



## Gender Discrimination and Difficulties faced by Women in Workplace in South West Nigeria

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**Abstract.** This study explores gender discrimination and difficulties faced by women in the workplace in South-West Nigeria, motivated by the pressing issue of women's limited participation and progress in the labor market. The research aimed to investigate the challenges women face, the role of company culture in perpetuating discrimination, and the impact of technological revolution on promoting equal opportunities. A descriptive research survey design was employed, with a sample of 1,800 participants from six polytechnics. The results showed that women face significant difficulties, including micro-aggressions, subtle discrimination, and unequal treatment. Company culture was found to perpetuate discrimination, with high agreement rates on issues like discouraging challenges to discriminatory practices and perpetuating gender stereotypes. However, the technological revolution was found to promote equal opportunities, fairness, and inclusivity. The study concludes that stakeholders should invest in digital literacy programs and promote inclusive tech policies to bridge the gender gap in the workplace. This study's findings have implications for policymakers, organizations, and individuals seeking to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the workplace. The study's innovative approach highlights the potential of technology to drive positive change in the workplace.

**Keywords:** Workplace inequality, female empowerment, organizational culture, technological inclusion.

### 1. Introduction

Gender discrimination in the workplace is a significant issue in South-West Nigeria, where cultural, socio-economic, and institutional factors deeply influence the experiences of women. Despite advancements in education and legal frameworks

promoting gender equality, many women continue to face systemic discrimination. Nigerian society is largely patriarchal, with traditional norms placing men as the primary breadwinners and relegating women to domestic roles. This cultural backdrop often translates into professional settings, where women are perceived as less capable or less committed to their careers compared to men [1,2].

In the workplace, women in South-West Nigeria encounter various forms of discrimination, including unequal pay, limited opportunities for leadership roles, and pervasive sexual harassment. The gender pay gap is a persistent problem, with women earning less than men for the same roles. Additionally, women are underrepresented in senior management and decision-making positions, which perpetuates gender disparities and limits their career advancement [3]. The intersectionality of gender with factors like ethnicity, religion, and socio-economic status further exacerbates these challenges, especially for women from marginalized communities [4].

Beyond these professional barriers, women also struggle with inadequate workplace policies that fail to support their dual roles as employees and caregivers. The lack of sufficient maternity leave, flexible working hours, and childcare support adds to the difficulties faced by women, leading to high levels of stress and burnout. These challenges not only affect women's well-being but also hinder their productivity and career growth [5].

Efforts to address gender discrimination in South-West Nigeria have been made through legal frameworks such as the Nigerian Constitution and the Labor Act, which provide for non-discrimination on the basis of gender. However, the enforcement of these laws is weak, and societal attitudes continue to undermine gender equality initiatives. Cultural

change, along with stronger legal enforcement and institutional support, is essential to create a more inclusive and equitable workplace for women in this region [6,7].

Despite these challenges, there is a growing awareness and advocacy for gender equality in Nigeria. Women's rights organizations, both local and international, are actively working to address these issues by promoting policies that support women's advancement in the workplace and by challenging the societal norms that contribute to gender discrimination. However, achieving meaningful progress will require a sustained and collective effort from all sectors of society [8].

The complexities of gender discrimination in South-West Nigeria are deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and socio-economic factors. Understanding these complexities is crucial for developing effective strategies to combat discrimination and create an environment where women can thrive professionally. Only through a comprehensive and multifaceted approach can the barriers to gender equality be dismantled, paving the way for a more inclusive society [9].

### 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Gender discrimination in the workplace remains a critical issue in South-West Nigeria, manifesting in various forms such as unequal pay, limited access to leadership roles, and pervasive sexual harassment. Despite legal frameworks promoting gender equality, enforcement is weak, and societal attitudes continue to undermine progress. Women in this region face compounded challenges due to cultural norms, inadequate workplace policies, and intersectional factors like ethnicity and socio-economic status. These barriers not only hinder women's career advancement but also affect their overall well-being and productivity. Addressing these systemic issues is crucial for achieving gender equality in the workplace.

### 1.2 Objectives of the Study

The study's broad objective was to explore gender discrimination and difficulties faced by women in workplace in south-west Nigeria, while specific objectives are to:

- investigate the prevalence and forms of gender discrimination experienced by women in the workplace in South-West Nigeria;
- analyze the socio-cultural and institutional factors that contribute to gender disparities in employment and career progression in the region; and

- assess the effectiveness of existing policies and workplace practices in addressing gender discrimination and propose recommendations for fostering a more inclusive and equitable work environment for women in South-West Nigeria.

### 1.3 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

- What are the specific forms of gender discrimination that women encounter in the workplace in South-West Nigeria?
- How do socio-cultural and institutional factors contribute to the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace in this region?
- How effective are current workplace policies and practices in addressing gender discrimination, and what improvements can be made to promote gender equality in the workplace?

## 2. Literature Review

Literature relating to different concepts of women unemployment, gender discrimination and technological revolution will be adequately reviewed for the proper understanding of the subject under study.

### 2.1 Gender Discrimination in Nigeria

The Nigerian state attained independence in 1960 and republic status in 1963. People from many cultures, political and religious views make up the state, which is heterogeneous. Even though the Nigerian state's constitution is secular, the workplace environment does not reflect this, as workers, particularly women, frequently face discrimination because of their gender, their religion, or the patrilineal nature of the government. The employee's appointment or employment into positions of leadership or responsibility in any organization is hampered by gender discrimination. Every employee has potential and possesses specific talents, but they typically need a favorable work environment in order to demonstrate their leadership endowment and perform at their best.

The deliberate deprivation of an individual's rights (political, social, family, and economic) that may have made them positively contribute to the growth of the organization and the community at large is referred to as gender discrimination. In this context, gender discrimination is viewed as a phenomenon that has detrimental effects on the growth of companies and individuals, whether it exists in a public or private entity [10].

The Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution recognizes the negative effects of gender discrimination and specifies nondiscrimination and gender equality as the cornerstones of societal advancement. According to Section 42(1) of the same Constitution, a citizen of Nigeria of any community, ethnic group, and place of origin, gender, religion, or political perspective should not be subjected to any kind of discrimination for any reason. The preceding states that discrimination against Nigerian women in any form is prohibited by the constitution of Nigeria. The Nigerian Constitution's text, which expresses a desire to uphold the patriarchal traditions of Nigerian cultures, is the issue, claims.

Additionally, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) adopted a strategic employment policy that includes funding for gender sensitization training in both the public and commercial sectors to address the issue of gender discrimination. Through widespread mobilization, these projects seek to raise public awareness of the value of women's engagement in both the formal and unofficial sectors and to dispel prevailing views and preconceptions about women's labor. However, despite the appointment of women to the position of permanent secretaries (starting in 2000 and in accordance with affirmative action), all of the government's measures at the federal, state, and municipal levels have been ineffective. In Nigeria, the federal civil service is composed primarily of men (75%), with women making up 25% of the workforce and holding less than 14% of executive posts overall, said that despite their larger population and higher educational skills, women are disproportionately employed in lower-status employment than their male counterparts. In an analysis of the causes and effects of gender discrimination against women in business, politics, and social issues, according to one argument, although the Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution guarantees equality and non-discrimination between the sexes, in practice there is a significant and apparent similarity between the law and the practice [11].

The promotion of gender equality of men and women as a strategy for sustainable development, whether in the public or private sector in Nigeria, has been proved by research to not be gender discriminating when it comes to contributing to development in any community. According to NULGE 2019, men make up 65% of the workforce, while women make up 35%. All of them point to widespread gender discrimination, especially against women, in a variety of spheres of life.

## 2.2 Forms of Discrimination

Gender discrimination at work can take the following forms: direct gender discrimination and indirect gender discrimination.

### 2.2.1 Direct Gender Discrimination

This becomes relevant when people are unquestionably treated unfairly at work, including through actions like paying employees differentially depending on their gender. Men and women may perform the same job, yet they may receive promotions at different periods. A discriminatory motivation must have been present for the act of discrimination to have occurred, and actions might reveal this motive. Consider a company that consistently hires males from a pool of both male and female applicants. A specific individual must be the target of the crime, and it must be proven that the victim's gender was the cause of the discriminatory behavior. Every job applicant must be treated fairly by the employer, and members of particular groups must not be stereotyped. Unfortunately, this is the situation in legal firms where many principals of law offices would prefer to engage male lawyers than female lawyers because they believe female lawyers are unable to handle the rigors of the profession, which is a misconception, a false generalization. Every employee needs a chance to demonstrate that they are deserving of respect [12].

However, if a company's operations include a lot of manual labor, the employer is not compelled to offer less physically taxing jobs to his staff in order to give women more possibilities to work for him. For instance, if he runs his firm using earthmoving equipment, a woman working there will undoubtedly suffer health-related problems.

### 2.2.2 Indirect Gender Discrimination

Indirect Gender Discrimination occurs when seemingly neutral policies or practices disproportionately disadvantage a particular gender. Unlike direct discrimination, which is overt and intentional, indirect discrimination is more subtle, often embedded in rules that appear fair but have unequal outcomes. For instance, a policy requiring full-time availability for promotions may disproportionately affect women, who often bear more caregiving responsibilities. Addressing this requires analyzing the practical impact of policies on different genders [13].

When one gender is given preference in specific labor rules, members of that sex cannot be employed under such laws. Instances where a condition or requirement is applied that is unjustifiable regardless of sex and the person to whom it is applied suffers

as a result constitutes indirect discrimination. This occurs when a smaller percentage of people of a given gender can comply with the condition or requirement than members of the other gender. One example of pay discrepancy that places female employees at the receiving end of such an act of pay inequality is the difference in the payment of compensation based on an employee's gender [14].

### 2.3 Effect of Gender Discrimination on Job Performance

Discrimination is defined by the employee equity Acts 1998–2015 as occurring in a variety of employment- and employment-related contexts. The Acts address hiring, promotion, pay equity, working conditions, education or experience, firing, and all sorts of harassment. They contend that society actively encourages prejudice against women. Women are viewed as second-class in many societies and are not permitted to hold certain positions. Some societies forbid women from inheriting land or engaging in farming, depriving them of a crucial economic entitlement. Women are not permitted to serve as president, head of state, prime minister, or governor, among other positions, in all but a select few nations around the world. For women, this is not good. Women often discriminate against themselves, though. In actuality, women would prefer that men take the reins over their own gender. Perhaps it is in their nature, but women tend to avoid positions of leadership.

In the South West of Nigeria, the study will try to ascertain whether or not hiring practices in various civil or public service positions are gender-based. It will also try to ascertain whether or not promotions within the workplace are based on gender. It is thought that finding the answers to these study questions will help to address some fundamental problems with gender discrimination. The ability of an organization to accomplish its stated aims and fulfill its *raison d'être* is a key factor in evaluating its overall success. The "degree of accomplishment of tasks that make up an employee's job" is a simple definition of performance. They defined performance as the outcomes or effects of an individual's actions during a specific time period [15]. It entails actions taken to accomplish corporate objectives. Performance also demonstrates how well workers adhere to their job responsibilities. Typically, output is used to gauge performance. In other words, when someone puts a lot of effort into a task but produces little, the effort is high but the performance is low. Additionally, it should be noted that controlling and enhancing employee performance is crucial for accomplishing an organization's overall goals because it directly affects the success and productivity of a business [16].

Performance evaluations, job security, job happiness, training and development, organizational structure, and other factors all affect how well an employee performs. However, a study found that there aren't any elements like intrinsic or extrinsic rewards, clearly specified job descriptions, or a negative effect of gender discrimination on women's employment that influence employee performance. Salary payments are a type of exchange that takes place between employers and workers in exchange for human capital services. Promotions and other non-cash exchanges are possible. According to the rationale presented above, promotions result in an increase in work level; however, women will likely earn fewer promotions due to their lower levels of human capital, which will translate into lower job levels in exchange for the same labor services [17].

Furthermore, it was determined that ensuring equality between different genders and races and organizational justice are both intimately related concepts. Employee selection should be based on personal preferences in order to enhance attitudes and performance [18]. Occupational segregation refers to the categorization and stereotyping of particular professions based on gender. Women are regarded as belonging to particular occupational kinds, for instance.

### 3. Gender Inequality

Gender inequality refers to the disparities and unequal treatment experienced by individuals based on their gender, often disadvantaging women in various aspects of life. This form of inequality manifests in economic, social, political, and legal domains, deeply embedded in societal norms and practices. For instance, in the workplace, women often face a persistent wage gap, earning less than men for performing the same job roles, a disparity that continues despite similar levels of education and experience. This wage gap is further exacerbated by job segregation, where women are concentrated in lower-paying occupations traditionally deemed as 'female' roles, thereby limiting their economic advancement opportunities [19].

Educational inequality is another significant aspect of gender inequality, where in many regions, girls have less access to quality education compared to boys. This limited access restricts their future opportunities, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and dependence. Additionally, even when girls have access to education, they often encounter gender biases within educational materials and practices that reinforce traditional gender roles, limiting their career aspirations and achievements (Bishu & Alkadry, 2017).

In the political realm, women are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions. This underrepresentation not only reflects societal biases but also leads to policies and laws that may not fully address the needs and rights of women. The lack of female representation in politics is often rooted in cultural expectations and systemic barriers that discourage women from pursuing political careers [20]. Furthermore, legal systems in many parts of the world still contain elements of gender bias, either through laws that explicitly discriminate against women or through a lack of protection against gender-based violence. Women often face significant barriers in accessing justice and protection, with laws and cultural practices sometimes prioritizing male authority and interests [21].

The impacts of gender inequality are far-reaching, affecting not only the individual but also the broader society. Economically, gender inequality limits growth and productivity by not fully utilizing the talents and capabilities of all citizens. Socially, it reinforces divisions and contributes to higher levels of conflict and dissatisfaction. Addressing gender inequality requires comprehensive efforts to challenge and change the societal norms, policies, and practices that perpetuate these disparities, promoting equal rights and opportunities for all genders.

### **3.1 Causes of Gender Inequality**

The globe has made progress toward achieving gender equality over time. In many parts of the world, there are greater economic opportunities, better healthcare options, and higher representation of women in politics. But according to the World Economic Forum, it will be another century before complete gender equality is achieved. What causes the gender difference? Some of the factors that contribute to gender disparity are given below:

#### **3.1.1 Uneven access to education**

In many African nations, girls and women have never set foot inside a classroom. Women still have less access to education than male do elsewhere in the world. 1 in 4 young women ages 15 to 24 will not complete elementary school. 58% of those who don't finish that basic education belongs to that group. Two thirds of all illiterate persons on earth are female. Girls' futures and the chances they will have are significantly impacted when they receive an education that is below those of guys.

#### **3.1.2 Lack of employment equality**

Only six nations in the world grant women the same legal rights to employment as do male. In fact,

women in most economies only have 3/4 of the rights that men do. According to studies, creating a more level playing field in the workplace would have a good snowball impact on other sectors that are prone to gender disparity.

#### **3.1.3 Job discrimination**

The division of labor is one factor in gender disparity in the workplace. There is an ingrained notion in most countries that men are just more capable of doing particular tasks. Those are typically the jobs with the highest salaries, because of this inequality, women earn less money. Even though they work in the paid employment, women nevertheless bear the majority of the burden for unpaid labor. As a result, they have

#### **3.1.4 Lack of legal protections**

Over one billion women lack legal protection against domestic economic or sexual violence, according to research from the World Bank. The ability of women to prosper and live in freedom is significantly impacted by both. The legal prohibition of harassment at work, in the classroom, and in public spaces is also lacking in many nations. Without protection, women frequently have to make choices that limit their aims and sacrifice their aspirations in these risky environments.

#### **3.1.5 Lack of bodily autonomy**

Many women worldwide lack control over either their own bodies or having children. They will always be in the hands of mankind. It's frequently incredibly tough to get birth control. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that more than 200 million women who don't want to become pregnant don't use contraception. There are a number of causes for this, including a dearth of choices, restricted access, and cultural and religious opposition. Globally, 40% of pregnancies are unplanned, and while 38% of them end in births, 50% of them do result in abortions or having illegitimate children. Often, these women lose their independence as a result of becoming financially dependent on another person or the government.

#### **3.1.6 Poor medical care**

In developing nations issues with gender equality, the majority of ladies give birth to their children in substandard circumstances while the male receives all the necessary medical treatment and vaccinations. Women generally receive less high-quality medical care than male, and they have less access to contraception. This is related to other instances of gender inequality, such as the fact that more women live in poverty as a result of a lack of

access to education and employment possibilities. There is a lower likelihood that they can afford quality medical treatment. Furthermore, there hasn't been as much study on illnesses like autoimmune disorders and chronic pain syndromes, which are more common in women than men and affect them more severely. The gender difference in the standard of healthcare is widened by the fact that many women also encounter prejudice and exclusion from their physicians.

### **3.2 Difficulties faced by women in the workplace**

Gender discrimination in the workplace is a global issue that manifests in various forms, from wage disparities to limited career advancement opportunities. In South West Nigeria, these challenges are compounded by deep-rooted cultural and societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality. Despite legal frameworks aimed at protecting women, the implementation of these laws is often inconsistent, leaving many women vulnerable to discrimination. This study explores the difficulties faced by women in the workplace in South West Nigeria, examining the cultural, institutional, and structural barriers that hinder their professional growth and participation in the workforce. By understanding these challenges, the research aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on gender equality and offer recommendations for creating a more inclusive work environment for women in the region.

#### **3.2.1 Gender pays gap**

The gender pays gap remains one of the most pervasive issues faced by women in the workplace. Despite equivalent qualifications and experience, women are often paid less than men. This disparity is attributed to several factors, including discriminatory pay practices, the undervaluation of jobs traditionally held by women, and the lack of transparency in salary structures. In Nigeria, the gender pay gap is further exacerbated by cultural norms that assign men as the primary breadwinners, thus justifying higher pay for men [22]. A study by Rosette et al., [23] highlight that even in sectors where women are well-represented, such as education and healthcare, they still earn less than their male counterparts. This persistent wage gap not only reflects deep-seated gender biases but also limits women's financial independence and economic security.

#### **3.2.2 Limited Career Advancement Opportunities**

Women in the workplace often encounter barriers to career advancement, a phenomenon commonly referred to as the "glass ceiling." This invisible

barrier prevents women from rising to leadership positions despite having the necessary qualifications and experience. The glass ceiling is perpetuated by gender stereotypes that suggest women are less capable of handling high-pressure roles or that they prioritize family over career. In Nigerian organizations, women are frequently passed over for promotions in favor of male colleagues, even when they have demonstrated equal or superior competence. Additionally, the lack of female role models and mentors in leadership positions further hampers women's professional growth. Women who do break through the glass ceiling often face additional scrutiny and are held to higher performance standards than their male counterparts, making their career progression even more challenging [24].

#### **3.2.3 Work-Life Balance Challenges**

Balancing work and family responsibilities is a significant challenge for many women, particularly in cultures where women are expected to be the primary caregivers. In Nigeria, societal expectations often dictate that women prioritize their roles as mothers and wives over their professional aspirations. This expectation can lead to women opting for part-time work, taking extended career breaks, or even exiting the workforce altogether, thereby limiting their career progression and financial stability. The lack of supportive workplace policies, such as flexible working hours, maternity leave, and childcare facilities, exacerbates the difficulty women face in managing both work and family responsibilities. The strain of juggling these roles can also lead to stress, burnout, and decreased job satisfaction, further hindering women's ability to advance in their careers [25].

#### **3.2.4 Sexual harassment**

Sexual harassment in the workplace is a critical issue that affects women's safety, dignity, and well-being. It creates a hostile work environment that can lead to psychological trauma, decreased job satisfaction, and even career abandonment. Despite existing laws against sexual harassment in Nigeria, enforcement is weak, and many incidents go unreported due to fear of retaliation, stigmatization, or disbelief. Sexual harassment is prevalent across various sectors in Nigeria, with women often subjected to inappropriate comments, unwanted advances, and, in some cases, coercion [26]. The culture of silence surrounding sexual harassment is compounded by the lack of effective reporting mechanisms and the stigma attached to victims, which discourages them from speaking out. This issue not only affects the victims but also contributes to a toxic workplace culture that undermines productivity and morale.

**3.2.5 Lack of mentorship and support**

The absence of mentorship and professional support is another significant challenge faced by women in the workplace. Mentorship is crucial for career development as it provides guidance, support, and opportunities for networking and skill enhancement. However, in many Nigerian organizations, mentorship programs are either non-existent or predominantly male-dominated, leaving women with limited access to these resources. The lack of female mentors in leadership positions means that aspiring female professionals have few role models to emulate [27]. This gap in mentorship and support not only hinders women's career progression but also perpetuates the cycle of gender inequality in the workplace. Mentorship programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by women could play a pivotal role in empowering women and fostering gender diversity in leadership.

**4. Research Methodology**

**4.1 Research Design**

This study used descriptive research survey design in this project work. The choice of this research design was considered appropriate due advantages of identifying attributes of a large population from a group of individuals. The design is appropriate for the study as the study seeks to examine the impact of technological revolution and gender discrimination on women unemployment opportunities in Polytechnics in south-west Nigeria.

**4.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedures**

All women working in Polytechnics in the south-west geopolitical-zone of Nigeria formed the target

population. One-thousand eight-hundred (1800) sampled were taken from six polytechnics. These comprised The Federal Polytechnic Ede, The Federal Polytechnic Ile-Oluji, The Polytechnic Ibadan, Moshood Abiola Polytechnic, Lagos City Polytechnic and Crown Polytechnic Ado-Ekiti. These polytechnics were purposively sampled and simple random sampling procedure was used to select all the participants. This sampling procedure gives each participant equal opportunity of being selected for the study.

**4.3 Instrument, Validity and Reliability**

The self-designed instrument was used. To ascertain the validity of the instrument used for the study, the questionnaire was subjected to evaluation with regards to its validity. The instrument was given to the experts for vetting. Each item on the questionnaire was critically examined to remove any form of ambiguity that might arise in the course of generating the questions and to determine its relevance to the purpose of the study. This instrument was administered on twenty women working one polytechnic outside the one used in this study. The reliability coefficient from the Cronbach Alpha indicated 0.77 and 0.82, respectively. This indicated that the instrument was reliable for the study.

**4.4 Method of Data Collection and Analysis**

The data were collected by the researchers in company of four trained research assistants. The Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) was used, while both descriptive and inferential statistics tools of the said package were used to analyse the data generated in the study.

**5. Results**

**Research Question 1:** What are the forms of gender discrimination that women encounter in the workplace in South-West Nigeria?

**Table 1:** Forms of gender discrimination that women encounter in the workplace in South-West Nigeria.

Items	M	S.D	Rank
Women face unequal pay compared to men for the same work.	3.02	0.93	6 <sup>th</sup>
Women encounter barriers in career advancement opportunities	2.98	0.86	8 <sup>th</sup>
Gender bias influences hiring and promotion decisions against women.	2.98	0.88	8 <sup>th</sup>
Women experience workplace harassment and discrimination based on gender.	3.07	0.87	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Balancing work and family responsibilities poses challenges for women.	3.09	0.86	1 <sup>st</sup>
Lack of access to mentorship and networking opportunities hinders women's professional growth	3.05	0.87	5 <sup>th</sup>
Women often face micro-aggressions and subtle forms of discrimination in the workplace.	3.09	0.83	1 <sup>st</sup>
Women's ideas and contributions are sometimes ignored or undervalued in the workplace.	3.06	0.87	4 <sup>th</sup>
Workplace culture and policies may not be inclusive or supportive of women's needs	3.01	0.84	7 <sup>th</sup>
The use of functional technology does not help to improve women ability specifically in working environment.	2.95	0.94	10 <sup>th</sup>
Weighted Mean			3.03

*Note: M represents mean or average, and SD represents standard deviation.*

The result in Table 1 shows the difficulties women face in the workplace. Given the weighted mean score of 3.03, statements with mean values that are equal or greater than the weighted mean score are considered in this result. As shown in Table 1, the respondents ranked two statements as first and they were “Women often face micro-aggressions and subtle forms of discrimination in the workplace (M = 3.09, SD = 0.83), and “Balancing work and family responsibilities poses challenges for women (M = 3.09, SD = 0.86). While 31.3% and 53.7% of the respondents respectively strongly agree and agree with the former, 33.0% and 51.6% of the respondents respectively strongly agree and agree with the latter. Ranked third was “Women experience workplace harassment and discrimination based on gender” (M = 3.07, SD = 0.87) and 32.5% and 51.6% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively with this statement. “Women's ideas and contributions are sometimes ignored or undervalued in the workplace” (M = 3.06, SD = 0.87) was ranked fourth and 31.8% and 51.5% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively, and Lack of access to mentorship and networking opportunities hinders women's professional growth (M = 3.05, SD = 0.87) with 31.2% of strongly agree and 52.4% agree and was ranked fifth.

As shown in Table 1, from the perspectives of the respondents, the difficulties women face in the workplace were experience of micro-aggressions and subtle forms of discrimination in the workplace, balancing work and family responsibilities, experience of workplace harassment and discrimination based on gender, ideas and contributions being ignored or undervalued in the workplace, and lack of access to mentorship and networking opportunities that hinders professional growth.

In alignment, the experience of women in male-dominated occupations” concluded that women in male-dominated occupations often work in conditions that do not cater for their unique needs because of covert and entrenched gender-biased organisational cultures [28]. However, they opined that organisations can motivate women to remain in male-dominated work settings if they provide the women with tangible physical support and female-focused policies, visible career opportunities, challenges to entice their personal drive for achievement and different ways of recognising their success as gender balanced mentorship is vital for assisting these women to cope and persevere. This study however revealed that technological revolution has made it easier for women to access job opportunities previously dominated by men as a good number of jobs have been digitized and getting support has been made easier via online mentorship programmes that can be assessed from wherever one is in the world.

**Research Question 2:** How do socio-cultural and institutional factors contribute to the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace in this region?

**Table 2:** Socio-cultural and institutional factors contribute to the persistence of gender inequality in the workplace in this region in Polytechnics in South-West Nigeria.

Items	M	S.D	Rank
Company culture in south-west Nigeria perpetuates gender stereotypes that put women at a disadvantage.	3.11	0.82	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Women in south-west Nigeria face discrimination in promotion practices due to prevailing company culture.	3.01	0.86	7 <sup>th</sup>
Company culture often marginalizes women's voices and contributions in decision-making processes.	3.00	0.88	8 <sup>th</sup>
Discriminatory attitudes and behaviours towards women are tolerated within company culture in south-west Nigeria	3.00	0.82	8 <sup>th</sup>
Women experience unequal treatment compared to their male counterparts within the company culture.	3.07	0.88	4 <sup>th</sup>
Traditional gender roles are reinforced by company culture in south-west Nigeria, limiting women's career advancement opportunities.	3.02	0.84	5 <sup>th</sup>
Gender-based harassment and discrimination are overlooked or minimized within the company culture.	3.02	0.83	5 <sup>th</sup>
Company policies and practices contribute to the perpetuation of discrimination against women in south-west Nigeria.	3.00	0.84	8 <sup>th</sup>
Women are discouraged from challenging discriminatory practices within the company culture in south-west Nigeria.	3.12	0.82	1 <sup>st</sup>
Ministry of Education should Modify internal structures to enable it to promote a policy of gender equality	3.08	0.83	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Weighted Mean			3.04

**Note:** M represents mean or average, and SD represents standard deviation.

The result in Table 2 shows how company culture affect discrimination against women in Polytechnics in south west Nigeria. Given the weighted mean score of 3.04, statements with mean values that are equal or greater than the weighted mean score are considered in this result. As shown in Table 4.7, the respondents ranked first “Women are discouraged from challenging discriminatory practices within the company culture in south-west Nigeria with mean of 3.12 and standard deviation of 0.82. Also, 33.3% and 52.1% of the respondents respectively strongly agree and agree with this statement. Ranked second was “Company culture in south-west Nigeria perpetuates gender stereotypes that put women at a disadvantage” ( $M = 3.11, SD = 0.82$ ) and 33.1% and 51.5% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively with this statement. “Ministry of Education should modify internal structures to enable it to promote a policy of gender equality” ( $M = 3.08, SD = 0.83$ ) was ranked third and 30.6% and 55.4% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively, and Women experience unequal treatment compared to their male counterparts within the company culture ( $M = 3.07, SD = 0.88$ ) with 33.1% of strongly agree and 49.5% agree which was ranked fourth.

As shown in Table 2, from the perspectives of the respondents, company culture affects discrimination against women in Polytechnics in south west Nigeria in terms of women discouragement from challenging discriminatory practices, company culture in perpetuates gender stereotypes that put women at a disadvantage, the need for the Ministry of Education to modify internal structures to enable it to promote a policy of gender equality, and women experience of unequal treatment compared to their male counterparts.

Majority of respondents agreed that there was gender discrimination in workplace and such discrimination was more pronounced in relation to sexual harassment of women, micro-aggressions and subtle forms of discrimination, workplace policies that favour men than women, stereotypes and biases influence hiring and promotion decisions, and work assignments that are based on gender rather than merit. This aligns with the findings of Shockley et al., [29], which highlighted the impact of ambiguous workplace harassment. Their research revealed that women are more likely to report incidents that are clearly defined as harassment, while more ambiguous cases often go unreported. This reluctance to speak out in more ambiguous situations stems from a fear of being labeled as a liar or losing respect among peers, making it difficult to fully capture the extent of workplace harassment.

The study revealed that discrimination affects women in Polytechnics in south-west Nigeria in terms of their access to education, mobility and freedom restriction, limiting economic empowerment opportunities, confronting barriers in accessing employment opportunities, and experience of gender-based violence. This is consistent with the findings of Soklaridis *et al.*, [30], which indicated that individuals in high-ranking positions within institutions often escape accountability for sexual harassment. This unchecked behavior has a profound impact on victims, affecting not only their well-being but also their work output and academic performance.

**Research Question 3:** How effective are current workplace policies and practices in addressing gender discrimination, and what improvements can be made to promote gender equality in the workplace?

**Table 3:** Current workplace policies and practices in addressing gender discrimination, and what improvements can be made to promote gender equality in the workplace

Items	M	S.D	Rank
Technological advancements have made it easier for women to access job opportunities previously dominated by men	3.21	0.66	1 <sup>st</sup>
Flexible work arrangements facilitated by technology (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) have positively impacted women's ability to balance work and personal life responsibilities	3.12	0.68	5 <sup>th</sup>
Online education and training platforms have empowered women to gain skills and knowledge necessary for career advancement.	3.12	0.70	5 <sup>th</sup>
Technology has helped in reducing gender bias in recruitment processes by introducing blind hiring techniques and AI-based selection tools	3.10	0.70	9 <sup>th</sup>
Virtual Collaboration tools have enabled women to participate more actively in team projects, regardless of their geographical location.	3.14	0.69	4 <sup>th</sup>
The availability of online networking platforms has facilitated women's	3.12	0.69	5 <sup>th</sup>

access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities.

Technology has played a significant role in breaking down traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the workplace.	3.12	0.67	5 <sup>th</sup>
Artificial Intelligence and automation have created new job opportunities that are more inclusive and less biased towards any gender.	3.18	0.68	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Technological innovations have led to increased transparency and accountability in workplace policies, promoting fairness and equity for all employees, regardless of gender.	3.15	0.68	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Requirement to place men more than woman on employment lists in positions of eligibility	2.87	0.91	10 <sup>th</sup>
Weighted Mean			3.11

**Note:** M represents mean or average, and SD represents standard deviation.

The result in Table 3 shows how technological revolution creates equal opportunities and motivation for increased women participation in workplace process. Given the weighted mean score of 3.11, statements with mean values that are equal or greater than the weighted mean score are considered in this result. As shown in Table 3, the respondents ranked ‘Technological advancements have made it easier for women to access job opportunities previously dominated by men’ first with mean of 3.21 and standard deviation of 0.66. Also, 33.4% and 54.8% of the respondents respectively strongly agree and agree with this statement. Ranked second was ‘‘Artificial Intelligence and automation have created new job opportunities that are more inclusive and less biased towards any gender’’ ( $M = 3.18, SD = 0.68$ ) and 31.9% and 55.6% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively with this statement.

Technological innovations have led to increased transparency and accountability in workplace policies, promoting fairness and equality for all employees, regardless of gender’’ ( $M = 3.15, SD = 0.68$ ) was ranked third and 29.5% and 57.4% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively. Virtual Collaboration tools have enabled women to participate more actively in team projects, regardless of their geographical location ( $M = 3.14, SD = 0.67$ ) was ranked fourth and 30.5% and 54.5% of respondents strongly agree and agree respectively. Four statements that were ranked fifth were: Flexible work arrangements facilitated by technology (e.g., remote work, flexible hours) have positively impacted women's ability to balance work and personal life responsibilities ( $M = 3.12, SD = 0.68$ ) with 27.6% of strongly agree and 58.6% agree; Online education and training platforms have empowered women to gain skills and knowledge necessary for career advancement ( $M = 3.12, SD = 0.70$ ) with 28.6% of strongly agree and 56.3% agree; The availability of online networking platforms has facilitated

women's access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities ( $M = 3.12, SD = 0.69$ ) with 28.5% of strongly agree and 57.3% agree; and Technology has played a significant role in breaking down traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the workplace ( $M = 3.12, SD = 0.67$ ) with 28.5% of respondents that were strongly agree while 57.3% also agree with the statement.

As shown in Table 3, from the perspectives of the respondents, technological revolution has created equal opportunities and motivation for increased women participation in workplace process in terms of: making it easier for women to access job opportunities previously dominated by men; creating new job opportunities that are more inclusive and less biased towards any gender; increasing transparency and accountability in workplace policies, promoting fairness and equality for all employees, regardless of gender; enabling women to participate more actively in team projects, regardless of their geographical location; positively impacting women's ability to balance work and personal life responsibilities; empowering women to gain skills and knowledge necessary for career advancement; facilitating women's access to professional networks and mentorship opportunities and in playing a significant role in breaking down traditional gender roles and stereotypes in the workplace.

The discovery on the impact of technological revolution on women employment revealed an increase in job opportunities for women in south-west Nigeria which is in line with the study of Soklaridis *et al.*, [31] who mentioned that women are beginning to take a firm foothold in the industry and show a steady rhythm which will in time outpace their male counterparts in the STEM field as it is happening in every other field of human endeavour. In addition, this study revealed that the impact of technological revolution on

women employment brings about enhanced technological skills acquisition for women to secure employment which is an improvement when compared to Spottswood, *et al.*, [32] research that found out that there are pronounced gender differences in the effects of new digital technologies, with a strong variation between countries and industrial sectors.

The digital technologies significantly impact the ways of working in every sector and thereby results in them influencing technologies influence women's participation across all such types of work [33]. This study aligns with this discussion as it reveals that technological revolution has brought about the creation of non-traditional job roles that are more accessible to women, and has also promoted women's participation in the tech workforce.

## 6. Conclusion

Women in the workplace face various challenges, including micro-aggressions, subtle discrimination, work-family balance issues, harassment, and unequal treatment. These difficulties hinder their professional growth, underscoring the need for supportive policies and inclusive work environments. Company culture in south-west Nigeria's polytechnics perpetuates discrimination against women, discouraging them from challenging unfair practices and reinforcing gender stereotypes. The technological revolution has been instrumental in creating equal opportunities and motivation for increased women participation in the workplace, promoting fairness, inclusivity, and career advancement.

## 7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are raised for concerned stakeholders:

- Stakeholders should invest in digital literacy programs that empower women with the necessary skills to leverage technological innovations, enhancing their participation in the workplace.
- Organizations and policymakers should promote inclusive tech policies that foster equal access to opportunities, transparency, and accountability, ultimately bridging the gender gap in the workplace.
- Employers should encourage flexible work arrangements facilitated by technology, such as remote work and

flexible hours, to support women in balancing work and personal life responsibilities, thereby enhancing their productivity and job satisfaction.

- Polytechnics stakeholders should promote a culture of inclusivity by fostering a culture that encourages equality, respect, and inclusivity, allowing women to feel empowered to challenge discriminatory practices.
- The Ministry of Education should modify its internal structures to promote and enforce policies of gender equality, ensuring that women are treated fairly and have equal opportunities.
- Support mechanisms for women should be established for those who experience discrimination, providing them with resources and platforms to report incidents and seek redress.
- Organisations should develop and enforce policies to prevent workplace harassment and discrimination, providing a safe and inclusive environment for women to thrive

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