

Gender and Socio-economic Dynamics in the Labour market in Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Women in Nigeria face multifaceted barriers to labour market participation, stemming from early marriage, limited educational attainment, and entrenched societal expectations. In rural areas, nearly 50% of women are married by age 20, compared to less than 4% of men, leading to early pregnancies and domestic responsibilities that restrict women's ability to engage in formal employment. These dynamics are more pronounced among women from poorer households, exacerbating socio-economic inequalities. The Nigerian labour market is characterized by deep-rooted gender disparities and socio-economic complexities that significantly influence employment patterns, income distribution, and economic participation. Gender roles, cultural norms, and socio-economic status intersect to shape the opportunities and constraints faced by individuals, particularly women, in accessing and thriving within the labour market. Female entrepreneurs tend to operate in low-risk, low-capital sectors due to constraints such as limited access to finance, digital tools, and market information. Profit gap is up to 39% between male- and female-led small and medium enterprises. Educational disparities further compound gender inequality in the labour market. Government policies have historically focused on the formal sector, neglecting the informal economy where the majority of women work. This policy bias reinforces institutional gender inequality and limits the effectiveness of interventions aimed at promoting inclusive economic growth. The cumulative effect of these gender and socio-economic dynamics is a labour market that systematically disadvantages women, contributing to higher poverty rates among female-headed households. Nearly twice as many women as men live below the poverty line in Nigeria, highlighting the urgent need for targeted policy reforms. A multi-sectoral approach that includes expanding access to education, financial services, and digital infrastructure; reforming labour laws to promote equity; and designing inclusive policies that recognize and support informal sector contributions is needed. Bridging this gap of the Nigerian labour market that reflects a complex interplay of gender and socioeconomic factors that perpetuate inequality and hinder inclusive development is essential not only for gender equity but also for unlocking the full economic potential of the country. Human capital and gender stratification theories were used to explain this work. Sources of data collection and analysis are both qualitative and quantitative.

Keywords: Gender, Socio-economic, Dynamics, Labour, market.

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Introduction

Concept of Gender and Socio-economic Dynamics Globally

Gender disparities in labour markets remain a persistent global challenge, despite decades of progress toward equality. Women continue to face systemic barriers in employment, leadership, and income across both developed and developing economies. According to the Global Gender Gap Report (2025) by the World Economic Forum, women represent 41.2% of the global workforce but are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles, particularly in high-growth sectors such as technology and infrastructure. These disparities are not only a matter of social justice but also have profound economic implications. Underutilization of female talent leads to lost productivity, slower innovation, and weaker economic resilience. The OECD and IMF have emphasized that closing gender gaps in labour markets could substantially boost global GDP and improve social cohesion. However, gendered occupational segregation, wage gaps, and limited access to skilling opportunities continue to hinder progress. These issues are further compounded by socio-economic factors such as education, geographic location, and cultural norms, which vary widely across regions.

Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country and largest economy, presents a unique context for examining gender and socio-economic dynamics in the labour market. Despite a growing female labour force, women in Nigeria remain disproportionately represented in informal and low-income sectors. According to Enfield (2019), women are more likely to be involved in farming and small household enterprises, often driven by necessity rather than opportunity. Early marriage, limited education, and cultural expectations further restrict women's access to formal employment and leadership positions as well as the Nigerian labour market which exhibits significant wage disparities. A recent study by Nwosu and Orji (2023) found that the gender wage gap is statistically significant across all income levels, with women earning less than men even when

controlling for education and experience. These disparities are more pronounced at the lower end of the wage distribution, indicating a "sticky floor" effect that traps women in low-paying jobs.

Nigeria's youthful and growing population presents both a challenge and an opportunity for inclusive economic development. Gender inequality in the labour market contributes to broader socio-economic disparities, including poverty and limited access to education and healthcare. Comparative insights from other countries can inform policy reforms and institutional changes needed to promote gender equity

Objectives and Scope of the Paper

This paper aims to:

1. Analyze the gender and socio-economic dynamics in Nigeria's labour market using empirical data and theoretical frameworks.
2. Investigate how differences in education, skills, and experience affect labour market outcomes.
3. Explore how societal norms and institutional structures perpetuate inequality.
4. A comparative analysis from countries including China and Singapore on gender and Socio-economic dynamics in the Labour market.

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Gender and socio-economic dynamics in Nigeria's labour market using empirical data and theoretical frameworks

Recent studies reveal persistent gender disparities in Nigeria's labour market. According to Orji and Nwosu (2024), there is a statistically significant gender wage gap across all points of the wage distribution. Men consistently earn more than women, with the gap being more pronounced at the lower end of the wage spectrum a phenomenon referred to as the "sticky floor" effect. This suggests that women are disproportionately trapped in low-

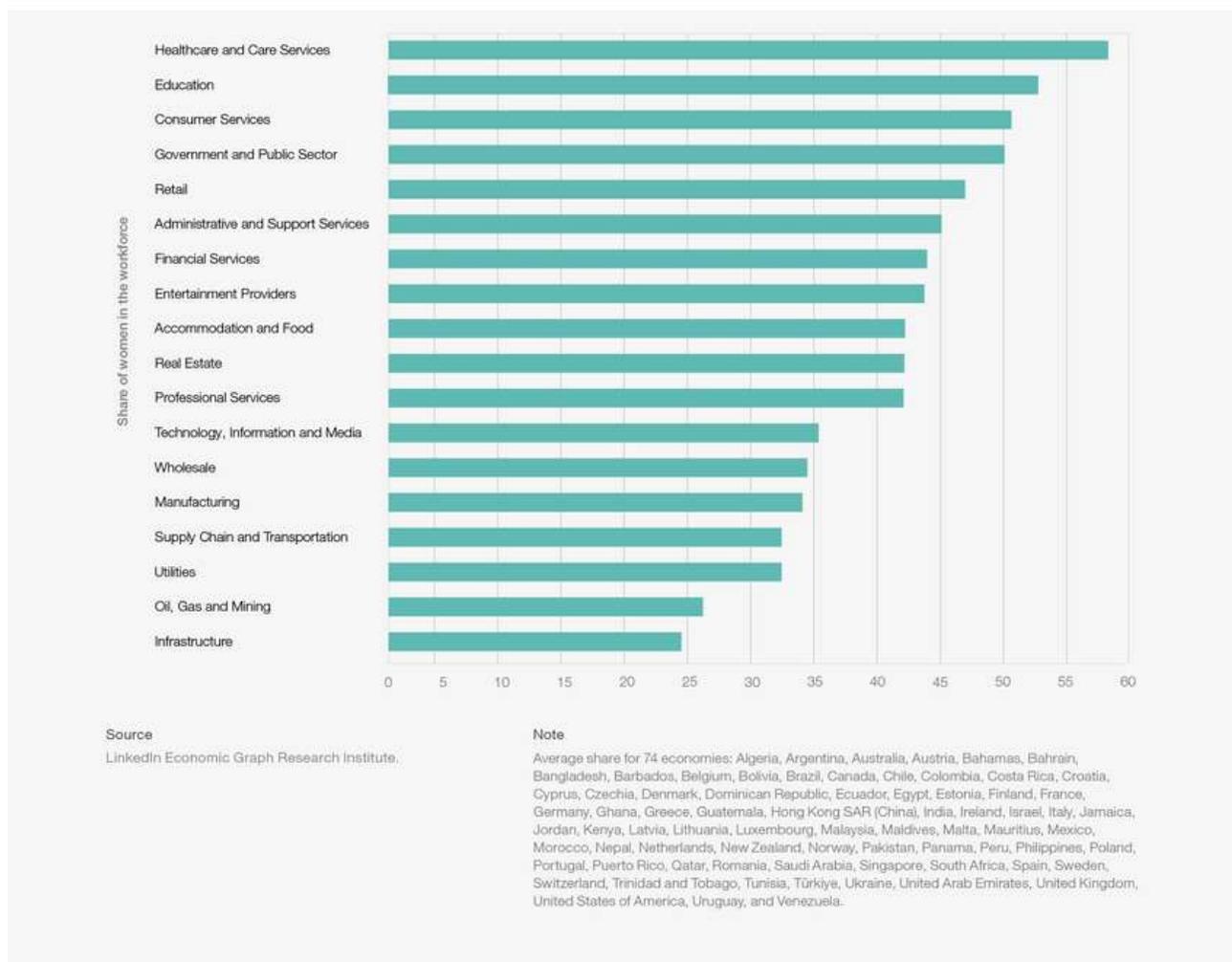
paying jobs, while men have greater access to higher-paying opportunities. The study also found that factors such as urban residence, unionisation, education, and occupation significantly influence the wage gap. Between 2003–2004 and 2018–2019, the composition effect (differences in characteristics like education and experience) became more dominant in

explaining the wage gap, indicating that disparities in human capital are a major contributor.

Although the gap has narrowed over time, women still face barriers such as early marriage, limited access to education, and cultural expectations that prioritize domestic roles over professional aspirations.

FIGURE 2.2 Share of women in the workforce, by industry, selected economies

Values as of 2024



How differences in education, skills, and experience affect labour market outcomes

Educational attainment is a key determinant of labour market success. However, in Nigeria, gender

disparities in education persist, particularly in rural and northern regions. According to Enfield (2019), the primary school completion rate is about 80% for boys and only 66% for girls. This gap widens at higher levels of education, limiting women’s access

to skilled and formal employment. Impact on employment, Adeosun and Owolabi (2021) found that higher education levels significantly increase wages for women, but fewer women attain these levels compared to men. This educational gap contributes to lower female participation in high-paying sectors.

On sectoral segregation, women are often directed toward traditionally “feminine” fields such as teaching and nursing, while men dominate engineering, ICT, and finance, fields with higher income potential. On employability skills, both hard and soft skills are critical for employability.

However, gendered norms and institutional barriers affect the type and quality of skills women acquire. On Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Nigeria, studies by Emah et al. (2025) found that women are underrepresented in technical fields like welding, electrical installation, and electronics. Instead, they dominate hotel management and catering, which are lower-paying sectors. On skill perception bias, it was noticed that even when women acquire similar skills, employers perceive them as less competent in technical roles. This perception limits their employment opportunities and reinforces occupational segregation. On soft skills gap, many TVET institutions in Nigeria do not integrate soft skills training into their curriculum. This disproportionately affects women, who often lack access to informal networks and mentorship that could enhance their employability. On work Experience and Career progression, experience is another critical factor in labour market outcomes, and gender differences here are shaped by social roles and life choices.

Fapohunda (2013) found that women often experience more career interruptions due to childbearing and caregiving responsibilities. This results in fewer years of continuous work experience, which negatively affects promotions and salary

growth. Employers’ intent on promotion bias may assume that women are less committed to their careers, leading to fewer promotions and leadership opportunities, even when women have similar qualifications and experience as men.

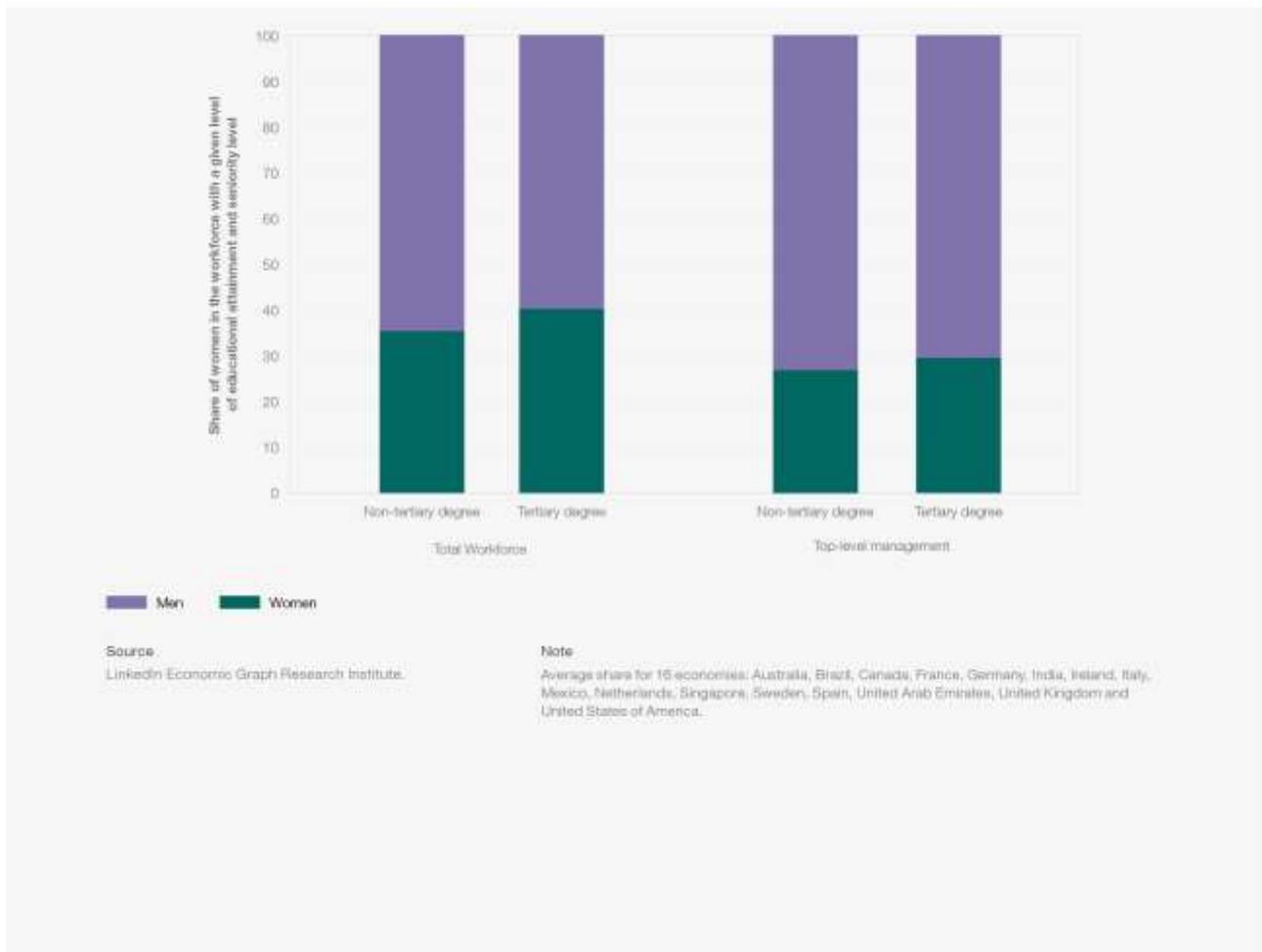
Online Labour Market Evidence, a study by Archibong et al. (2023) using data from Nigeria’s largest online job platform found that women apply to fewer and lower-level jobs than men, despite having similar qualifications. This was attributed to information asymmetry and self-selection bias, where women underestimate their qualifications or anticipate discrimination.

Gender differences in education, skills, and experience significantly shape labour market outcomes in Nigeria. Women face structural and cultural barriers that limit their access to quality education, technical skills, and continuous work experience. These disparities result in lower wages, limited career mobility, and underrepresentation in high-paying sectors. In 2024, men continue to be better represented in the workforce across all levels of educational attainment comprising 65% of workers without a tertiary degree and 60% with tertiary diplomas

(Figure 2.3). This is despite the fact that women graduate from tertiary education at higher rates than men. Importantly, among tertiary-educated women in the workforce, just 29.5% make it to top leadership, despite representing 40.3% of the workforce. Even for women with master’s or bachelor’s degrees, top-level representation plateaus at 30.7% and 30.8%, respectively.

In other words, the gap between women’s representation in the total workforce and in senior leadership widens as education levels increase, signaling a clear disconnect between educational attainment and economic engagement. This disparity underscores the inefficiency of current systems in translating women’s skills into leadership and economic decision-making roles.

FIGURE 2.3 Share of women and men in the workforce by educational attainment and seniority level, selected economies
Values as of 2024



Demographic shifts suggest that workforce transformation will also see gender parity dynamics change. Women aged 16-28 years now represent 45.7% of the workforce, while the representation of women from those aged 61-79 years stands at 26.8%, indicating that younger women are finding their way into the workforce and offering a demographic dividend for economies that can, in the decades ahead, retain and nurture the career progression of a highly educated labour force.

For nearly a decade, women have steadily gained ground in workplace leadership. Between 2015 and 2024, the share of women in top-management roles increased from 25.7% to 28.1%, with midlevel

management also rising from 31.5% to 33.4%. These are important gains, but the momentum has slowed. Since 2020, the gap between women in mid-level and top-level leadership has stalled at 5.4 percentage points, indicating persistent drains in the leadership pipeline.

Gender differences in education, skills, and experience significantly shape labour market outcomes in Nigeria. Women face structural and cultural barriers that limit their access to quality education, technical skills, and continuous work experience. These disparities result in lower wages, limited career mobility, and underrepresentation in high-paying sectors.

Societal Norms and Institutional Structures as Drivers of Gender Inequality

Societal norms, coupled with cultural expectations, gender roles, and deeply entrenched patriarchal norms shape societal expectations about gender roles in Nigeria. Women are often relegated to domestic and caregiving responsibilities, while leadership, technical, and decision-making roles are culturally viewed as male domains. These norms are reinforced through family structures, religious teachings, and media portrayals through the following ways:

Early Marriage and Domesticity: Cultural practices such as early marriage and polygamy limit women's access to education and formal employment. In Northern Nigeria, girls are often married before the age of 18, curtailing their educational and career prospects (Asmau, 2024).

Religious Interpretations: Interpretations of religious doctrines often emphasize women's roles within the home, discouraging public or political engagement. This contributes to low female representation in leadership and governance.

Social Stigma: Women who challenge traditional roles by pursuing careers or political office are frequently stigmatized as unfeminine or morally compromised, which deters many from seeking advancement (Asmau, 2024) while others are tagged feminists which is perceived as a derogatory name for ambitious women. These cultural expectations are not just informal they actively shape women's self-perception, aspirations, and societal acceptance.

Institutional Structures: Institutional frameworks in Nigeria often fail to protect women from discrimination or promote gender equity effectively. Even where laws exist, enforcement is weak, and many policies are not gender-sensitive.

Legal Gaps: Nigeria's Labour Act (2004) prohibits discrimination but lacks explicit protections for women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, or those living with HIV/AIDS. The Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act (VAPP, 2015) has only been adopted in 34 of 36 states, limiting its reach Shahin (2025).

Informal Labour Market: A significant portion of Nigerian women work in the informal sector, which is largely outside the scope of formal labour protections. This leaves them vulnerable to exploitation, wage theft, and harassment.

Workplace Patriarchy: In formal settings, patriarchal attitudes persist. A study by Adisa et al. (2020) The study uses qualitative interviews to reveal how entrenched patriarchal norms in Nigerian banks shape women's behavior encouraging self-censorship, limiting assertiveness, and reinforcing male dominance. These dynamics undermine women's performance and career progression, despite formal policies promoting gender equality.

Intersection of Norms and Institutions

The World Bank (2023) emphasizes that social norms are informal rules that guide behavior and expectations. When these norms are embedded in institutions such as laws, markets, and policies, they perpetuate unequal access to resources and opportunities. For example: Employers may assume women are less productive due to caregiving responsibilities, leading to biased hiring and promotion practices. Government policies may prioritize maternity leave over shared parental leave; reinforcing the idea that caregiving is solely a woman's role World Bank (2023). This intersection creates a feedback loop where norms influence institutions, and institutions reinforce norms.

Cultural Barriers to Education and Economic Empowerment

Ogakwu (2020) highlights how cultural beliefs devalue girls' education, especially in rural and northern Nigeria. Practices like patrilineal inheritance and early marriage discourage investment in female education, which in turn limits women's economic participation. Because of educational disparities, girls are often the last to be enrolled and the first to be withdrawn from school during financial hardship. Teacher Bias and Curriculums Surveys show that teachers spend less

time engaging girls in class, especially in STEM subjects, reinforcing gender stereotypes.

Study indicates that societal norms and institutional structures in Nigeria work together to perpetuate gender inequality. Addressing these requires:

Policy Interventions: Reform labour laws to explicitly protect marginalized groups, ensure nationwide adoption and enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, promote inclusive workplace policies and gender-sensitive hiring practices.

Cultural Reorientation: Launch public awareness campaigns to challenge harmful gender stereotypes, promote positive media portrayals of women in leadership and technical roles, engage religious and community leaders in advocating for gender equity.

Empowerment Initiatives: Expand access to education and vocational training for girls, support women's participation in politics and governance, Provide financial and legal support for women in informal sectors.

Nigeria's' Persistent Gender Wage Gap and Labour Market Polarisation

Gender Wage Gap has persisted in Nigeria despite some progress; men consistently earn more than women across all wage levels. The gap was more pronounced in 2003–2004 and has declined by 2018–2019, especially at the top of the wage distribution. However, a “sticky floor” effect persists, meaning women at the bottom of the wage scale face more entrenched inequality than those at the top (Orji and Nwosu, 2024).

Key Influencing Factors to Persistent Gender Wage Gap in the Labour Market: Urban residence, education, unionisation, and occupation significantly affect wage disparities.

The composition effect (differences in characteristics like education and experience) now explains more of the gap than the wage structure itself.

Socio-economic Dynamics: Women are more likely to be employed in informal or agricultural sectors. COVID-19 exacerbated gender disparities, pushing more women into lower-paying farm-based jobs Hossain and Hossain, (2025).

Comparative analysis from China and Singapore on gender and Socio-economic dynamics in the Labour market

The overall female labour force participation (LFP) rate in China is above the global average, but has been declining over recent decades. According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China (2023), the female labour force participation rate has declined from 73.2% in 1990 to 61.5% in 2022. As of 2024, this rate was 60% according to data from the World Bank (World Bank 2025). This downward trend is closely related to economic restructuring, changes in fertility policies, and the influence of traditional gender roles. However, despite the gradual popularisation of modern gender equality concepts, the traditional notion of "men handle external affairs while women focus on domestic responsibilities" still profoundly influences women's career choices. Labour Force Participation in females' participation has dropped from 73.2% in 1990 to 60% in 2024, despite being above the global average (Wang, 2025).

Comparative Insights on Gender and Socio-economic Dynamics in the Labour market

Aspect	Nigeria	China	Singapore
Gender Wage Gap	Persistent, declining slowly	Exists, worsened by motherhood and retirement policies	Narrowing, with institutional support
Labour Participation	Lower for women, especially in informal sectors	Declining, especially in rural areas	Relatively high and improving
Education vs Employment	Education helps but doesn't eliminate wage gap	High female education, low employment conversion	High education and PMET representation
Policy Support	Limited, needs focus on wage structure and human capital	Emerging, but traditional norms and weak childcare systems persist	Strong institutional frameworks and gender equity initiatives

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, developed by Schultz (1961) introduced the concept of human capital, arguing that education, health, and skills are forms of capital that enhance productivity and economic growth. He emphasized that investing in people yields returns similar to investing in physical capital. Becker (1964) posits that individuals' earnings and productivity are determined by their investment in education, training, and experience. In Nigeria,

disparities in access to education and vocational training between men and women contribute significantly to labour market inequality. For example, women are less likely to attain higher education due to socio-cultural constraints and economic barriers. This limits their ability to compete for formal sector jobs and high-paying positions. Becker's (1964) work formalized the idea that individuals' earnings and productivity are largely shaped by their investments in education, training, and experience. He argued that these investments function like capital yielding returns

over time and help explain wage differentials, employment patterns, and economic growth. The findings by Orji and Nwosu (2024) support this theory, showing that differences in education and occupation explain a substantial portion of the wage gap. In Nigeria, disparities in access to education and vocational training between men and women significantly affect labour market outcomes in the following ways:

Education and Labour Participation: Nagac and Nuhu (2016) found that female labour force participation in Nigeria follows an inverse U-shaped pattern rising with education up to secondary level but declining with higher education due to socio-cultural constraints and limited job opportunities for highly educated women.

Occupational Segregation in Nigeria's Labour Market: Occupational segregation refers to the unequal distribution of men and women across different types of jobs and industries. In Nigeria, this phenomenon is deeply rooted in both socio-cultural norms and systemic barriers that limit women's access to certain occupations.

Gendered Employment Patterns: Women in Nigeria are disproportionately represented in: Clerical and administrative roles, Sales and service jobs, Agricultural and informal sector work. Men, on the other hand, dominate. Technical and engineering roles, Leadership and managerial positions, Formal sector employment with higher pay and benefits

According to Enfield (2019), women are more likely to work in small household enterprises and informal jobs, often out of economic necessity. These roles typically require lower levels of education and offer limited career progression. The report also highlights that 73.5% of women are involved in farming-related activities, which are low-paid and lack formal protections.

Orji and Nwosu (2024) found that occupation is one of the strongest covariates influencing the gender wage gap in Nigeria. Their study revealed that men earn significantly more than women across all wage levels, and that occupational segregation contributes to this disparity

Occupational Segregation: Women are more likely to be employed in administrative, clerical, and sales roles, while men dominate technical and leadership positions. This reflects unequal access to skill development and professional networks.

Causes of Gender occupational Segregation

Yamaguchi, (2019) contributes to the debate on the causes of gender segregation as follows;

Educational Disparities: Girls are less likely to complete secondary and tertiary education, especially in Northern Nigeria. This limits their access to professional and technical roles.

Cultural Norms: Societal expectations often discourage women from pursuing careers in male-dominated fields such as engineering, ICT, and construction.

Limited Access to Networks: Women have fewer professional networks and mentorship opportunities, which are crucial for career advancement.

Workplace Bias: Employers may perceive women as less suited for leadership or technical roles due to stereotypes about competence and commitment. Carranza et al (2018) identifies structural barriers such as discriminatory hiring practices, social norms, and unequal access to education and childcare as key drivers of occupational segregation. It also offers policy recommendations to reduce these disparities.

Implications of Gender occupational Segregation

Wage Inequality: Women in clerical and sales roles earn significantly less than men in technical and leadership positions.

Limited Career Mobility: Women are often stuck in roles with little opportunity for promotion or skill development.

Economic Inefficiency: Underutilization of female talent reduces overall productivity and innovation in the economy.

Wage Gap: Orji and Nwosu (2024) revealed that men earn significantly more than women across all wage levels in Nigeria. The gender wage gap is now

largely explained by the composition effect such as differences in education, occupation, and experience rather than wage structure alone. These findings affirm that improving women's human capital through education, training, and experience is essential for reducing gender disparities in the labour market.

Gender Stratification Theory

Gender Stratification Theory, advanced by Walby (1990), emphasizes the role of societal structures and cultural norms in maintaining gender inequality. In Nigeria, patriarchal norms often dictate women's roles in society, limiting their access to economic resources and decision-making power. This theory explains why women are overrepresented in informal sectors and underrepresented in leadership roles. Structural barriers such as discriminatory hiring practices, lack of maternity protections, and limited access to finance further entrench gender disparities. The "sticky floor" effect observed in Nigeria's wage distribution is a direct outcome of these stratified systems. In Nigeria, these systemic structures manifest in several ways:

Cultural Norms and Early Marriage: Enfield (2019) reports that nearly 50% of rural Nigerian women are married by age 20, compared to less than 4% of men. Early marriage leads to early pregnancies and domestic responsibilities, limiting women's ability to pursue education and formal employment. In *Theorizing Patriarchy*, Walby (1990) presents a comprehensive framework for understanding how patriarchy operates through six interrelated societal structures:

paid work, household production, culture, sexuality, violence, the state. She argues that these structures are shaped by cultural norms and institutional practices that systematically disadvantage women and reinforce male dominance. Walby's work is foundational in feminist sociology and continues to inform debates on gender equity and policy reform which is needed in two major areas such as education and informal sector.

Educational Barriers: Ogakwu (2020) highlights that cultural beliefs often devalue girls' education,

especially in Northern Nigeria. Practices like patrilineal inheritance and early marriage discourage investment in female education, reinforcing economic dependency.

Informal Sector Dominance: Women are overrepresented in informal sectors such as farming and petty trade. These sectors offer low pay, limited job security, and minimal access to social protections. Enfield (2019) found that 73.5% of women are involved in farming-related activities, which hold most women in low-paid occupations. These systemic barriers persist regardless of individual qualifications, underscoring the need for structural reforms.

Summary and Recommendations

Summary

Bridge the wage gap where women earn significantly less than men across all sectors, especially in informal and agricultural work. Labour Participation of women should be encouraged as female participation is lower than male, with women overrepresented in informal, low-paying, and vulnerable employment. Barriers include limited access to education and finance, unpaid care responsibilities, discriminatory hiring practices, and weak enforcement of gender-sensitive labour laws. Policy Gaps should be closed. Since Nigeria has adopted frameworks like the National Gender Policy and National Employment Policy, implementation and enforcement remain weak.

Recommendations

Strengthen Legal and Policy Frameworks

Implement the Revised National Gender Policy (2021–2026) to mainstream gender across all sectors and levels of governance. This policy emphasizes gender justice, equality, and social inclusion. Enforce anti-discrimination laws in hiring, promotion, and workplace practices to protect women from bias and harassment. Integrate gender into the National Employment Policy (NEP) 2025, which promotes decent work and addresses

inequality of opportunities through structural transformation.

Expand Economic Inclusion Programs

Scale up cash transfer and livelihood support programs targeting women, especially in rural and low-income communities. Evidences from the Nigeria National Social Safety Net Program (NASSP) shows that such interventions significantly boost women's employment and empowerment. Support women-led MSMEs through innovative financing mechanisms like psychometric loan assessments and non-collateral-based lending. These approaches have proven effective in increasing firm survival and profitability.

Improve Access to Education and Skills Training

Promote STEM and vocational education for girls and women, aligning training with market demands. Support adolescent girls' education and delay early marriage through programs like AGILE (Adolescent Girls Initiative for Learning and Empowerment), which combines life skills, digital training, and cash transfers. Policy Implications; expand access to STEM education for girls and integrate soft skills into vocational training. Promote gender-sensitive hiring and promotion practices in both public and private sectors. Support flexible work arrangements and parental leave policies to reduce career interruptions for women. Maximizing returns on education investment by integrating women's skills and experience into the workforce contributes to stronger and more balanced economies, yet many economies are failing to translate educational attainment into full workforce utilization. This signals a largely untapped return on education investment where talent is being siphoned inefficiently, leaving valuable human capital underleveraged.

Reform Land and Asset Ownership Laws

Secure women's land rights through legal reforms and joint titling initiatives. Women's limited access to land and property restricts their ability to invest and access credit⁴.

Promote awareness and legal literacy around inheritance and property rights to empower women economically.

Enhance Childcare and Work-Life Balance Support

Invest in affordable childcare services to enable women's full participation in the labour market.

Encourage flexible work arrangements and parental leave policies that support both men and women.

Strengthen Labour Market Institutions

Improve Labour Market Information Systems (LMIS) to track gender-disaggregated employment data and inform policy decisions. Promote Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) such as job matching, career counseling, and skills upgrading with a gender lens.

Foster Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration

Engage civil society, private sector, and international partners in designing and implementing gender-responsive employment programs. Establish accountability mechanisms like policy trackers to monitor progress on gender inclusion.

Conclusion

Gender-inclusive labour market reforms in Nigeria are not only a matter of equity but a strategic imperative for sustainable economic development. Recent research and national policy frameworks such as the Revised National Gender Policy and the National Employment Policy highlight both the progress made and the persistent challenges facing women in the workforce. Despite improvements in education and entrepreneurship among Nigerian women, structural barriers such as wage inequality, informal employment, limited access to finance, and unpaid care responsibilities continue to hinder their full participation in the labour market. These issues are compounded by weak enforcement of gender-sensitive laws and insufficient institutional support.

To achieve meaningful reform, Nigeria must adopt a multi-dimensional approach that combines legal enforcement, economic empowerment, education, and social protection. Strengthening labour market institutions, investing in gender-disaggregated data systems, and fostering collaboration across government, civil society, and the private sector are essential steps.

Ultimately, gender-inclusive labour market reforms will not only uplift women but also enhance productivity, reduce poverty, and accelerate national development. The time for bold, inclusive, and sustained action is now.

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