Gender Participation In Trade Unionism In Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract
Since the declaration of the years 1976 – 85 as United Nations Decade for Women, it has been assumed that women in the workforce will show more interest and participate actively in trade unionism. However, this has not been so. Hence, this study seeks to analyse gender participation in trade union activities in some selected industrial unions in southwestern Nigeria. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used for the study, in which the sample size was 1,174 based on 20% of each of 5 selected industrial unions. t-test and multiple regression analysis were used for the analysis of the data generated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed the evidence of the research work shows that male are significantly more favored in the positions held in union, and that there is no significant difference (P>0.05) at 0.05 level between male and female in their perception of women participation in trade unionism. Recommended was on policy of government that will encourage women’s participation in unionism in Nigeria.

Introduction
Industrial relations system has become a formidable tool of developing social and economic policies. Therefore, it is of more concern to the trade unions and their members, their employers, and more importantly, to the government. Industrial organisations inaugurate workers’ union and, by government policy, all workers in such industries belong to the union. Automatically, it is the male and female workers in the work environment that are members of the union. The principle that workers have right to organise themselves into union is premised on the International Labour Organisation (I.L.O.) convention of 1948 which emphasises freedom of association and protection.

In Nigeria of today, evidence abounds that the organisation and management of trade unions seems to be a male affair (Yinusa, 1985, Milkman, 1990). According to Mamounata Cisse and Natacha, David (2001), traditionally, women are have no roles in the society in Africa they are relegated as second-class citizens, by their customs. It is also assumed that they are unaware of their legal rights and even if they are, they are unable to claim them. Their daily grind involves them toiling under a wholly unfair burden of family and household chores. What is more, in the home, in the school, in workplace, in street, and throughout society, women are often subjected to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse. In most African countries, this gender-related issue gives rise to a social, religious and cultural context that gives men a superior status and a de facto monopoly on all sources of power.

British colonial education policy contributed greatly to this disparity between the sexes in their participation in white-collar job. Colonialism brought with it a new political,
social, and educational system, which affected a lot of the African women. It gave a new orientation to the roles men and women were expected to play in the society. Women’s role in the western culture is traditionally that of housewife rather than contributing to the economic development. This is true of common Igbo adage, which addresses wives as ‘oriaku’ literally meaning “sit back” and enjoys your husband’s wealth. Women were considered unsuitable for rigorous of public life. This philosophy was behind the mind of the colonial masters when they gave the objectives for establishing the CMS Girls’ School later known as Methodist Girls’ High School, Lagos as being to produce good wives and good mothers and good ornaments (Awe 1991).

Yinusa (1990) observes that women generally, record low level of attendance at trade union meeting especially when it is outside working hours”. Since attendance at meetings is another measure of trade union commitment, women participation in union activities have not been impressive. Though, the population of gender disparity is not pronounced in membership, recruitment, and funding of the unions, it however, continues to be an issue in management of affairs of the unions. This problem is not limited to Nigeria as it is a worldwide problem in industrial set up. Evidences abound that most trade unions in developed world are still in the hands of men. The fact that gender inequality exists in unions all over the world is supported by Amanda Villatora of El-Salvador National Union Centre, when she stated in her paper entitled Equality: Continuing Challenge presented at ICFTU in 1991 that: Equality must begin with union; the trade union must encourage, must disseminate information, but also must prepare, must educate and train women and must give them self-esteem (p. 53)

Also, a woman member of an electronics union in the USA’s Silicon Valley tells of her experience in “ICFTU, reported in Equality (1991) that they were nervous but at the end they built confidence and gained supports from their male counterparts. In addition, the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) recently reported in “Labour Education Journal” (2001) that women still represent only a small minority of African journalists. According to Sinclair (1995), “women’s representation in union has grown substantially since the early 1960s; however, women’s lack of advancement in the work sphere has been paralleled by their position within trade union movement.” Women, she said, are not only less likely to belong to a union than men, but female union members also exhibit lower participation rates in union activity.

Women’s level of participation has not increased in accordance with their membership in union activities leaving women grossly under-represented in official and lay positions at both local and national level. For instance, in a survey of 37 Trade Union Congresses affiliated unions with a total of 7.8 million members, the Labour Research Department found that in 1990, only about one-fifth of national executive committee members, delegates to union conferences, TUC delegations and national full-time officials were female, though they estimated that women constituted approximately 31% of union membership in that year. Also, another study by the Research Department found that in 1993, none of the largest ten unions had women represented on their decision-making bodies in their proportion to their membership in that year.

Statement of the problem
There are many legal provisions, national and international proclamations in favour of equal rights in matters, which relates to social, political and economic benefits, without regards to any form of discrimination on account of any unjustified criteria of race, class or gender. Yet women continued to suffer deprivations in many sectors of the economy. Moreover,
since the declaration of the years 1976 – 85 as United Nations Decade for Women, it has been assumed that women in the workforce will show more interest and participate actively in trade unionism. However, this has not been so. Hence, this study sought to analyse gender participation in trade union activities in some selected industrial unions in south-western Nigeria.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in position held between male and female in trade union activities of selected industrial unions in south-western Nigeria.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship among the independent predictors (socio-economic status, tradition and social structure, women empowerment, gender inequality, structural administration and union placement of male and female in hierarchy) and women’s level of participation in trade union activities in South-West, Nigeria.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study are to:

(i) examine the pattern of gender inequalities in trade union activities in Nigeria;
(ii) determine the form and level of women’s participation in trade unionism in Nigeria;
(iii) identify the causes of gender inequalities in union affairs;

Scope of the study

There are twenty-nine industrial unions in south-west Nigeria. Since all members of industrial unions cannot be studied due to limited time and resources, members of selected industrial unions in four states (Oyo, Osun, Ogun and Lagos) were used for this study. Purposively, unions, which have a large proportion of female members, were used as stated below:

(1) National Association of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives.
(2) National Union of Teachers.
(3) Nigeria Civil Service Union.
(4) National Union of Local Government Employees.
(5) Non-Academic Staff (Union of Education and Associated Institutions).

Concept of Gender

Gender is neither innate nor necessarily stable; it is acquired through interaction in social world and it changes over time. It is a social construction that varies across cultures, over time within a given culture relation to the other gender. In CIDA’S policy on ‘Gender Equality’ (1996), gender refers to the socially constructed roles and responsibilities of women and men. The concept also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, aptitudes, and likely behaviors of both men and women.

According to Wollstone-Craft (1792), who was presumed to have been the first to recognise the social character of gender, she declares that most differences between the sexes are socially created and not natural. In essence, the meaning of gender grows out of a society’s values, beliefs, and preferred ways of organising collective life. Williams (1985) perceives gender as “those non-physiological components of sex that are culturally regarded
as appropriate to males or females.” Oakley (1987) says that there is confusion between sex and gender and makes an attempt to distinguish the two terms. She sees sex, as a biological, which is both psychological and cultural. She goes further to support the above contention with a number of facts. First, anthropologists have reported wide variation in the way different cultures define gender. She further points out that every society uses biological sex as criterion for the prescription of gender; although no two cultures would agree completely on what distinguishes one gender from the other.

Osteergard (1992), writes that gender division is not fixed biologically; but constitutes an aspect of the inter-social division of labour and this, in turn, is rooted in the conditions of production and reproduction which are reinforced by the cultural, religious, and ideological system prevailing in a society. Basow (1992) views gender as subjective feelings of maleness or femaleness irrespective of one’s sex. One’s gender can be determined in many ways, for example, behaviour. In most societies, humility, submissiveness, gentility emotion, and quietness are considered feminine behaviour and women are expected to behave that way. While men, on the other hand, are expected to be dominant, aggressive, unemotional, and talkative. A gender role, as defined by Susan Basow, refers to society’s evaluation of behaviour as masculine or feminine. She goes further to say that gender roles may differ from society to society; can change with history; can be performed by sexes and are socially and culturally determined.

**Barriers Against Women Participation in Labour Organisation**

Glass-ceiling is one of the barriers against women participation in labour organisation. The term, stems from a metaphor for working women who operate in “glass-houses” whose behaviour is not only scrutinized by individuals on every level of the organization; but whose success or failure might affect the status of such working women. Morrison and Von Glinow, (1990) state that glass ceiling is a concept popularised in the 1980s to describe a barrier so subtle, so transparent, and yet strong that it prevents women from moving up in the management hierarchy. Kanter, (1977), Morrison, White, and Van Velsor (1987) describe the glass ceiling as follows:

Many women have paid their dues even a premium for a chance at a top position, only to find a glass ceiling between them and their goal. The glass ceiling is not simply a barrier for an individual, based on the person’s inability to handle a higher-level job. Rather the glass ceiling applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women. (p. 370)

Lynn Martin, former Secretary of Labour (Europe) in Department of Labour’s report on glass-ceiling, notes in 1991 that glass-ceiling, hinders not only individuals but society as a whole and it effectively cuts our pool of potential corporate leaders by eliminating over one-half of our population. Horgan (1990) perceives that, “beyond external barriers to advancement, women often face internal barriers because they Communicate and behave in ways that hold them back from advancement. Some of these behaviours include de-emphasising and trivialising successes by attributing them to luck or circumstance rather than ability, emphasising failure rather than promoting successes and accepting perpetuating sex-typed language that widens the sexes.

Stewart and Kudlelss (1993), are of the view “that women have not reached the top of the corporate hierarchy, in part, because of the sex-role stereotype held by many


corporate decision makers that women do not have the personality characteristics necessary for top leadership roles.” This point to the stereotypical judgment that because women are naturally affiliative and nurturing, they cannot make tough decisions that might disappoint others.

Green, (1994) note that women experience both “access discrimination’ and treatment ‘discrimination’ in organisation. Moreover, Morrison, and Von Glinow (1990), elaborate on the reason why differences in access and treatment exist. They came up with three theoretical explanations for those discrepancies between the experiences of male and female, and they are as follows: actual differences, systemic barriers, and discrimination.

Actual Differences
The explanation for the access and treatment differences experienced by women in organisations is the notion that women are actually different from their male co-workers and that these differences are causal agents leading to differential access and treatment. For example, if Gbemisola as a woman is less assertive and more different than Niyi as a man, Niyi might be more likely to push for promotions, raises and valued job assignments. It should be emphasised that these hypothesised differences are not necessarily innate or natural differences between the sexes, rather the differences might be as a result of early socialisation experiences, educational background, or cultural values. The key point of this explanation is that differences in organisational access and treatment are presumed to be the result of actual differences in behaviours, skills, and attitudes of women.

Powell (1990), in his review of the literature comparing the organisational behaviour of male and female managers, came up with the following findings

Sex differences are absent in task-oriented behaviour, people-oriented behaviour, effectiveness ratings of actual manager and subordinates’ responses to actual managers, stereotypical differences in some types of managerial behaviour and in some ratings of managers in laboratory studies favour male managers. On the other hand, when differences in motivational profiles appear, they are non-stereotypical and favour managers. (p.69)

This view supports the ‘no differences’ view of sex differences in management. However, there is compelling research evidence that no actual differences exist between men and women that can account for differences in organisational experiences. Thus, Morrison and Von Glinow (1990), note that “person-centred theory cannot adequately explain differential treatment in management; other factors must also be considered’. ”(p.201)

Systemic Barriers
A second general explanation for the differential experiences of women in organisation is that certain characteristics of the organisational system and structure impede women from achieving the status and treatment received by men. This explanation moves the causal impetus from the individual (i.e. the woman) to the situation (i.e. nature of the organisation). Three types of systemic barriers have been investigated in the research literature.

First, there is compelling evidence that women experience limited access to or exclusion from informal communication networks. According to Ibarra (1993), “limited network access produces multiple disadvantages, which include: restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organisations and difficulty in forming alliances which, in turn, are
associated with limited mobility and ‘glass-ceiling effects’). Because informal network ties aid in socialisation, decision-making and conflict management this shows the importance of informal communication network for organisational functioning.

Nwankwo, (1986), are of the view that women have difficulty establishing mentor-protégé. Kram, (1985), is said to be one of the first to discuss the importance of mentoring relationship. He defines a mentor as “an experienced, and productive manager who relates well to a less experienced employee and facilitates his or her personal development for the benefit of the individual as well as that of the organization”. Nwankwo, supports the above view. Kram (1985) goes further to say that mentor-protégé relationship is a close one that involves both career and psychological benefits. Many women would prefer to develop such a relationship with another woman. Unfortunately, there is often a shortage of women in upper management ranks to serve as mentors. Thus, a potential female protégé must often establish a mentoring relationship with a man, and this can be extremely difficult.

Nwankwo, (1986) is of the view that the barriers to establishing cross-gender mentorship are lack of access of information networks, socialisation practices, and norms regarding cross-gender relationships. For instance, if Aduni was looking for a mentoring relationship, she might be hampered because she knew few people in the management ranks., Also, her upbringing might made her reluctant to initiate relationships because she was worried about how others might construe a mentoring relationship between herself and a man.

A third systemic explanation for the differential organisational experiences of women is tokenism. In many organisations, males represent the vast majority of employees especially among the ranks of management as well as in trade unionism. Ilgen and Youtz, (1986), and Lawrence, (1994) perceive that women in trade unionism and managerial positions are often “tokens” or highly visible representatives of their gender minority. According to Morrison and Von Glinow, (1990), “tokens performances are hindered because of the pressure to which their visibility subjects them and because members of the dominant group exaggerate differences according to stereotype”. Thus, the predominance of males in trade unionism and managerial positions can place system pressure on women.

Finally, systemic barriers lead to both access and treatment problems for women. This is because women always have a difficult time accessing important informal communication networks; they are also hampered in establishing mentoring relationships and are equally often treated as tokens if they break into organisational areas primarily populated by males.

**Research Methodology**

This study was carried out using a survey research design. This design was adopted to enhance and allow the researcher to analyze gender participation in trade unionism in some selected industrial unions in South-Western Nigeria. The adoption of this is based on the fact that the following independent variables of sex, position in the union and status among others cannot be manipulated. The target populations for this study were financial members of the 5 selected industrial unions in Oyo, Osun, Ogun and Lagos State Nigeria. However, Ekiti and Ondo states were left out because they have similar structural organisation and administration with Osun State. See the table for details.

A total of nine hundred and eighty-six respondents comprising four hundred and sixty-nine men and five hundred and seventeen women constitute the sample population for the study. The proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used for the study,
in which the sample size was based on 20% of each of the selected industrial unions. For the National union of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives, 84 female and 4 male were picked amounting to 88; 154 female 103 male were picked from the Nigeria union of Teachers amounting to 257; while 135 female and 181 male were picked from the Nigeria Civil Service Union amounting to 316; while for the Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees and Non- Academic staff of Educational and Associated Institution 141 female and 247 male, 71 female and 59 male amounting to 383 and 130 respectively. Therefore the total sample size was 1,174.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industrial Unions</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Sample size (Based on 20%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 National Union of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Nigeria Union of Teachers</td>
<td>772</td>
<td>513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Nigeria Civil Service Union</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>906</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Nigeria Union of Local Government Employees</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>1231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Non-Academic Staff Union of Educational and</td>
<td>357</td>
<td>295</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associated Institutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,927</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,967</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 Union Membership

The instrument used for this study was a 4-point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 questionnaire tagged: Gender Participation in Trade Union Activities Questionnaire” (GPTUAQ). The questionnaire was divided into two parts, part one consisted of seven items seeking demographic characteristics of the respondents. Part two which dealt with the inventory on gender participation in trade union activities consisted of forty-three question items. The questionnaire was also complemented with oral interview to seek further information from
the respondents on issues which are very relative and sensitive to personal involvement in union activities as may be peculiar to the individual.

The instrument of the study (GPTUAQ) validated through the content validity. The reason for this was to ascertain whether the contents of the instrument actually measure the independent and dependent variable. Thus, the study’s instrument was first given to the researcher’s supervisor (who is a seasoned and renown industrial education expert) for his criticisms on the different items contained in the instrument. Second, the instruments were given to some lecturers in Adult Education, Sociology as well as Guidance and Counselling of University of Ibadan who vetted the instruments critically. From their appraisal, some items were deleted while some new items were included. This helped to establish the content and face validities of the instrument.

The test retest reliability was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. The test retest was administered at the interval of two weeks on some union leaders as well as some rank and file of National Union of Banks, Insurance and Financial Institution Employees of Oyo State, Nigeria and gave a correlation coefficient of 0.85.

1,174 questionnaires were administered with the assistance of 5 research assistants. 994 of the questionnaire were retrieved and 8 were not properly filled. So 986, which were properly filled, were used in analysing the data, while the researcher conducted the interview personally.

t-test and multiple regression analysis were used for the analysis of the data generated for the study at 0.05 level of significance. The t-test analysis was used to determine the impact that an independent variable has on dependent variable. In this case, the researcher sorts to establish the impact of gender on participation have on the use of t-test statistics. The use of multiple regression was adopted by the researcher based on the interest in ascertaining the values of each variable been regressed together so as to determine their order of importance.

**Discussion of Findings**

The findings from this study based on the hypotheses as well as research questions formulated at the end of the literature review in chapter two. Each of the hypotheses as well as research questions were discussed based on the findings of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Qualification</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member</td>
<td>584</td>
<td>59.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee Member</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Frequency Distribution of Respondents’ Position in Union N = 986*

The above table shows the positions the respondents hold in the union. It is observed that 59.2% of the respondents are ordinary members while, 11.7% are committee
member. It is also observed that 3.6% of the respondents are in the leadership as well as executive positions in the union.

It is important to report that, during the oral interview held with members of the selected industrial union for the study, it was observed that, National Union of Nigeria Nurses and Midwives has seven executive members where two (28.6%) of the executive members are female; While, the remaining five (71.4%) are male. Also, the Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has fifty-six executive members. The percentage of the male executive is fifty-two (92.9%); while, that of the female, in the same executive is four (7.1%).

In the case of National Union of Local Government Employees (NULGE), the number of executive members is 126 ninety (71.4%) of them are males; while, thirty-six (28.6%) are female. This indicates that, in trade unionism, the male members hold a larger percentage of the executive positions in unionism and the female members are in the minority in unionism.

Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in position held between male and female in trade union activities of selected industrial unions in south-west Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>x</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>514</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>3.118</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P<0.05

Table 2: A t-test table showing sex and positions held in trade union between male and female

From table 7 above, the computed value is 3.118 and significant at <0.05. The hypothesis is therefore not accepted. The evidence of the research work shows that male are significantly more favoured in the positions held in union. From the above interpretation; it could be observed that there is a significant association between sex and positions held in union. Of the 375 females that indicated their sex and position in union, 83.7% are ordinary members; 12.8% are committee members, 1.1% belong to the executive, while 2.4% are leaders. The males had 5.6% of the 359 respondents as leaders, 1.4% as executive, 18.1% as committee members and 74.9% as ordinary members. The overall 4% that are leaders in the union is 2.7:1.2 male: female respectively; for instance, men in leadership positions are almost 2½ times greater than women in leadership positions. This confirmed the low level involvement of women participation in trade union activities.

This finding is in agreement with the view of Green (1994) who affirms that women workers have always been less unionised than men. For example, Green states that the proportion of men to women in the pre-world war II was in the ratio of 81 to 19. This was a distinctively large proportion. However, the ratio has started to improve in the 1980s for instance, the ratio was 66 to 34 by 1987. This shows that there is gender inequalities in the recruitment, selection, and unionisation between men and women, but these usually favour men (Green 1994:21).
In another perspective, Anderson, (1979), as cited in Garba et al (1997), notes that “participation in activities must be reflected in a fuller range of factors which, in most cases, show that the women are mostly involved in attendance rather than on issues that border on the development and acceptance of contract proposals; electing state and national officers; proposing constitutional changes, filling and processing grievances, formulating union policy among others.

Validating this empirical deduction on the level of gender inequalities in trade unionism, Olajumoke (1983), observed that, “although women constitute about 50% of the population and 15% of the Nigerian total workforce, only 2.5% of them participate actively in unions, even though such areas of participation are mostly noticeable in attendance. Also, Yinusa, (1982), as cited in Sokunbi et al (1995), notes that in a study of the Nigerian Tobacco Company (NTC) in Zaria, nine out of the twenty- two women employed in the organisation did not know that they belong to a union. Corroborating this absence of awareness in relation to unequal representation, Yinusa cited in Sokunbi, Jeminiwa and Onaeko (1990), stresses that:

Women generally have low level of trade union meeting attendance especially when it is outside working hours; since attendance of meeting is another measure of trade union commitment, women have not presented a positive image in terms of representation at all (p.33)

Thus, the degree of inequalities does not only manifest in participation but also in executive representation as well as in union activities. For instance, Olajumoke (1983), again posits that women elected to the Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) executive have not gone beyond Assistant General Secretaries and in most cases Treasurers in industrial unions and that until recently, the women’s department at the Nigeria Labour Congress was headed by a male. This again shows the level of disparity in the number of male-female functions in the union.

This finding is also in agreement with the views of Beale (1982); Cunnison and Stagemen (1995), Hunt (1983), Lawrence (1994). These scholars contented that the failure of unions to incorporate ‘women culture’ into the movement has been a major factor in women’s lesser participation in unions and in unions’ historical lack of success in organising women workers”. That is, unions are less attractive to women because of the masculine image associated with them. This masculine image is produced and reproduced by several features of unions. For instance, from a practical point of view, the job of paid union officials involves excessively long hours and extraordinary commitment (Watson 1998) which women may find difficult to combine with domestic responsibilities they typically assume (Lawrence, 1994; Ledwith et al, 1990).

For lay office holders, the problem is one of juggling three: Jobs”: paid work, union office, and domestic responsibilities. Further, the choices and decisions that unions make regarding the timing and location of union meetings are not always conducive to women’s involvement. Reviewing the level of inequalities as represented in the trade unionism, Onyeonoru, I. (2001). “Theories of Trade Unionism and Collective Action: Implication for Democracy”. Paper presented at the Annual Industrial Relations Conference of the Department of Adult Education, University of Ibadan. Onyeonoru, I. (2001). in ILO’s Labour Education posits that,
The unions thus appear to reflect the prevailing sex (gender) segregation and discrimination in the large society. While the principle of equality is now as accepted by most unions, in reality the efforts made in this sphere (such as establishing departments/units on women, adopting specific policies and activities for women, and some affirmative action programme) have not yet led to the existence of full equality in many of the unions nor the adequate reflection of women's needs in the demands of trade unions.

The implication of the above view is that, in several countries, the general observation appears to be that women have not benefited much from trade unions as organizations representing workers' interests. Similarly, the organizations have not been able to exert pressure to bring about needed social change in their lives including progress towards gender equality and social justice in the society which are mostly needed in the union's activities. This imbalance has always placed women at the disadvantaged position when compared to their male counterparts.

It is interesting therefore, to affirm that inequality in gender participation in trade unionism is premised on the inherent female segregation on the basis of activities required. Although other factors may contribute significantly to this degree of inequality; but in several societies, developed and developing, the female sex has always shown very low enthusiasm about unionization and rights agitation

**Hypothesis two:** There is no significant difference between male and female perception of women participation in trade unionism in the selected industrial unions in South-West, Nigeria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception on partici-</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>31.51</td>
<td>5.79</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.487</td>
<td>9.81</td>
<td>0.626*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pa tion</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>31.32</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*P>0.05 not significant result

**Table 3:** A t-test table showing male and female perception of women participation in trade unionism

Since the P value is greater than 0.05, the result is significant. The above table shows that there is no significant difference (P>0.05) at 0.05 level between male and female in their perception of women participation in trade unionism. This view helps to confirm the hypothesis. It is obvious that since women participation has been established to be generally low; the same factors are advanced by both men and women for this situation.

This study supports the view of Morison, White and Van Velsar (1987), on glass ceiling as applies to women as a group who are kept from advancing higher because they are women. This is a barrier that influences inequalities on the level and participation of men and women in trade union activities in Nigeria. Supporting this influence of inequalities on
male and female level of participation, Martin (1991) maintains that the glass-ceiling, where it exists, hinders not only individuals but also the society as a whole. “It effectively cuts our pool of potential women corporate leaders by eliminating over one-half of our working population”.

More so, influences of gender inequalities also manifest in systemic barriers by recognising differential experiences on the part of women in trade union activities. This implies is that the male are more experienced in trade unions activities, thus differentiating the role of women by establishing certain areas of less stereotypical functions for the women to perform than the men who are regarded as experts in more complex roles. Therefore, there are compelling evidences to show that women experience limited access to or exclusion from informal communication network within the union and such limited access produces multiple disadvantages which include restricted knowledge of what is going on in their organizations and union (Ibara, 1993).

Supporting these findings, other researcher(s) has also note(s) that, as a result of the glass ceiling, women could not have role models or mentors at the highest hierarchy of leadership. This limits their aspirations, influences, and levels of involvement in the union activities since there is usually lots of male pressure on them, thus limiting their voting rights, legislative rights reform negotiation on the union’s structure, so because of minority, Ilgen and Youtz (1986), and Kanter (1977) observe “that women in trade unionism are often tokens or highly visible representatives of their gender minority”. Thus, Morison and Glinow (1990), maintain that ‘tokens’ performances are hindered because of the pressure to which their visibility subjects them and because members of the dominant group exaggerate differences according to stereotype. Thus, the predominance of male as manifest in the gender inequalities in trade unionism can place system pressure on the women.

**Research Question:** What are the major causes of gender inequalities as perceived by the respondents?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union Constitution</td>
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<td>31.5</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>972</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional Burden</td>
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<td>39.5</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>957</td>
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<tr>
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<td>45.9</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>13.0</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>960</td>
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<tr>
<td>Domestic Responsibilities</td>
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<td>39.2</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>952</td>
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<tr>
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<td>252</td>
<td>25.6</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>948</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Security</td>
<td>333</td>
<td>33.5</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>2174</td>
<td>1666</td>
<td>937</td>
<td>964</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Frequency table showing the major causes of gender inequalities in Trade Union activities
The above table shows that 60.8% of the respondents have a positive view of the fact that unions constitution are not structured in a way favourable to female participation in trade union activities, while only 37.7% of the respondents have a negative view of the influence of the unions constitution of their level of participation. Also, >0.8% of the respondents are of the view that trade union activity is an additional burden to female participation while 16.3% of respondents disagree. On the part of societal belief, 72.3% of the respondents have a positive view that societal belief have effect on female participation in trade union activities, while 15.1% of the respondents do not support this view.

Furthermore, 70.8% of the respondents have a positive view that domestic responsibility is a hindrance to women participation in trade union activities, while 25.7% of the respondents have a negative view of domestic responsibility as a hindrance to their level of participation. Also, 56.1% of the respondents support the view that awareness levels of female unionist have a positive influence on their level of participation in trade union activities; while 40.2% respondents are of negative view in relation to awareness level of female participation in trade union activities.

Finally, 58.8% of the respondents have a positive view that job security has an influence on women level of participation on trade union activities, while 38.5% of the respondents have a negative view that job security has an influence on female level of participation.

**Conclusion and Recommendations**

There is a need for unions to organise workers education programme for its members, which will help to eliminate conservative attitude towards improved women participation in trade union activities. The involvement of female members of the union in decision-making and complementary statement aimed at motivating women to actively participate in trade union activities. There is need for the womenfolk in the trade unions to network, as well as communicate and exchange information among them.

The policy makers should affirm a policy that will encourage positive actions on women participation in trade union activities. The union leaders should set apart some executive positions in which women members can contest for and hold those positions. Since trade union is the only available means in which collectivity of workers can exercise power in work environment, female members need to be re-engineered through displays of women union leader that have made their marks in union activities to serve as mentors for them.

**REFERENCES**


