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**FACTORS AFFECTING THE GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN
NIGERIA'S GOVERNMENT SECTOR**

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Factors Affecting the Gender Mainstreaming in Nigeria's Government Sector

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of traditional practices, gender roles, religious practices and community perception on women in gender mainstreaming process in recruitment in Nigeria

Methodology: The study adopted a desktop methodology Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

Results: The results revealed that there exist conceptual and contextual gaps relating to the study on factors affecting the gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's government sector. Preliminary empirical review reveals that gender roles have a positive and significant influence on gender mainstreaming process in recruitment in Nigeria.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: Social constructionism theory and feminist theory may be used to categorize the key work design factors which may relate to gender mainstreaming factors that are important to this study. The results of this research will form the basis for further research to explain how culture, gender roles and community perception on women influence the gender mainstreaming process in recruitment.

Keywords: *Education Level, Gender Mainstreaming, Gender Roles, Recruitment.*

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INTRODUCTION

There has been a heated debate in the last decades over gender issues within the patriarchal society (Laundry, 2016). According to Ndiso (2022), gender mainstreaming is perceived as an exact antithesis to curb gender marginalization in both women and men. Therefore, have been numerous global efforts by international organizations to enhance gender mainstreaming. In the year 1985, World Conference to appraise and review the United Nations (UN) achievements decade for women: development, equality and peace, was conducted in Nigeria. This conference was considered the birth of global feminism and the first step towards achieving gender quality goals. However, despite these efforts, gender mainstreaming in developed as well as developing countries is still low.

There is need for clarity on the issue of gender since it is an all-round social-cultural factor. It is a factor of concern since gender can further be applied in very many aspects including ethnic group, race, age as well as class. Gender systems are applied in various social cultural aspects which dictates the expected, the valued and the tolerated in men and women, girls and boys in these specific aspects (Scholten & Witmer, 2017). In the process of socializing, people learn the gender roles; however, these roles are flexible and not fixed. The gender systems are implemented through the legislations, the education systems, the political systems, cultural and traditional systems as well as economical systems. Gender aspect does not specifically deal with women or men rather it focuses on determining the gender roles, resource accessibility as well as resource control together with the ability to make decisions (Goldberg, 2022).

It is essential to put more consideration on the fact that gender aspect is not interchangeable with women. Gender is concerned with men and women and how they relate. Gender equality advancement should involve both men and women. Recently, the greater focus in relation to gender has been men. With an aim of increasing the focus of men, there are three key approaches which have been implemented (Scholten & Witmer, 2017). The first aspect is the essence of identifying men as the champions of gender and make sure they are actively involved in work. The second aspect is the fact that unless men change their attitude as well as their behavior then gender equality recognition might be impossible. This shows that men should change their attitude towards reproductive rights and health rights. The last aspect is that the gender systems that have been adopted are negative in relation to both men and women. The gender systems are making demands to men who are not realistic as well as requesting them to have a certain behavior. Wide research is being done by male researchers as well as female researchers on the identities of men as well as their masculinity. The more concern which is focused towards men is going to affect future strategies relating to gender in a significant way (Andersson & Lindberg, 2018).

Gender mainstreaming is not concerned with coming up with separate projects for women in the work program, further it does not even concern with creating women related components within the activities in the existing work program. It calls for concern to gender perspectives as a key part of the general activities in all the established programs. This entails coming up with the gender perspectives, the general work for men and also women as well as the procedure of making decision in relation to policy development, advocacy, implementation of norms, monitoring of norms and standards, research together with project monitoring.

It is essential to notice the associations between the gender mainstreaming in the comprehensive work of the UN as well as the process of promoting equal opportunities as well as gender balance with the UN itself. Both organizational values together with organizational culture play a significant role in creating a conducive environment for gender mainstreaming. It is easier to implement gender mainstreaming in an environment that ensures teamwork, risk taking multi-disciplinary focuses, creative thinking as well as flexibility (Scholten & Witmer, 2017).

The strategies implemented for mainstreaming do not indicate that the key activities which are adopted in support for female gender are no longer essential. Such actions target the women priorities in general and the need for instance, policy development, legislation as well as the projects on the ground (Lee-Gosselin, Briere & Ann, 2015). Projects implemented specifically for women are still playing an essential role in ensuring gender equality. These projects are still essential since gender equality is yet to be achieved and still gender mainstreaming processes are yet to be well developed. The initiatives that are implemented specifically for promoting gender equality are essential for minimizing the existing disparities since they catalyze the process of improving gender equality and at the same time facilitate mainstream. Specific projects for women serve as a key empowerment for them since they act as an essential incubator for storing ideas together with strategies that can be utilized in mainstreaming. Projects specifically designed for men ensure gender equality through growing the male allies (Ortiz-Rodriguez & Pillai, 2018).

Gender role beliefs are the perceptions towards gender related tasks as well as power distribution. The source of these gender beliefs originates from the social role perspective, the predominant perspective as well as other beliefs that categorize certain roles for men and other roles for women (Hergatt, Olson & King, 2015). In relation to the traditional family lifestyle the women were entrusted with the role of home activities, taking care of the children and ensuring good relationships. On the other hand, men were entrusted with the role of supporting the family financially despite the fact that gender-based beliefs is categorized into different perspectives. Bakas (2017) revealed that, in some nations men report more traditional and less egalitarian gender role beliefs as compared to women. In many western and no-western countries, the key mechanism through which gender equality is facilitated is education. In Egypt, it is also revealed that education is positively related to attitude favoring gender equality. The key predictors of ladies' belief of gender role equity is the level of education as well as the employment status (Fons & Vijver, 2017). In USA the most egalitarian belief is held by the most educated as well as the employed ladies. In relation to men, the key egalitarian predictors are the level of income, the education level, age, marital status as well as employment status. The egalitarian of the older people, the less educated, as well as the married men who have fully committed wives in home chores is less when put into comparison with the egalitarian of the more educated, the unmarried and men with high status who are employed on full time basis.

It is further found that the belief in relation to sexes is extremely prevalent, whereby there is less segregation in relation to occupation, education and the stronger role in the family is held by the mother. Bakas (2017) indicates that higher levels of subjective wellbeing should be subjected by the feminine societies as compared to the masculine societies. In more feminine societies, all sexes are given equal opportunities especially the ladies who are given more opportunities to express their abilities in fulfilling the social roles which are more associated with individual well-being

and the satisfaction; level of the partners. Hofstede (2021) the findings of this research do not give a clear picture of the specific measures taken by all the countries. Nevertheless, having in mind that Netherlands has a very high rate of femininity which lowers the power distance hence expecting the number of the main streamers to have an average score on femininity which in turn lowers the power distance as compared to any other group which is immigrating, this implies that the Dutch mainstreamers have more beliefs which are egalitarian on the gender role.

In Africa, various research studies carried out globally have highlighted different determinants of gender mainstreaming. In Nigeria, Ngulube (2018) indicate that women are under estimated when making decisions on important matters. Therefore, the key argument is that the more advanced inequality in gender that influences girls and women in general from accessing job opportunities and education opportunities is as a result of inherited power relation perceptions as well as gender roles which come by as a result of culture structures dominated by male.

Statement of the Problem

Even with international and national government efforts to ensure gender mainstreaming process, the gender mainstreaming still remains poor. Women equal recruitment and representation in various departments is sidelined where their male counterparts still dominate. Therefore, there have been impediments towards the uptake of gender and appreciating the gender mainstreaming process. This is experienced across the governance structures in Nigeria up to the national level. Gender-based abuse, for example, is still prevalent, with nearly half (45%) of women aged 15 to 49 having experienced physical or sexual violence at some stage in their lives. At the group and household levels, changes in social attitudes and traditional practices around gender roles, norms, and female empowerment have been slow, owing to structural gender barriers fuelled by strongly held and entrenched stereotypes. It is therefore important to understand the determinants of gender mainstreaming process in recruitment.

Theoretical Review

Social Constructionism Theory

Social constructionism theory was advanced by Berger and Luckmann in 1966. The interest of this theory is to discover various ways in which social phenomena as well as social realities are formulated, implemented and made into tradition by human. Moreover, their focus was on the process of description of institutions and not analyzing causes as well as effects. This theory suggests that society as well as culture develops gender roles that are deemed ideal behavior for any person of particular gender (Wilson & Tagg, 2020).

The source of the social constructionist movement is very close in relation to the critiques of the objectivism on the concept of empiricist knowledge. The gender role theory is among the key popular differences of social constructionist. The key source of gender variation occurs more in the social practices as well as organizational practices as compared to personal fixed practices. From a wide research body, Sarpong and Nabubie (2015) gives a clear documentation of the social construction as well as the perpetuation of the stereotypic gender variation. The perception, as well as the evaluation and the treatment of the males together with the females are shaped through gender stereotypes. This is done through ways which are selectively gendered begetting the key

patterns of behavior that reveals the first stereotypes. Several variations in gender that possess social behavior are seen as the products of labor division between genders that grow through social practices as well as cultural practices that are controlled through desperate gender status as well as power (Holland, 2016).

This theory will enable the researcher to be able to investigate some of the socio-cultural issues and activities that affects gender mainstreaming process in recruitment in Nigeria. The society sees women as lesser beings, which should be taking care of the home as their male counterparts head the family and lead in all issues of decision making. This has affected women participation in political roles as they are often undermined as lesser beings in the society that men are.

In the broader nature vs. nurture controversy, social constructionism is on the nurture side of the spectrum. A Philosopher Paul Boghossian has written against social constructionism. He argues that social constructionism is put into practice by many since it is a liberating stance. In case things happen to be the way they are due to social changes as compared to nature, then changing them to occur in our favor would be very simple (Boghossian, 2021). He further indicates that social constructionist's holds that we should stop judging absolutely on the truth of certain things rather we should argue with support of certain theory.

Feminist Theory

The extension of feminism into abstract or theoretical debate is referred to as feminist theory. It seeks to evaluate women's social responsibility, expertise, interest, work, and education in order to better understand the essence of gender inequality (Blackmore, 2015). Liberal feminism is an individualistic feminist philosophy that focuses on women's ability to maintain their equality through their own choices and acts. This theory is founded on the belief that since people (male and female) are born equal, they should be given equal opportunities, and that women's subordination and marginalization emerged as a result of the theory's failure to be implemented and recognized (Hurley, 2017). Liberal feminists warn that current gender diversity can favor no one because both women and men are essential to society's development. As a result, they should be handled fairly, and it should be noted that if half of society's wealth (women) are ignored, the society will not prosper.

Liberal feminists argue that society is mistaken in believing that women are physically less physically and mentally competent than men, and that as a result, women are discriminated against in the marketplace, the academy, and the platform. Liberal feminists claim that female subordination is embedded in a set of legal and cultural barriers that prevent women from achieving success in the public sphere. They work to achieve gender equality through legal and political change (Bendl & Schmidt, 2022).

The Liberal Feminist Theory assumes that these premises are based on the belief that gender prejudice has been as a result of individual ignorance. The affected person has to take action so as address this prejudice. Therefore, education is viewed as an important variable that can be employed to improve the existing situation (Reiter, 2017). Liberal feminists are as well concerned with freedom and equal rights of individuals. If reforms have to be there such kind of reforms need to be introduced gradually without upsetting the persons' status quo. Liberal Feminists have average aims, their opinions do not challenge present values radically and as such their aim is on

gradual change in economic, political and social system. Gender variations are attributed to various factors including culture and the manner in which women and men are socialized in that particular culture. Other factors are related closely to the individuals' attitudes (Shaw, 2015). These can be altered through education and empowerment. Basically, liberal feminism is for continuing reforms by advocating for equal rights to all, as well as laws and also policies that encourage equality. This theory is attempting to bridge the wide gap between female and male. It lays more emphasis that women as their male counterpart ought to be given equal opportunities to take part in daily activities to have sustained equal advancement in third world nations. In women political participation, the theory highlights that factors that hinder women from participation include culture, income and policies put in place (Bendl & Schmidt, 2022).

The feminist theory will be used in this study to explain how culture, gender roles and community perception on women influence the gender mainstreaming process in recruitment. According to the theory, since all people (male and female) are born equal, they should be given equal opportunities. However, society retains the mistaken belief that women are less mentally and physically capable than men by birth, which contributes to discrimination in the workplace and during recruitment processes. As such reforms including education and legal frameworks on gender equity play a major role in enhancing gender mainstreaming.

Empirical Review

Nel and Joel (2019) carried out a study on the transformation of governance in the South African energy sector: Critical considerations for gender mainstreaming. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, views gender equality as a basic human right. SDG 5 emphasizes that the end of discrimination in all sectors across the globe, is essential to achieve SDG 5. The aim of the study was to discuss the interrelationship of the energy sector and gender mainstreaming, to work towards achieving SDGs 5 and 7. The analysis of the study was based on a qualitative approach, using unobtrusive research techniques. Data was collected through a desktop study, using secondary data, including scholarly papers and books, reports from the United Nations, ministerial websites, relevant news articles, unsolicited government reports and policies. The results indicated that male representation is higher than female representation', which may indicate, unequal access to participation in energy resource governance, which would reinforce an unequal gender power balance. Although there has been an improved effort from government in terms of gender mainstreaming and empowerment, a number of barriers remain, including a lack of gender-sensitive policies, awareness, information, and employment equity. The South African government has made some progress in terms of gender mainstreaming and there seems to be improvement in some areas in the energy value chain. However, these efforts have been fragmented and disjointed and not much has been achieved in terms of gender mainstreaming in the policy process and implementation.

Mudege, Mdege, Abidin and Bhatasara (2017) outlined the role of gender norms in access to agricultural training in Chikwawa and Phalombe, Malawi. Based on qualitative research conducted in Chikwawa and Phalombe in Malawi, the study discussed how gender relations shape men and women's access to and participation in agricultural training. It also examined how men and women justify or challenge gender inequalities in relation to access to agricultural information and knowledge. Data on gender and recruitment to and participation in training, barriers to training

and access to information as well as farmer to farmer extension models were collected and analyzed. A gender relations approach, focusing on power and inequality, was used to analyze the data. The data showed that the perception of men as household heads and women as careers or helpers who are also illiterate and ignorant often has implications on women's ability to access training and information. Negative stereotypical perceptions about women by their husbands and extension workers militate against women's access to training and information. Institutional biases within extension systems reproduce gender inequality by reinforcing stereotypical gender norms. Extension officers should be targeted with training on gender responsive adult learning methodologies and gender awareness to help them be more inclusive and sensitive to women's needs.

Daly (2015) investigated gender mainstreaming in theory and practice. The study utilized the findings of completed, eight-country research project to visit some key issues in the theory and practice of gender mainstreaming. The research results indicated that gender mainstreaming is a diverse entity when looked at from a cross-national perspective but rather hollow when considered within the national setting. To the extent that there is a "common core" to gender mainstreaming in action across countries, it lies in the tendency to apply the approach in a technocratic way and to be no systemic in compass. The argument is advanced that this is at least in part attributable to particularities in the development of mainstreaming. The study suggested that gender mainstreaming is underdeveloped as a concept and identifies a need to elaborate further on some fundamentals. In particular, the conceptualization of mainstreaming needs to be rethought with special attention devoted to the understanding of the problematic of gender inequality that underlies it and the articulation of the relationship between gender mainstreaming and societal change.

Bock (2015) examined gender mainstreaming and rural development policy. The research paper considered gender mainstreaming of the EU Rural Development Programme. The EU promotes the gender mainstreaming of rural development policies because retaining women in rural areas is seen as crucial to the long-term viability of rural areas. A review of literature and scan of policy documents demonstrates that few rural development plans address gender issues, and generally only by including some separate projects for women. Little is done to address the systemic features of gender inequality and to realize inclusive developments that address the needs of all social groups. The de-politicization of rural gender issues results in policy makers ticking the obligatory gender box without envisioning any real change in the agenda or process of rural development policy making. The study argues that a more fruitful way to go forward is to re-politicize gender in rural development and to tease out at the local level how changing gender relations and rural development coincide.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a desktop methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

RESULTS

The results were grouped into various research gap categories namely as conceptual, contextual, and geographical.

Conceptual Gaps

Studies by Nel and Joel (2019), Mudege, Mdege, Abidin and Bhatasara (2017), Daly (2015), Bock (2015) had a conceptual framework gap. The influence of traditional practices, gender roles, religious practices and community perception on women in gender mainstreaming process in recruitment in Nigeria were not established by any of the research cited. The research did not provide a clear breakdown of the factors affecting the gender mainstreaming in Nigeria's government sector. Because of this, the current work aims to fill in these conceptual gaps.

Contextual and Geographical Gap

Studies by Nel and Joel (2019), Mudege, Mdege, Abidin and Bhatasara (2017), Daly (2015), Bock (2015) had geographical gap because they weren't actually done in Nigeria. This suggests that the findings may not be applicable in Nigeria due to the fact that the methods employed in each country vary. This study was undertaken with the intention of filling that void.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings and recommendations of the study shall provide insight to women in Nigeria on their right of access to employment opportunities in the County government. Gender mainstreaming process enables women to have equal access to power and resources, unlimited orientation at the workplace. This creates better resource distribution among both genders without discrimination. The research gives knowledge to other researchers, Scholars, and academicians that can be used as research material or to identify research gaps. The study as well provides basis for further studies on the determinants of gender mainstreaming in recruitment process. The study provides more information to body of knowledge on determinants of gender mainstreaming process in recruitment.

Social constructionism theory and feminist theory may be used to categorize the key work design factors which may relate to gender mainstreaming factors that are important to this study.

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