	Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
		R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
4.	There are fewer women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre because they lack educational qualification	4	4.8	19	22.8	46	55.4	14	16.8
5.	There are fewer women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre because they lack experience	8	9.6	16	19.2	47	56.6	12	14.5

About 72% of respondents disagree that lack of educational qualification is not the reason for fewer women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. This result may imply that the women possess whatever academic qualification is required for Managing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. 71% of respondents disagree that lack of experience is not the reason for fewer women in Management positions.

**Table 7: Analysis of the Achievement Motivation of Women**

S/No.	Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
		R	%	R	%	R	%	R	%
6.	There are fewer women in management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre because they are not assertive enough to seize the	3	3.6	18	21.7	52	62.6	10	2

7. There are fewer women in management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre because of the low self-concept they have on themselves. 6 7.2 19 22.8 50 60.2 8 9.6

About 64.5% of respondents disagree that not being assertive enough is not responsible for fewer women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. The management positions are not taken by force hence, there is no need for assertion over male counterparts. Emphasis should be on performance and personal capabilities. 70% of respondents disagree that low self-concept is not responsible or the presence of fewer women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

### Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested and their results presented below:

**H<sub>01</sub>** The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by cultural stereotypes.

The result is summarized below:

Since  $\chi^2 > \chi^2$  tabulated at 95% confidence i.e.  $1,379.34 > 12.592$  we reject the null hypothesis that the representation of women in Management positions in Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by cultural stereotypes and accept the alternative that the representation of women in Management positions is affected by cultural stereotypes.

**H<sub>02</sub>** The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by inadequate education.

The result is summarized below:

Since  $\chi^2 > \chi^2$  tabulated at 95% confidence i.e.  $15 > 7.815$  we reject the null hypothesis that the representation of women in Management positions in Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by inadequate education and accept the alternative that the representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is affected by inadequate education.

**H<sub>03</sub>** The representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by achievement motivation.

The chi-square test was applied to the results of table 7 and tested at 5% significance.

The result is summarized below:

Since  $\chi^2 > \chi^2$  tabulated at 95% confidence i.e.  $9.25 > 7.815$ , we reject the null hypothesis that the representation of women in Management positions in Cross-River State Cultural Centre is not affected by achievement motivation and accept the alternative that the representation of women in Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is affected by inadequate education.

### **Analysis of Data According to Research Questions**

This segment of the study analyzed the data presented above and use the Group discussions and semi-structured interviews conducted by the researcher to triangulate information generated from the questionnaire and further deepen analysis and discussion on such information.

**Research Question 1:** What are the Gender Issues in the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre?

Table 5, 6 and 7 above were used to answer this research question. Findings as presented in tables 5, 6 and 7 shows that there are unequal opportunities for Managing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre and that even though women possess the necessary academic qualifications required for Managing the Cultural Centre, fewer women as compared to men are in Management positions in the centre.

**Research Question 2:** Did the Edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre make gender perspectives and the attention to the goal of gender equality central in the Operations of the Culture Centre?

It was discovered during the group discussions with the respondents that the Cross-River State Cultural Centre Board Edict of March, 1976 – which established the Cross-River State Cultural Centre did not make gender perspectives and the attention to the goal of gender equality central in the Operations of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre. The Edict only stated the objectives of the Cultural Centre and indicated that Theatres, Galleries and Museums should be established and Managed in the various divisions of the Cultural Centre amongst other objectives. Even when the Board system of administration of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre was abolished for the sole Administrator system, the Edict establishing the centre was not amended to reflect the goals of gender equality.

**Research Question 3:** What are the Organizational prejudices that block women from Senior Management Positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre?

Information obtained from the group discussions with respondents show that the appointment of persons to the position of Director of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre is usually political. This often places women on a serious disadvantage since women lack the political power necessary for them to be appointed as Directors of the Cultural Centre. There are also no equal opportunity laws in the Cross-River State

Cultural Centre. The establishment of equal Opportunity laws in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre will give women the opportunity of participating more fully in the Cultural Centre.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Findings from this study have shown that even though women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre have the requisite academic qualifications and experience necessary for Managing the Centre, they have been marginalized. The appointment of persons to the position of Director of the Cultural Centre is normally done by the Governor of the State and these appointments have not favoured the female gender. Only one female has been appointed to the position of Director of the centre from inception. This finding is consistent with the views of Okpeh Ochayi Okpeh who observed that the categorization of persons into the Masculine and Feminine gender makes women feel less important to men and gives rise to a situation whereby men are considered more intelligent, more valuable and more significant than women.

It was also discovered that appointments to higher Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre have been politicized. Consequently, women lack the political power necessary for them to be appointed to such positions. This finding is consistent with the findings of Yahaya Lessiele who in a paper titled women empowerment in Nigeria: problems, prospects and implications for counselling, reviewed the constraints against women and the prospects of women empowerment in Nigeria and posited that Nigerian women are still relegated to the background as they lack the political power necessary to actualize their innate potentials (132).

The study also found that gender perspectives and the attention to the goal of gender equality were not central to the provisions of the Decrees establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

It was also discovered that care has not been taken to ensure that both gender have equal opportunities in the course of working in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

### **Conclusion**

Although, women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre have requisite academic qualifications and experience necessary to be appointed to higher Management positions in the centre, the politicization of the position of Director of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre has made it practically impossible for more women to attain the position. The existing inequalities in the appointment of persons to the position of Director of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre should be reduced by appointing more women to the position. The Edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre should be reviewed and women given opportunities to make meaningful contributions to the Management of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. The Edict establishing the Cross-River State Cultural Centre should be reviewed in order to make gender perspectives and attention to the goal of gender equality central to the activities of the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.
2. The Ministry of Women Affairs should be reawakened to its responsibilities of Coordinating multi-sectoral reforms which integrate social, economic and political reforms to increase women's access, participation and representation in the public space. This would afford women the opportunity of being appointed to high Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre.
3. An equal Opportunities Commission should be created in addition to the Federal Character Commission so that besides geography and ethnicity, gender is reflected in the criteria for Operating the Federal Character principle.
4. In order to achieve individual growth and development for women in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre, some Nigerians who deny women of their rights and privileges need to be reoriented.
5. The politicization of appointments into higher Management positions in the Cross-River State Cultural Centre should be discouraged. Appointments into higher Management positions in the Centre should be based purely on merit. A board to handle issues of recruitment, promotions and appointments in the Cultural Centre should be set up so that appointments and promotions will henceforth be based on merit.

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