

Perception Related to Labour Participation, Power Relations, and Social Expectations in Nigeria

Adetayo Adetunji and Abiodun Y. Omotosho

ABSTRACT

Women and girls especially face gendered disadvantages in health, political representation, and the labour participation. As a result, this study explored the perception of men and women on gender inequality in Nigeria as it relates to labour participation, power between men and women, and social expectations. This study was descriptive and cross-sectional in design and used an online-based structured survey to elicit data from 238 men and women. Perception related to labour participation, power relations, and social expectations were determined on 8-item, 6-item, and 10-item perception scales, respectively. The majority (78.2%) were females, and the average age was 25.0±7.2 years. More men had unfavourable perceptions across the assessed perception categories compared to females. More than half (57.6%) of the respondents had unfavourable perceptions related to labour participation of women and men. Furthermore, one-third (31.1%) of respondents had unfavourable perception on power relations that exist between men and women. The majority (86.6%) of the respondents had favourable perception of social expectations of men and women. Sex was significantly associated with all perception categories ($P \leq 0.05$). The high proportion of unfavourable perceptions related to women's labour participation and power relations could be addressed through comprehensive social norms interventions that will lead to positive perception change.

Keywords: Discrimination, Gender Inequality, Labour Participation, Power Relations, Social Expectations.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The concept of gender refers to the way the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys are socially constructed (Wiles, 2009). While socially and culturally constructed gender norms determine roles and opportunities, restrictive and harmful gender norms, values, and expectations result in inequalities that extend across the life course and generations (Brettell, 2002; Kennedy *et al.*, 2020). This assertion is encapsulated in the concept of gender inequality which refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender. It arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles (Brettell, 2002).

Gender inequality is a major barrier to human development and an impediment to inclusive economic growth and development. This is in addition to the exclusion of already disadvantaged individuals from development gains (Klasen, 2017; UNDP, n.d.). Deep-rooted gender inequalities result in lower human development outcomes for women compared to men (GSDRC, n.d.). Also, women, have suffered immense discrimination, rejection, and deprivation because of gender bias. This is evident in their health, political representation, and their participation in the labour market. This gendered discrimination culminates in negative consequences for development (UNDP, n.d.).

Evidence from previous studies has shown that gender differences in labour-related policies affect women globally. For example, it is estimated that over 2.7 billion women are legally deprived of the same work opportunities as males. This is supported by the fact that in 2018, 104 of the 189 economies analysed still had rules prohibiting women from working in specified occupations. In addition, 59 economies have no rules against workplace sexual harassment, and 18 countries allow husbands to legally forbid their wives from working (World Bank, 2022). Women remain less likely to participate in the labour market than men around the world and they are more likely to be unemployed than men (UN Women, 2018). Globally, it is estimated that the gender wage gap is estimated to be 23 per cent (ITUC, 2018). The real representation of the gender pay gap might be worse in developing countries due to the potentially high rates of informal self-employment. In Nigeria, this is evidenced through the poor economic and education indices where the

labour force participation rate is higher among males (59.9%) compared to females (50.5%) and the literacy rate is 71.3% among males compared to 52.7% among females (World Economic Forum, 2020).

The Nigerian context is typified by gendered disparities that are detrimental to women. Culture, social norms, religion, and other factors have continued to widen the gap between Nigerian men and women and in the process keep women in a subordinate position to men (Makama, 2013). Gender inequality restricts women's access to health care, education, labour force, and resources (Enfield, 2019; Heise *et al.*, 2019). This has also meant differential treatment of men and women in laws and political participation (Makama, 2013). This is reflected in power relations between men and women, the expected roles of men and women and access to education and employment. The Nigerian context is patriarchal and this continues to sustain the sexual division of labour and in the process limit, women's participation in the labour force and stipulate conditions for those who are employed (Adisa *et al.*, 2019; Enfield, 2019; Makama, 2013). Even though the presence and status of women in paid employment have improved, the progression of women into positions of management has been slow (Carli & Eagly, 2016; Shukla, 2016).

The exclusion and discrimination of women from participation in major decision-making processes have also been documented (Emeka & Monica, 2011). Nigerian women earn less than their male counterparts at every educational level, and in some situations, men with less education earn more than their better-educated female peers (Akpan & Sempere, n.d.; Enfield, 2019). The majority of Nigerian women are concentrated in casual, low-skilled, low-paid informal sector employment (Obayelu *et al.*, 2020; Olu-Owolabi *et al.*, 2020). These assertions are further evidenced by some gender indicators in Nigeria. The gender development index shows that Nigeria ranks 161 out of 189 UN-recognised countries, the total unemployment rate (female to male ratio) is 1.20, mean years of schooling is 5.7 years for females compared to 7.7 years for males. The labour force participation rate is 47.9% for females compared to 57.9% for males (Datta, 2018).

Women are disproportionately affected by poverty and in Nigeria, approximately 80.2 million women and girls lack equality of opportunity and therefore have significantly worse life chances than men and boys (British Council Nigeria, 2012; Mayah *et al.*, 2017; OXFAM International, 2022). These gaps can be sufficiently bridged through a proper understanding of individual and interpersonal perceptions and attitudes related to labour participation, power between men and women and gender roles. To this end, this study is seeking to investigate the perception of men and women on gender inequality in Nigeria as it relates to the mentioned components.

II. METHODOLOGY

A. Study Design

This study was descriptive cross-sectional in design and was further guided by Robert Connell's Theory of Gender and Power (Allen, 2009; Wingood & Diclemente, 2000), UNDP's Gender Inequality Index (UNDP, n.d.), and Socio-ecological model (McLeroy *et al.*, 1988). The study used an online-based structured questionnaire programmed on the KoBoToolBox survey platform. This was used to elicit responses from men and women using social media platforms.

B. Study Population

The study population for this study was men and women aged 18 years and above. The major criteria for the selection of respondents are as follows.

1. Participants must be adults aged 18 years and above.
2. Participants must own/have access to a smartphone/a computer to complete the survey.
3. Participants must consent to be part of the study.

C. Sample Size and Sampling

The sample size was determined using the published tables for sample size determination (Israel, 2003). A sample size of 204 was used stemming from the assumption of $\pm 7\%$ precision for a population of more than 100,000. 20% of the calculated sample size was added to make up incomplete or invalid data and or cases of attrition. The new sample size "N" was calculated using (1) suggested by Wayne (1975) and Nilima (2017).

$$N = n/1 - NR \quad (1)$$

where,

n = old sample size, NR = non-response rate.

$N = n/1 - 20\%$, $N = 204/1 - 0.2$, $N = 204/0.8$, $N = 255$

While 255 was the final sample size for this study, at least 17 samples were removed at the level of analysis due to incomplete and invalid data to bring the final sample size to 238.

D. Sampling

Due to the nature of the platform used to elicit data from respondents, convenience sampling was used to sample participants. In doing this, a link to the KoboToolBox platform where the survey was hosted was posted on Twitter and Instagram with visitors invited to respond. To reduce bias using this sampling method, the KoboToolBox platform was set to an “Online-Only (single submission)” mode to restrict multiple submissions. Additionally, a statement that admonished respondents to make only an entry was included in the survey instruction.

E. Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, there was an extensive literature review of the items to be captured such as gender inequality, labour force participation, power, and social expectations. Additionally, there was an effective consultation with experts for appropriate guidance and revisions. Reliability was ensured through the pretest of the survey toll on 10% of the total sample size. The pre-test data were subjected to descriptive analysis and subsequently Cronbach alpha statistical test. Cronbach alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items is as a group. In this test, a result showing a correlation coefficient greater than 0.70 is said to be reliable and the closer the value of the reliability test to 1, the more reliable is the instrument. The Cronbach alpha value was 0.82, showing the tool to be reliable.

F. Instrument for Data Collection

A structured, self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents. The questionnaire was adapted from the following gender scales: Gender Equitable Measurement Scale (Ricardo *et al.*, 2006), Gender Relations Scale (Stephenson *et al.*, 2012), Sexual Relationship Power Scale (Pulerwitz *et al.*, 2000), Gender Norms Attitude Scale (Waszak *et al.*, 2001). The instrument comprised four sections. Section A focused on the socio-demographic information about the respondents, section B focused on the perceived labour participation of women and men in Nigeria, section C helped elicit information on perceived power relations that exist between men and women in Nigeria, and Section D garnered information on social expectations of men and women in Nigeria.

G. Data collection process

As stated previously, the survey was completed by respondents on the KoboToolBox platform. A link to the survey was generated and posted on Twitter and Instagram social media platforms. Data collection lasted for two months between October and November 2021. Each survey session was completed between 15 – 20 minutes. The survey comprised screening instructions to get the desired study population that met the laid-out inclusion criteria.

H. Data Management and Analysis

Data from the online survey was extracted, cleaned, and checked for completeness. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26 was used for data analysis. Perception related to labour participation was determined on an 8-item perception scale. Each item carried a maximum of 2 points with 0-8 points representing unfavourable perception, while 9-16 points represented favourable perception. Similarly, perception-related power relations were determined on a 6-item perception scale where 0-3 points represented unfavourable perception, while 0-6 points represented favourable perception. Lastly, perception of social expectations was determined on a 10-item perception scale where 0-5 points represented unfavourable perception, while 6-10 points represented favourable perception. The chi-square test was used to test the association of sex and perception categories. Results were presented in tables and charts.

I. Ethical Considerations

This study was reviewed and approved by the National Health Ethics Research Committee with approval number NHREC/01/01/2007-04/08/2021. Additionally, informed consent was obtained before each data-gathering activity. Only respondents who can provide written informed consent were recruited for the study. Ethical issues like confidentiality, the opportunity to decline the interview at any stage and non-exposure to risk were discussed with each respondent. To ensure the confidentiality data, the names of respondents and other identifiers that could link the participants to the provided information were not required.

III. RESULTS

A. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Table I shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. The majority (78.2%) of respondents were females, the average was 25.0±7.2 years with 63% of respondents aged 25 years or less.

Most (92.4%) respondents had tertiary education, 89.9% were married, and less than half (42.3%) were of the Yoruba ethnic group. The majority (77.7%) were Christians, and 63.1% were employed out of which 81% work in the formal sector. More than half (53.5%) earned 50,000 naira or less per month. This figure also translates to 108 USD.

TABLE I: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC OF RESPONDENTS

Demographics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	52	21.8
Female	186	78.2
Total	238	100
Age* (as at last birthday)		
≤20	74	32.6
21-25	69	30.4
26-30	46	20.3
31-35	18	7.9
≥36	20	8.8
Total	227	100
Level of Education		
Secondary	18	7.6
Tertiary	218	92.4
Total	236	100
Marital Status		
Single	214	89.9
Married	24	10.1
Total	238	100
Ethnicity*		
Yoruba	99	42.3
Igbo	45	19.2
Hausa	20	8.5
Igala	7	3.0
Edo	7	3.0
Urhobo	4	1.7
Others	52	22.2
Total	234	100
Religion		
Islam	35	15.0
Christianity	181	77.7
No religion	14	6.0
Others	3	1.3
Total	233	100
Employment Status		
Employed	132	56.6
Unemployed	101	43.4
Total	233	100
Type of employment		
Formal	81	81.0
Informal	19	19.0
Total	100	100
Income (Estimated from all sources per month)		
≤50,000	77	53.5
50,001-100,000	25	17.4
100,001-150,000	15	10.4
150,001-200,000	3	2.1
≥200,001	24	16.7
Total	144	100

* Mean age = 25.0±7.2, Median = 23 years, Minimum = 18 years, Maximum = 69 years

B. Perception Related to Labour Participation of Women and Men in Nigeria (PER_1)

Perception related to the labour participation of women and men is shown in Table 2. Approximately 71.6% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that gender contributes to unemployment/underemployment. The majority (75.8%) strongly disagreed with the following notion: "If the male partner provides, the female partner should not seek employment." Also, 77.2% strongly disagreed or disagreed that women have more leadership positions in workplaces and 75.6% strongly disagreed that men and women should not receive equal pay. At least 1 in 3 (28.9%) respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed that women are paid less than men in workplaces. On having enough financial resources to obtain personal needs, 44% of the respondents disagreed and 26.9% strongly disagreed.

Similarly, 1 in 3 respondents (29.7%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement that women do not have the same access to capacity-building opportunities as men, while 29.8% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the allocation of career opportunities is equal among men and women.

TABLE II: PERCEPTION RELATED TO LABOUR PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND MEN IN NIGERIA

Statements	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Total
Gender contributes to unemployment /underemployment.	75 (31.8)	94 (39.8)	25 (10.6)	8 (3.4)	34 (14.4)	236
If the male partner provides, the female partner should not seek employment	4 (1.7)	1 (0.4)	3 (1.3)	179 (75.8)	49 (20.8)	236
Women have more leadership positions in workplaces	4 (1.7)	10 (4.2)	40 (16.9)	72 (30.4)	111 (46.8)	237
Men and women should not receive equal pay.	2 (0.8)	13 (5.5)	7 (2.9)	180 (75.6)	36 (15.1)	238
Women are paid less than men in workplaces	49 (21.1)	58 (25.0)	58 (25.0)	18 (7.8)	49 (21.1)	232
I have enough financial resources to obtain anything I want	8 (3.4)	28 (12.0)	32 (13.7)	63 (26.9)	103 (44.0)	234
Women do not have the same access to capacity-building opportunities as men	57 (24.2)	91 (38.6)	18 (7.6)	28 (11.9)	42 (17.8)	236
Allocation of career opportunities is equal among men and women	17 (11.3)	28 (18.5)	25 (16.6)	64 (42.4)	17 (11.3)	151

C. Perceived Power Relations that Exist between Men and Women (PER_2)

Table III shows the perceived power relations that exist between men and women. Less than half (47.7%) of the participants strongly disagreed that men and women were equally treated in their community. Similarly, the majority (60.8%) of participants strongly disagreed with the statement that “Men should not be comfortable with their partners making financial decisions.” At least 1 in 5 respondents (19.3%) agreed that women should seek their partner’s permission before making economic decisions. On the notion that “a good woman never questions her husband’s opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them,” 70% strongly disagreed. More than half (57.8%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed that their community was committed to promoting gender equality. The majority (70.6%) strongly agreed that a woman should be able to talk openly about sex with her partner.

TABLE III: PERCEIVED POWER RELATIONS THAT EXIST BETWEEN MEN AND WOMEN

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Total
Men and women are equally treated in my community	8 (3.4)	21 (8.9)	18 (7.6)	113 (47.7)	77 (32.5)	237
Men should not be comfortable with their partners making financial decisions (including investing, saving, and management of income)	10 (4.2)	19 (8.0)	12 (5.1)	144 (60.8)	52 (21.9)	237
Women should seek their partner’s permission before making economic decisions	15 (6.3)	46 (19.3)	21 (8.8)	86 (36.1)	70 (29.4)	238
A good woman never questions her husband’s opinions, even if she is not sure she agrees with them	3 (1.3)	8 (3.4)	4 (1.7)	166 (70.0)	56 (23.6)	237
My community is committed to promoting gender equality	13 (5.5)	38 (16.0)	49 (20.7)	53 (22.4)	84 (35.4)	237
A woman should be able to talk openly about sex with her partner.	168 (70.6)	51 (21.4)	5 (2.1)	8 (3.4)	6 (2.5)	238

D. Perceptions Related to Social Expectations of Men and Women in Nigeria (PER_3)

Though more than half (57.6%) strongly agreed with the following statement “changing diapers, giving a bath, and feeding kids is the woman’s responsibility,” 1 in 3 respondents (29.9%) either agreed or strongly agreed that a woman’s role is taking care of her home and family. The majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the notion that women should not be represented in government (79.8%) and only when a woman has a child is she a real woman (85.1%). While 60.1% of respondents strongly disagreed that it is a woman’s responsibility to avoid getting pregnant, at least 11.3% agreed with the notion. The majority either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the following statements, “to be a man, you need to be tough”

(82.7%), “a woman should obey her partner in all things” (87.8%), and “women should leave politics to men” (97.4%). Also, the majority of the respondents strongly disagreed that a divorced woman has no value (85.3%), and a real man produces a male child (85.2%). A detailed representation of responses is presented in Table IV.

TABLE IV: PERCEPTIONS RELATED TO SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS OF MEN AND WOMEN IN NIGERIA

Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Total
Changing diapers, giving a bath, and feeding kids is the woman's responsibility.	6 (2.5)	23 (9.7)	7 (2.9)	137 (57.6)	65 (27.3)	238
A woman's role is to take care of her home and family.	8 (3.4)	63 (26.5)	16 (6.7)	91 (38.2)	60 (25.2)	238
Women should not be represented in government	8 (3.4)	5 (2.1)	3 (1.3)	190 (79.8)	32 (13.4)	238
Only when a woman has a child is she a real woman	1 (0.4)	2 (0.9)	3 (1.3)	200 (85.1)	29 (12.3)	235
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	5 (2.1)	22 (9.2)	16 (6.7)	143 (60.1)	52 (21.8)	238
To be a man, you need to be tough	8 (3.4)	22 (9.3)	11 (4.6)	125 (52.7)	71 (30.0)	237
A woman should obey her partner in all things	1 (0.4)	15 (6.3)	13 (5.5)	134 (56.3)	75 (31.5)	238
Women should leave politics to men.	0 (0.0)	3 (1.3)	3 (1.3)	195 (81.9)	37 (15.5)	238
A divorced woman has no value	1 (0.4)	2 (0.8)	2 (0.8)	203 (85.3)	30 (12.6)	238
A real man produces a male child	4 (1.7)	4 (1.7)	4 (1.7)	202 (85.2)	23 (9.7)	237

E. Categorization of Perception

Perceptions related to labour participation of women and men (PER 1), power relations that exist between men and women (PER 2), and social expectations of men and women (PER 3) were all categorized into favourable and unfavourable perceptions. For PER 1, the mean perception score was 7.9 ± 3.2 points and 57.6% of the respondents had unfavourable perceptions related to labour participation of women and men in Nigeria. For PER 2, the mean perception score was 7.7 ± 2.7 points and 68.5% of the respondents had favourable perceptions on power relations that exist between men and women. Lastly, for PER 3, the mean perception score was 15.6 ± 4.2 points with 86.6% of the respondents having favourable perception of social expectations of men and women. The categorization is presented in Fig. 1.

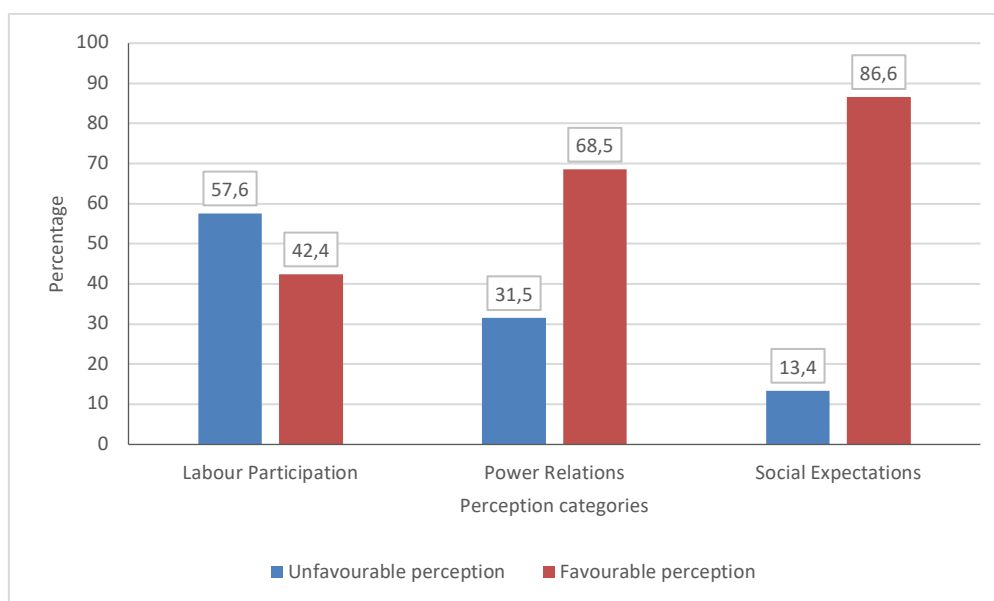


Fig. 1. Categorisation of perception.

F. Association of Sex with Perception Categories

The association of sex with perception categories of labour participation (PER 1), Power Relations (PER 2) and social expectations (PER 3) was presented in Fig. 2.

For PER 1, more than half (57.6%) of the respondents had unfavourable perception of labour participation and 84.6% of this proportion were men. One-third of respondents had unfavourable perception of power relations out of which 57.7% were men. For social expectations, majority (86.6%) had favourable perception. Sex was significantly associated with all perception categories.

A further comparison of the proportions of unfavourable perception across perception categories by sex was shown in Fig. 2. There was a downward trend from labour participation to social expectations (PER 1–PER 3). More males had more unfavourable perception across the perception categories compared to females.

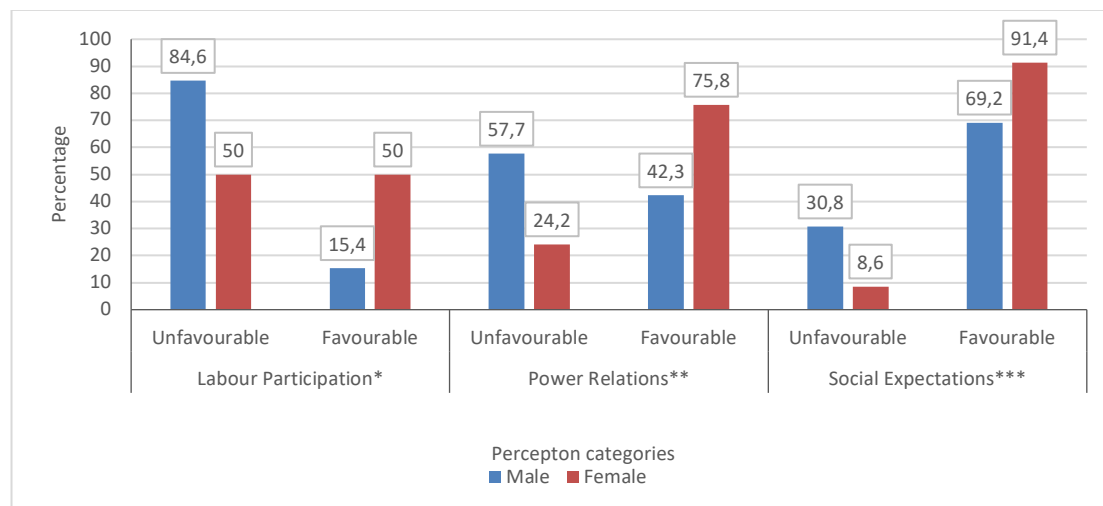


Fig. 2. Association of sex with perception categories.

* $X^2 = 19.934$, $P = 0.000$, significant at $P < 0.05$; ** $X^2 = 21.130$, $P = 0.000$, significant at $P < 0.05$; *** $X^2 = 17.159$, $P = 0.000$, significant at $P < 0.05$

IV. DISCUSSION

Findings from this study showed that a substantial proportion of the respondents disagreed with notions that gender contributes to underemployment and unemployment, unequal remuneration for women, and lack of the same capacity-building opportunities for women as men. This is in contrast with findings of studies that have documented rates of unemployment and underemployment across gender. For example, studies have shown gender inequality in the labour force is a major challenge in sub-Saharan Africa (Sydhagen & Cunningham, 2007). Also, a study on gender segregation and underemployment in the UK suggested that the probability of underemployment is growing at a faster rate among women rather than men and that underemployment is most common in the jobs that women are more likely to perform (*Gender Segregation, Underemployment and Subjective Well-Being in the UK Labour Market*, n.d.). In Nigeria, this fact is backed up by recent estimates from the Labour Force Statistics by the National Bureau of Statistics where the unemployment rate is higher among women (35.2%) compared to men (31.8%). This is the same for underemployment (National Bureau of Statistics, 2020). The unfavourable perception could be tied to normative beliefs that employment should be unilateral and designed for only one group which is in turn not perceived as problematic or gender biased. Unequal remuneration or the gender pay gap has been recognised as a major inequality in employment in Nigeria. A study on the gender pay gap in Nigeria showed marked differences between the salaries of men and women with this difference attributed to education, work experience, length of service, and opportunity for on-the-job capacity building (Fapohunda, 2013). This is not surprising as women generally are less educated and have lesser participation in the labour force (National Bureau of Statistics Nigeria, 2021; National Population Commission, 2019; Olowa & Adeoti, 2014). Additionally, work experience differs significantly among men and women and an example of this is the fact that women have more career interruptions compared to men and this further shortens their length of service (Parker, 2015). Early marriage also contributes to poor labour force participation and overall economic inactivity (Enfield, 2019). This could also explain why there are lesser women in managerial and leadership roles in the employment (Alhaji Ali, 2014).

This study revealed that participants disagreed with the notion that women should seek their partner's permission before making economic decisions. This is in contrast with previous studies on women's autonomy. There is an overwhelming male dominance in decision-making at the household and economic levels and this is especially common even in areas where women are providers of labour (Damisa & Yohanna, 2007). This could be further explained by the patriarchal nature of the Nigerian context.

Other authors have documented patriarchal attitudes that suggest that women should be confined to the home (Makama, 2013) and the need to obtain permission from male figures in the family such as husbands or fathers in situations where autonomy and independent action are constrained (Adisa *et al.*, 2019). These ideas are held in place by pervasive social norms and have meant that women are consigned to the periphery inside and outside of work (Anyangwe, 2015). This also means poor self-efficacy and economic outcomes for women. There is a cause-and-consequence relationship between lack of decision-making for women and poor labour participation. As shown previously, lack of decision-making for women including poor autonomy severely limits the ability of women to participate in economic activities. Similarly, poor labour participation and access to finance will hinder household decisions and self-efficacy. This is evidenced by the findings of a study on gendered nature of intra-household decision making. The authors found that as women's access to wage employment improves, their contributions to the household and their negotiations improve, and their bargaining and eventual participation in household decision-making also improve (Mader & Schneebaum, 2013)

In this study, participants affirmed the role of women in taking care of the home and family. This is in line with what is seen in previous studies. For example, in a study that sought to understand gender issues in Nigeria, the authors submitted that women are traditionally saddled with homemaking, caregiving and nurturing roles as against other economical roles outside the home. This is a reflection of their marginalisation and the gender inequality that exist in society (Olonade *et al.*, 2021; Onwumah *et al.*, 2019). It is also considered a form of economic violence against women (Fawole, 2008). This accepted norm further hinders women's participation in the labour market. The work women do in the home is unpaid and the responsibility disproportionately falls on them compared to their male counterparts (Apata *et al.*, 2021). This in turn leads to gaps in women's employment opportunities and limits their earning opportunities and economic growth metrics (Fälth & Blackden, 2009). An additional effect of this form of economic violence is the exacerbation of poverty rates which in turn violates the human rights of women and children and further denies them other rights such as education, housing, and participation in other societal processes (Fawole, 2008).

This study highlighted an above-average proportion of participants who had an unfavourable perception of women's labour force participation. This could be explained by a plethora of reasons. For example, this could be tied to the societal position on women's participation in economic activities. As stated previously, women are generally seen as home managers and anything outside of this is against the existential social norms (Datta, 2018). This is further reinforced by the fact that men are saddled with the responsibility of providing for the family. It is therefore not surprising that more proportion of male participants in this study had an unfavourable perception of women's labour force participation and power relations between men and women. The patriarchal nature of Nigerian society and similar contexts worldwide places the man as domineering. As a result, it is not out of place to see that men have a poor representation or idea of what power imbalance is in a male-female relationship. This presents a significant negative consequence and underscores the fact that male participants do not acknowledge this form of gender discrimination and do not recognise it as a problem. Subsequently, these deep-rooted factors will continue to limit women's labour participation and in turn other related developmental issues such as economic prosperity, agency, and human rights.

It is particularly important to address the gaps highlighted in this study as they have key implications for development. The unfavourable perception of women's labour participation could be addressed by increased social norms interventions that will ensure a sustained change in the knowledge, perception, and attitude of men and women in Nigeria on gender roles. This will further allow for increased visibility of women who are currently marginalised. A comprehensive social norms intervention in this regard should include a social and behavioural communication approach that will target key individuals in Nigerian communities. The fact that this study demonstrated that a higher proportion of men had an unfavourable perception of women's labour participation and power relations, calls for interventions that will target men and seek to change their views regarding these harmful social norms. Additionally, developmental organisations and associated individuals can undertake comprehensive policy advocacy that will improve the implementation of existing laws that ensure access for women and the enactment of more effective ones.

V. CONCLUSION

This study highlighted key findings regarding women's labour participation, power relations and social expectations. The findings demonstrated the unfavourable perception of participants on the contribution of gender to unemployment and underemployment, gender pay gap, unequal opportunities for capacity development among men and women, societal expectations, and gender roles.

Additionally, the study showed a marked proportion of male participants had an unfavourable perception of women's labour participation and power relations between men and women. A key recommendation to address the highlighted gaps includes comprehensive social norms interventions and policy advocacy.

VI. STUDY LIMITATIONS

The major limitations of this study are the convenience sampling technique used and the cross-sectional nature of the study. In addition, we acknowledge that the study might have excluded helpful responses from other social media platforms not considered in this study and those who are not on the internet. Future studies could adopt a more flexible design that will include appropriate sample randomization. Furthermore, an additional layer of qualitative inquiry could offer deeper insights into the topics examined. While we advise that the findings of this study are interpreted with caution, we believe the findings a valid and provide valuable information to inform literature and programmes on labour participation of women and men, power relations that exist between men and women, and social expectations of men and women in Nigeria.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Authors declare that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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