PATRIARCHY: A TRIPOD ON WHICH GENDER INEQUITY STANDS

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ABSTRACT
The study examined the role which patriarchy plays in strengthening gender inequity in Nigeria. The study utilised a descriptive research design. The data was collected using questionnaire as the primary source and journal articles as the secondary source. The population of the study included all male and female adult citizens in Nigeria. Purposive sampling technique was utilised in choosing 100 respondents for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents using an online Google form. The data was analysed using excel spread sheet and results presented in the form of charts and tables. The theoretical framework for this work is exchange theory by George Homans which examined human behaviour and interactions. This is necessary because exchange theory is concerned not only with individual behaviour but also interactions between people involving an exchange of rewards and costs. This study discovered that patriarchy is the strength behind gender inequity. It was recommended that a system which accommodates both sexes equally should be created and this can be done by changing certain political, religious and cultural beliefs that have been in existence for many decades in Nigeria. Therefore, the people, the government, traditional heads and religious heads must all join hands together to make this a reality.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Gender, Inequity and Tripod.

Introduction
Nigeria, similar to most other African countries in recent times are experiencing an immense drive for gender equity from the female gender and this movement is often referred to as feminism by the larger portion of the male gender in the society. Tradition, Religion and Culture are trivet sociological tools that the society uses to define and categorise where each gender (male and female) are placed in terms of relevance in all works of life. In traditional African societies, Nigeria for example, culture has a pervasive influence on how females are treated; Makama, (2013). Religious principle on the other hand, places male as the crown over the female, and for this reason, she essentially has to be under the man’s subjugation. Tradition also places bounds on leadership roles females can play. Although, the Nigeria’s 1999 constitution prohibits any forms of discrimination on the basis of gender, yet this tripod elements cannot stop putting restrictions on the societal right of women. These restrictions in the societal rights of women means the society has become men dominant in terms of influence, power and voice through an existing social structure known as Patriarchy. Patriarchy by definition is a social system in which family principles or entire societies are built around the concept of father-rule, where males takes the first front as authority figures; Wood, (2019) by taking the Nigerian educational sector into consideration; the Nigerian universities for example since inception have only seen Nine (9) female Vice-Chancellors emerged, not because of incompetence to thrive in that capacity, but the unwillingness of both the male and female gender to vote a female into such powerful position. If gender equity is to be realised as provided in the Nigerian constitution, this social system that gives male gender the monopolistic chance in aspects of influence, power and authority must be confronted.
Objective
This work is set to examine the role which patriarchy plays in strengthening gender inequity in Nigeria.

Study Area

![Map of Nigeria](image)

Figure 1: The study Area: Map of Nigeria (Source: Google, 2020).

Nigeria is located in West Africa, at the north of the equator. The 1914 political amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Colonies by Lord Lugard of Great Britain gave rise to what is known as the present day Nigeria. Nigeria is Africa’s most populated nation. By considering the demographic statistics of the National Population Commission of 2006, Nigeria is populated by more than 150 million people and with diverse languages, cultural attitudes, different traditions and various religious belief structures and practices. Nigeria covers an overall area of 923,768 square kilometers. The official language adopted by Nigeria is English from the British. Nigeria was granted independence on the 1st of October 1960 and she became a republic in 1963. The Federal Republic of Nigeria has the Executive, Legislative and Judicial arms of Government. There are 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja with 774 Local Government Areas. There are two core religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity and diversity of native beliefs across the country. There are three main tribal groups, the Hausas, the Yoruba and the Igbo and there are two major religious practices which are manifest where a group resident. For example, at the Northern Nigeria the predominant groups such as the Hausas, the Fulani and the Kanuri indulge in Islamic worship; in the southern part as in the south-south and south-east, the people there are largely Christians; whereas the Yorubas who are found at South west are both Christians and Moslems. Nigeria is a land of varied and rich Cultural traditions, with a wide display of refined visual arts and has manufactured a multitude of traditional crafts. The talent, creativity and versatility originate in its festivals, music, sculptures, literature and films are well known all over the world, and has a vigorous film industry known around the world known as Nollywood; Abara, (2012).
Literature Review

The concept of patriarchy

Igbelina-Igboke, (2013) traces patriarchy to the Latin words pater (father) and arch (rule), in which case the term also means ‘the rule of the father’. For Merriam Webster, the term ‘patriarchy’ is broader than this; thus defines it as: a social organisation marked by the supremacy of the father in the clan or family, the legal dependence of wives and children, and the reckoning of descent and inheritance in the male line; broadly: control by men of a disproportionately large share of power. Marshall, (1996) on its part describes patriarchy as social systems based on the authority of male heads of household;

Okpe, (2005) submits that patriarchy is a broad network or system of hierarchical organization that cuts across political, economic, social, religion, cultural, industrial and financial spheres, under which the overwhelming number of upper positions in society are either occupied or controlled and dominated by men. Thus, any system that operationalises an order that accords men undue advantage over women is considered patriarchal.

Patriarchy is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females; with various taboos to ensure conformity with specified gender roles; Igbelina-Igboke, (2013).

Patriarchy is very much a part of African life, and is deeply entrenched in the “norms, values and customs”. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the male is lord over the female; “it is the males’ will and cultural norms which dominate and legislate.” Men are born already elevated in the societal hierarchy, and men and male children are valued above women and female children; Bvukutwa, (2002).

This domination over women is reflected right from the process of contracting a marriage during which a man pays a bride price for his wife, which makes her the property of her husband. The idea that the husband owns his wife is symbolised in various ways. For example, in most parts of Nigeria, “the act of payment of bride price is perceived as an outright act of transfer of woman’s rights in source… family to spouse’s family Igbelina-Igboye, (2013).

In most places in Africa also, after wedding, the woman is compelled by tradition to bear her husband’s family name as surname, dropping her father’s name. Patriarchy presented and shaped societies in the history of humanity, both in the past and the present. Patriarchy has been a mode of life and is considered ahistorical, eternal and endorsed by God.

The 2012 Gender in Nigeria Report shows the patriarchal structure of the society in the following areas:

1. **Education**: In eight Northern States over 80% of women are unable to read compared with 54% for men. 70.8% of young women aged 20-29 in the North-West are unable to read and write and only 3% of females complete secondary school in the northern area.

2. **Health**: Nigeria has one of the worst maternal mortality rates in the world with one woman dying every 10 minutes during delivering. That is 545 deaths per every 100,000 successful deliveries Nearly 50% of Nigerian women are mothers before they turn 20. There is inability to access quality health care services, poor access to safe childbirth services and lack of adequate and affordable emergency obstetric care. In some part of my country, religion does not allow women to deliver in the hospital. This is a taboo as the husbands will not be happy to see their wives opening up to a doctor for any form of virginal examinations. So from young age, the girl child is taught how to deliver her baby unassisted. This leads to infections and death.

3. **Property Rights**: Women are denied legal right to own property or inherit land. In North-East Nigeria, women own only 4% of land and just over 10% of land ownership in the South-East and South-
South. When your parents leave all sorts of wealth for the children, most times, the female children have no right to partake in the sharing of their father’s wealth.

4. **Violence** Levels of violence against women are high. Battery and marital rapes are not considered a crime. Women are sexually harassed, abused and killed, even for rituals. When a woman is involved in adultery, which of course is committed with a man, the woman always gets punished by either public stoning or by hanging. The country’s Penal Code grants husbands permission to beat their wives, provided the violence does not result in serious injury.

5. **Weak Economic Base**

Women occupy 21% of formal sector positions regardless of their educational qualification. Women occupy fewer than 30% of all posts in the public sector and only 17% of this in senior cadre. Only one in every three employees in the privileged nonagricultural formal sector is a woman. Women’s access to bank loans is restricted by their limited financial resources and the difficulties they have obtaining the necessary guarantees. In certain cases, financial institutions demand prior consent of the woman’s husband before granting a loan.

6. **Weak Political Representation**

Women are under-represented in all political decision making bodies. Just 9% of those who stood for election in Nigeria’s April 2011 National Assembly election were women. Out of 360 members of the house of representative, only 25 are women representing 6%.

**Concept of Gender Inequity**

Gender equity is fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities between women and men. Geneva, World Health Organisation, (2001). Programmes and policies that specifically empower women are often needed to achieve this. Thus, gender inequity is an unfair and unjust system of distributing responsibilities amongst women and men. Inequality on the other hand is the state of not being equal, especially in status, rights, and opportunities.

The term ‘gender’ refers to the socially constructed differences that assign the attitudes and opportunities of males and females and their social interaction and relationships between them. It also determines what is accepted, permitted and valued for both women and men at any given time, and it differs from context to context, thus being context-specific Wood, (2019).

Eric, (2006), opined that many sociologists, argue that wages are shaped by cultural expectations and norms, but simply by the supply and demand conditions of markets. Jobs that are associated with women are traditionally devalued, and the kind of skills those jobs require deemed less valuable than the kind of skills associated with male jobs. More specifically, skills connected to caregiving and nurturance are undervalued in markets. Much of the gender gap in pay between male and female jobs is linked to these cultural standards. Ademiluka (2018), using ancient Israel and Africa as contexts, in their study assessed the correlation between patriarchy and violence against women. The study suggests that it is not all men who are perpetrators of women abuse; rather, there is evidence of female perpetrators of sexual violence against men. Rather than patriarchy, the major cause of women abuse is a personality disorder characterised, among other traits, by aggression against women, alcoholism and drug abuse – the latter two traits are often responsible for women abuse.

In a study conducted by Adeleke, (2015), on gender-equitable property rights regime affects gender relations at the household and societal levels through in-depth interviews conducted in 2012 with fifty-six purposively selected women property owners who lived in urban Ibadan, Nigeria. Findings include that though economic power has improved the status of the women and contributes to development of their communities, it has not yet translated into equity in decision making. More than economic power is required to attain equality. The capability of defining goals and acting upon them is also critical. George Homans exchange theory is the theoretical framework for this project. It is chosen because Homans believed that the heart of Sociology lies
in the study of individual behaviour and interaction as his main interest was rather in the reinforcement patterns, the history of the rewards and costs that lead people to do what they do; Ritzer, (1996).

Methodology
The study utilised a descriptive research design. The data was collected using questionnaire as the primary source and journal articles as secondary source. The population of the study included all male and female adult citizens in Nigeria. A purposive sampling method was utilised in choosing 100 respondents (50 male and 50 females) for the study. The questionnaire was distributed to respondents using an online Google form via whatsapp and e-mail. The questionnaire used was a four (4) liker scale and dichotomous in nature. It was divided into three sections, Section A elicits demographic data of respondents, and section B looked at Gender inequity, Section C elicits information on patriarchy. One hundred copies of the questionnaire were sent out and only ninety two participants responded adequately. Therefore, 92 returned copies of the questionnaire were analysed indicating a 92% completion rate. The data was analysed using excel spreadsheet and results presented in forms of charts, tables and graphs using percentages and frequencies. The reliability of the instrument was tested with Cronbach alpha of 0.082 derived which is an indication that the instrument was void of bias on the part of the researchers and devoid on the part of the respondent

RESULTS
Section A: Demographic Data

From Fig 1.1 above, the total percentage of male respondents is 47.8% and total female respondents were 52.2%. This is an indication that females are slightly more than male in the survey conducted.
Fig 3 above, shows the educational level of respondents and it revealed that 9% of respondents have primary education, 32% of respondents have secondary education and 59% of respondents have tertiary education. This is an indication that majority of the respondents were have tertiary education.

Figure 3: Respondents’ Educational level Distribution

Fig 4 reveals the distribution of respondents’ age. 14% of respondents fell in the ages of 18-28, 26% of respondents were 29-38 years, 22% of respondents were 39-48 years and 38% of respondents are 49 years and above. This is an indication that majority of respondents are between ages 49 and above.

Figure 4: Distribution of respondents’ age
Table 1 Gender equity assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inequity Questions</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (SA)</th>
<th>Agree (A)</th>
<th>Disagree (D)</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree (SD)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No gender discrimination in Nigeria</td>
<td>13(14.1)</td>
<td>6(6.5)</td>
<td>27(29.4)</td>
<td>46(50.0)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women are treated with the same fairness as men</td>
<td>3(3.2)</td>
<td>11(11.9)</td>
<td>59(64.1)</td>
<td>19(20.8)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women occupies as equal leadership positions as men in Nigeria.</td>
<td>23(25.0)</td>
<td>7(7.6)</td>
<td>26(28.3)</td>
<td>36(39.1)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and tradition gives men more freedom and right in decision making in Nigeria.</td>
<td>45(48.9)</td>
<td>21(22.8)</td>
<td>10(10.9)</td>
<td>16(17.4)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious organisations hands men a more important role in the society as against the women.</td>
<td>50(54.3)</td>
<td>27(29.3)</td>
<td>10(10.9)</td>
<td>5(5.5)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2020 Survey

Table 1, which revealed the gender equity assessment, 50% of respondents which represented the highest percentage strongly disagreed that no gender discrimination exist in Nigeria indicating that there is gender discrimination in Nigeria. 64.1% of respondents which represented the highest percentage Disagreed that women are treated with the same fairness as men. 39.1% of respondents which represented the highest percentage Strongly Disagreed that women occupies as equal leadership positions as men. 48.9% of respondents which represented the highest percentage Strongly Agreed that culture and tradition gives men more freedom and right in decision making in Nigeria. 54.3% of respondents which represented the highest percentage Strongly Agreed that religious organisations hands men a more important role in the society as against the women.

Table 2 Impact of Patriarchy on gender inequity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patriarchy Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>IDK</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does patriarchy exist in Nigeria?</td>
<td>68(73.9)</td>
<td>20(21.7)</td>
<td>4(4.4)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does patriarchy have a huge impact on who is elected and appointed into leadership position in Nigeria?</td>
<td>77(83.7)</td>
<td>13(14.1)</td>
<td>2(2.2)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think women in the society are unfairly treated as a result of this system?</td>
<td>53(57.6)</td>
<td>30(32.6)</td>
<td>9(9.8)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think this system is in existing due to cultural, religious and traditional believes?</td>
<td>65(70.7)</td>
<td>24(26.1)</td>
<td>3(3.2)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think patriarchy as a system enhance gender inequity in Nigeria?</td>
<td>70(76.2)</td>
<td>11(11.9)</td>
<td>11(11.9)</td>
<td>92(100)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2020 Survey *IDK means I don’t know

Table 2 examined the impact on gender inequity. 73.9% respondents representing the highest percentage said ‘Yes’ to the existence of patriarchy in Nigeria. 83.7% of respondents opined that patriarchy have a huge impact on who is elected or appointed into leadership position in Nigeria. 57.6% of respondents opined that women in the society are unfairly treated as a result of this system. 70.7% of respondents believe the patriarchal system is in place due to cultural, religion and traditional. 76.2% of respondents believe patriarchy as a system enhances gender inequity in Nigeria.
Discussion of Findings
The outcome of the survey carried out shows that gender discrimination does exist in Nigeria, and has a great influence on the way females in Nigeria are treated, as well as the position they are allowed to occupy in the society and all of these are indicators of gender inequity in various sectors of the Country. Tradition and culture give the male more freedom and right in the aspects of decision making, meanwhile religious conviction and principles considered male best fit for central leadership roles, these are the tripod on which the aforesaid gender inequity stand and thrive. This is in line with the findings of Makama, (2013) who examined patriarchy and gender inequality in Nigeria: a way forward discovered a relationship between patriarchy and inequality. In a bid to address patriarchy and gender inequity there is a need to challenge patriarchy in all its manifestations.

On the other hand, it is strongly believed that patriarchy as a system occurs in all facets of existence in Nigeria, and this system greatly affect people’s decision in the aspect of appointment and election in crucial leadership positions and also the type of responsibility to be given to the female. It is viewed that this system has enhanced unfairness in the treatment of females as against their male counterpart. Patriarchy continues to exist and stand because culture, religion and tradition allowed it to take it stance. It is concluded that this system – Patriarchy is the strength behind gender inequity.

Conclusion
Women over the years have proven to be as good as men in various sectors and deserve to be given equal opportunity to lead in different capacities as men. If Nigeria must develop to be able to compete with first world nations, we must challenge patriarchy which enhances gender inequity and avoid using gender as a basis for selection of individuals into various positions in the society; rather skills, competence and abilities must come first.

Recommendations
- A system which accommodates both sexes equally should be created and this can be done by changing certain political, religious and cultural believes that has been in existence for many decades. Therefore, the government, traditional heads and religious heads must all join hands together to make this a reality.
- Women should be give reorientation and made to believe in themselves again and their abilities to perform in any organisations they find themselves in the country as much as their male counterpart.

Contribution to knowledge
- The study has evidently shown that the role which patriarchy plays in strengthening gender inequity in Nigeria. It discloses that patriarchy can be brought to an end only if mitigative measures are put in place to correct the existing system that has bedevilled the nation.

References


APPENDIX

Questionnaire

Patriarchy a tripod on which gender inequity stands

Section A: Demographic Data

1. Age (a) 18-28 (b) 29-38 (c) 39-48 (d) 49 and Above
2. Gender (a) Male (b) Female
3. Educational qualification (a) Primary (b) Secondary (c) Tertiary

Section B

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inequity Questions</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4. No gender discrimination in Nigeria</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Women are treated with the same fairness as men</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Women occupies as equal leadership positions as men in Nigeria.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Culture and tradition gives men more freedom and right in decision making in Nigeria.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Religious organisations hands men a more important role in the society as against the women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2020 Survey
Section C: Patriarchy is a system of society or government in which the oldest male is head/leader of the family; or a society controlled by men in which they use their power to their own advantage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patriarchy Questions</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>IDK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. Does patriarchy exist in Nigeria?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Does patriarchy have a huge impact on who is elected and appointed into leadership position?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Do you think women in the society are unfairly treated as a result of this system?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Do you think this system is existing due to cultural, religious and traditional beliefs?</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Do you think patriarchy as a system enhance gender inequity in Nigeria?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 2020 Survey *IDK means I don’t know