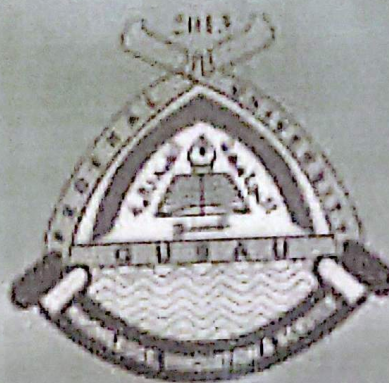




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GENDER DYNAMICS AND ROLE PERFORMANCE AMONG FEMALE POLICE OFFICERS IN KWARA STATE POLICE COMMAND, ILORIN

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Abstract

Discrimination against female gender is a universal phenomenon and it is more evident in Africa particularly Nigeria. The female gender is being stereotyped in almost all facets of human life including the police force. The disparity in career opportunities, promotions, and workload distribution between genders is troubling and demoralizing for women, especially among female police officers. Because of its historically unequal representation of men and women, the police profession is deeply patriarchal and male dominated. Women are still underrepresented in the Nigerian Police, despite the country's policy of making reservation for them. As a result, this study examined gender dynamics and role performance among female police officers in Kwara State, Nigeria. The Radical Feminist Theory and Liberal Feminism constitute the theoretical framework for the study. Descriptive design was adopted and 50 female officers, ranging in rank from corporal to chief inspector were purposively selected from the Divisional Police Headquarters in Ilorin, Kwara State. Data were gathered using questionnaire while analysis was done using descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequency counts, mean, and standard deviation. The findings revealed that the various gender relations experience of female police officers in the Kwara State include sexual harassment, bullying and intimidation and lack of respect. The study recommends that Police departments should establish mandatory training programs focused on gender sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion, while efforts should be made to create support networks, mentorship programs, and flexible work arrangements for female police personnel.

Keywords: Career Progression, Female Officer, Gender Dynamics, Gender Gap, Police Force.

Introduction

Throughout history, women have endured significant discrimination and oppression across various aspects of life, notably in education, political opportunities and employment such as the police force. This systemic inequity has been particularly pronounced in many African societies, where deeply entrenched patriarchal beliefs and cultural norms have perpetuated the marginalization of women (Otite, 2006). In Nigeria, while women have contributed significantly to social and economic development participating in informal sectors and community organizations they continue to encounter substantial barriers that limit their full participation in public life, affecting their potential to influence policy-making and leadership roles (Falola, 2023).

According to research, the proportion of sworn female police officers in the United States is still at or below 25%, there are far fewer women in managerial positions, and women from racial or ethnic minorities are more marginalized (Cordner and Cordner, 2011; Moses, 2010; Stroshine and Brandl, 2011). Women only make up 32.2% of the police force in Australia, which is less than their male counterparts (Reavley, Milner, Martin, Too, Papas, Witt, & LaMontagne, 2018). Statistics on men and women indicate that there are fewer women in the police force now as they made up 19.09% of the Nigerian Police Force in 2016. This fell to 17.77% in 2017 and 9.75% in 2018 (Aborisade & Ariyo, 2023).

The Nigerian Police Force was initially dominated by men, driven by societal beliefs that perceive law enforcement as an inappropriate profession for women marginalized their contributions (Idoko, 2023). These stereotypes are often reinforced by media portrayals that tend to depict women in subordinate roles, characterizing them as caregivers rather than leaders which undermine their potential to take on more prominent roles in policing (Rabe-Hemp & Beichner, 2011). This media framing not only reflects but also perpetuates societal biases, creating a cycle of underrepresentation. However, as society evolves and recognizes the need for diverse perspectives in law enforcement, the contributions of women have become increasingly acknowledged and valued (Bureau of Police Research and Development, 2017). The recruitment of women into the Nigerian Police Force began in 1955, marking a pivotal shift in the organization's composition. These pioneering women have demonstrated their competence and effectiveness in various roles, not just in enforcing laws but also in critical areas such as community policing, child protection, and addressing incidents of sexual and domestic abuse, effectively challenging the previously held perceptions of women in policing (Okoronkwo, 2015).

Despite their significant contributions, female police officers continue to grapple with pervasive gender stereotypes that can discourage them from both applying to and remaining in law enforcement careers (Cordner & Cordner, 2011; Ryan, Horvath, & Kriska, 2005). These stereotypes manifest in various forms, such as doubts about their physical strength compared to their male counterparts, persistent hostility or lack of support from male colleagues, and challenges related to achieving a balanced work-life dynamic (Schulze, 2010). Such barriers not only affect the morale of female officers but also hinder the overall effectiveness of law enforcement agencies that could benefit from their diverse perspectives and expertise.

Notwithstanding these challenges, extensive evidence supports the notion that women have proven to be equally capable and effective as police officers (Bell, 2015). They have successfully taken on roles and responsibilities that were once predominantly reserved for men, demonstrating their ability to handle both the mental and physical demands of the job with resilience and professionalism. Moreover, female police officers play a vital role in initiatives like community policing, enhancing trust and communication between the police force and the community (Aborisade & Ariyo, 2023). Their involvement is particularly crucial in addressing sensitive issues such as child protection and incidents of sexual and domestic abuse, where their interpersonal skills and empathetic approaches often yield more constructive outcomes.

Examining the gender dynamics and role performance of female police officers in Kwara State presents a valuable opportunity to gain insights into the unique challenges and opportunities they encounter within the law enforcement sector. Understanding their experiences can shed light on the systemic issues that persist and inform essential policy recommendations aimed at improving the representation and experiences of women in both law enforcement and other male-dominated fields. Such studies can stimulate discussions around best practices, fostering an environment that is conducive to inclusivity and equity, ultimately resulting in a more effective and representative police service that serves all communities.

Statement of the Problem

The primary role of police officers is to uphold and enforce laws, investigate crimes, and ensure security of citizenry in the country. It is important to note that policing as a profession should be made equally open to both women and men and that both are treated fairly as police officers. This is known as "Gender Inclusive Policing". In many Nigerian societies, gender-based discrimination remains a prevalent ideology, influenced by historical, religious, economic, and social factors, as it does in other African social contexts (Mensah, 2021 cited in Bright, 2023). In Nigeria, even though there is reservation of women in police force, the representation of women in the Police force in Kwara command continues to be poor. Due to the unequal representation of men and women, the police force has historically been a very patriarchal and male-dominated profession. The police force is dominated by masculine culture and behaviour. For a long time, gender prejudices and gender ideology prevented women from joining the police service. Because they were stereotyped as being weaker than males, it was assumed that female police officers were a burden on the police system. Their abilities and skills are insufficient to combat crime. This prevented the women from choosing to become police officers.

Moreover, with a changing socio-cultural environment, technological skill acquisition and an increase in educational opportunities, women have started recognizing their inherent potential strength. Women who work in law enforcement have struggled for years to gain acceptance in their workplace. Even though the number of female officers has increased, male officers continue to greatly out-number them (Jaiyeola & Aladegbola, 2020). The police force still presents a strong masculine image and thus law enforcement is an occupation that is believed to be most suitable for men. This puts the women at the risk of becoming increasingly marginalized in the police force particularly in the Kwara State Command. The equal participation of women is challenged thereby making it difficult for police women to thrive in various police responsibilities.

However, where female police officers are allowed to discharge their duties, they are still not assigned equal roles as male officers due to the stereotype that females are weak, and short-visioned compared to their male counterparts. According to Oluwafemi (2019), men and women must have the same educational background in order to enroll, but because physical strength and masculine toughness are valued more highly than other qualities throughout the recruitment process, few women are naturally recruited into the Nigeria Police Force. These and many other biases have created a gender gap in the police force,

thereby, drastically deteriorating the integrity of what the law enforcement agency is solely established for. To the best of the knowledge of the researcher, no study has mainly focused on gender dynamics and role performance among female police officers in Kwara state. Thus, this is the gap this study intends to fill to advance existing literature.

Objectives of the Study

The main aim of this study is to examine gender dynamics and role performance among female police officers in Kwara state Nigeria. Therefore, the specific objectives are to:

- i. Investigate the gender relations and experience of female police officers in Kwara State Police command.
- ii. Assess the factors responsible for differences in recruiting more male than female police officers in Kwara State Police command.
- iii. Examine role performed by male officers above their female counterparts in Kwara State Police command.
- iv. Determine how female can be motivated to join the Police Force.

Literature Review

Gender Dynamics in the Nigeria Police Force

The roles and connections, character attributes, attitudes, behavior, and values that society assign to men and women are all considered to be part of gender. The acquired distinctions between men and women are sometimes referred to as gender. Sex, as opposed to gender, describes the biological distinctions between men and women. Males and females are categorized based on biological traits such hormones, reproductive organs, and genetic variations. Generally speaking, they are unchangeable and ubiquitous. (NPF, UNFPA, UNWOMEN, 2010).

In Nigeria, it is increasingly acknowledged that integrating gender concerns within law enforcement is essential to both operational efficacy and institutional legitimacy. Women frequently contribute unique abilities and talents to law enforcement, such as the capacity to defuse potentially violent situations and utilize effective communication techniques to reduce the need for force. To conduct the cordon and search of women, expand the scope of intelligence collection, and aid victims of sexual exploitation, female police are required in specific situations (Dodge & Valcore, 2011). Notably, the Nigerian Police Force, like that in many other nations, is not only predominately male, but it is also portrayed as a

macho organization with standards, beliefs, and behaviour that are more appropriate for males.

According to Alemika and Agugua (2001), women made up just 4% of the police force overall and 8% of all officers. As of July 2010, the percentage for senior female officers had only increased to 5%, while the percentage for younger female officers was 12.9%. In addition to the Nigeria Police Force's concerning history of discrimination and gender abuse, the gender imbalance within the force has consequences for women. Women are generally punished for maintaining their femininity, despite the expectation that they do so (Alemika & Agugua, 2001). Female police who disobeyed were reprimanded, called weak, and found it difficult to get help. Research indicates that the reasons why female officers quit the force differ from those of male officers. These explanations typically have to do with family obligations, a lack of career growth, or discrimination of some kind (Dodge & Valcore, 2011). According to researchers, these barriers remain because male officers perceive women's presence as demeaning the profession because discrimination is pervasive in all facets of police (Young, 2006). Instances when women felt pressured to adopt male traits or risk being perceived as inferior were also documented in the present research. The Nigerian Police Force has also been implicated in sexual harassment.

According to the law, sex discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly due to their gender, particularly when it comes to employment, dismissal, and promotions (EEOC, 2010). Another significant barrier for women in law enforcement is sexual harassment. Less than 7% of female officers report experiencing sexual harassment, despite the fact that 60 to 70 percent of them do (EEOC, 2010). Sexual harassment is the main issue in male-dominated workplaces, according to the International Association of Women Police (IAWP) (Woolsey, 2010). In fact, compared to male officers, female officers in the Nigeria Police Force report sexual harassment events more frequently (NCWP, 2003). Gender-biased treatment of domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, as well as institutional frameworks and practices that tend to be more men-centric and protective of male interests and concerns, are among the alarming records of gender abuses that the Nigeria Police Force continues to have. These include responses to women's specific interests that are ingrained in both law and practice, as well as gender-unfriendly conditions of service, particularly for female police officers.

The use of policies and procedures that prevent women from accessing the legal system should be discouraged (Woolsey, 2010; Hassel & Brand, 2009). Men will never experience women's natural menstrual cycles, pregnancies, or breastfeeding; thus, various things should be handled differently (EEOC, 2010). Therefore, in order to help policewomen, they should get special treatment within the force. In contrast to policemen, policewomen are not required to operate on the front lines of police stations. Numerous job responsibilities, including those related to women and children, security, traffic, foreign affairs, administration, forensics, information, and household registration, give policewomen frequent rotations that can enhance their professional experiences and shield them from gender inequalities (Alemika & Agugua, 2001).

Gender in-balance recruitment policy in the Nigeria Police Force

Both male and female applicants must meet the same educational requirements in order to join the Nigeria Police Force. The force has three recruitment positions. They are: Constable, Cadet Inspector, and Cadet Assistant Superintendent are the first three positions. The lowest superior (senior), officer rank, or cadre is the third level, whereas the first two are junior and higher junior entry levels, respectively. A five-credit school certificate is required for candidates hoping to join the force as constables, while a postsecondary diploma (such as the National Certificate of Education, Ordinary National Diploma, and equivalents) is required for those hoping to join as cadet inspectors. A bachelor's degree or its equivalent is required to enlist as a cadet assistant superintendent. There are no provisions that discriminate based on gender at these levels. However, the high rate of female recruitment is hampered by biases combined with poorer literacy and lower enrollment rates among women at higher education levels.

There are other prerequisites for hiring in addition to formal schooling. For female candidates, the height requirement is often dropped a little. Nonetheless, it is possible to see the age and marital status discriminating clauses. Regarding age, it is implied that there is an implicit presumption that a boy who is 17 years old is as mature as a female who is 19. For enlistment into the Nigeria Police Force, there are additional stringent physical criteria. An applicant for recruitment who has any of the following anomalies or deformities will not be accepted, according to Section 73 of the Police Regulation. These requirements, which appear to have no discriminatory elements at first glance, are applicable to both male and female candidates. However, in practice, the representation of physically fit applicants is that of a man. The following tasks are typically performed by female police officers:

investigating sexual offenses against women and children; recording statements from female witnesses, female accused persons, and children; attending when women or children are being interviewed by male police officers; searching, escorting, and guarding women and prisoners in police stations; escorting female prisoners to or from police stations; crowd control in situations where women and children are present in any quantity; and school crossing duties. Administrative, phone calls, and office orderly activities are among the office tasks that female police officers recruited to the Force's General activities Branch may do in order to relieve male officers of these responsibilities. The legal responsibilities given to female police officers demonstrate a patriarchal mindset, meaning that males are not subordinated to women's power.

Women and children are thus the responsibility of female police personnel. The clauses pertaining to deployment and responsibilities blatantly discriminate against women. In addition, the subject of practical instruction in police training institutions is different for women and men. In particular, female police officers lack firearms handling training. "A woman police officer shall not be called upon to drill underarms or to participate in any baton or riot exercise," according to Section 123 of the Police Regulations. The 'honor, status, and professional progress associated with deployment to such responsibilities' are essentially denied to women since they are not allowed to perform 'core police activities'.

Motivating Factors for Women Recruitment into the Nigerian Police Force

Women can defy gender conventions and demonstrate their ability in sectors that have historically been dominated by males in Nigeria, where women's responsibilities in society are frequently determined by conventional gender roles. In their study on gender equality in Nigeria, Dodge and Valcore (2011) pointed out that women who join the police force saw it as a chance to make a significant contribution to security and law enforcement, empowering themselves and motivating others in the process. Second, one of the main factors encouraging women to enlist in the Nigeria Police Force is economic empowerment. Many women view the police force as a feasible way to provide financial security for themselves and their children since it offers steady salary, perks, and prospects for professional advancement. Alemika and Agugua's (2001) study on women in Nigerian security services emphasizes how such monetary rewards encourage women to work in law enforcement, enabling them to become financially independent and raise their socioeconomic standing.

Another important reason why women join the Nigeria Police Force is the desire to help the society and have a good influence. According to Young (2006), women who join law enforcement frequently feel a great sense of obligation and responsibility to protect their communities. They may actively support upholding law and order, tackling societal issues, and advancing justice and equality by enlisting as police officers. Scholarly publications by Hassel & Brand (2009) highlight the value of community service and the part that women play in law enforcement in building public-police trust and collaboration. Women are encouraged to join the Nigeria Police Force by the need for gender equality and representation in law enforcement, as well as by economic considerations, community service, and empowerment. According to a number of writers and scholars, such as Woolsey (2010), increasing the number of women in the police force is crucial to advancing gender equality, diversity, and inclusion inside the organization. It produces a workforce that is more representative and balanced, better able to meet the interests and concerns of everyone in society.

Obstacles Confronting Female Police Officers

Adebayo and Emmanuel (2009) argue that Nigerian women police have a number of difficulties, however some of these may be listed and examined as follows:

Sexual Harassment

A human rights violation, sexual harassment is prevalent in Africa particularly Nigeria. Many occupations that are dominated by males exhibit sexual exploitation and abuse. According to the law, sex discrimination happens when someone is treated unfairly due to their gender, particularly when it comes to employment, firing, and promotions (EEOC, 2010). Since sexual acts are often not considered to be a component of sex discrimination, many harassment episodes may go unreported (Hamilton, 2011). Three types of sexual harassment are identified by researchers as occurring in the workplace: unwanted sexual attention (uninvited sexual remarks or gestures), gender harassment (nonsexual), and sexual coercion, which includes intimidation or rewards related to the workplace used to achieve sex (Haas, Timmerman, & Hoing, 2009).

A number of scholars suggest that unwanted sexual attention and sexual coercion should be distinguished from gender harassment. Certain instances are perceived as insulting to women in the culture of law enforcement, while others are seen as unwelcome sexual attention (Leskinen et al., 2011). A research by Sbraga and O'Donohue (2000) was

evaluated by Haas et al. (2009). Finding out if men and women experienced sexual harassment in the same way was the aim of the study. According to the study's findings, being subjected to sexual harassment caused a number of psychological and physical issues for the participants. There were also reports of severe sickness, injuries, weight loss, melancholy, impatience, hostility, excessive sobbing, and exhaustion (Haas et al., 2009). According to the study's findings, men and women who report sexual harassment seem to be equally impacted, despite the fact that gender disparities were not found (Haas et al., 2009).

Gender Discrimination

Every person has the fundamental right to be treated equally under the law in all circumstances. When it comes to women in police that is not the case. However, the societal setting was the root cause of the issues with discrimination against women. In many cultures, women are not permitted to be seen outside and must wear appropriate clothing if they must. Some believe that this attitude hinders their exposure and education and subdues them, while others consider it as the finest thing that has been done to them because it is founded on their religious beliefs. As a result, Nigerian women in law enforcement, like women in other spheres of society, face discrimination and inequality, just as they did in the past. However, women now enjoy the majority of favors, including good postings, promotions, and even untouchability from men, including officers and rank and files, because we are completely different and God has favored us. Employers are not allowed to discriminate on the grounds of sex, race, or color under Volume VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1972. The Act applies to both the public and private sectors, of which the police are a part.

Strength

According to available data on the overall number of women in the workforce as of 2003, there are fewer women than males. Ten percent of males are women, compared to ninety percent. However, things are going well so far; the number of women is rising compared to prior years. This data indicates that women's recruiting was previously not given much thought, but is now. For instance, since its founding in 1988, the Nigeria Police Academy has trained 2,848 Cadet Inspectors and 2,374 Cadet Asps. As a result, 5,222 Cadet Officers have graduated from the Academy. Ten of these officers were from Sierra Leone and the Republic of Gambia. 266 (54.29%) Cadet Asps and 224 (45.71%) Cadet Inspectors make up the current groups of Cadets that started training on January 9, 2012. Although

there are 437 (64.08%) Cadet Asps and 245 (35.72%) Cadet Inspectors in the batch that started training on July 9, 2012, there are more than twice as many women police officers in Batch B than there were in Batch A.

Marriage

According to Section 124 of the Police Act and Regulation Cap 359 LFN 1990, a female police officer who wishes to get married must first submit a written application to the Commissioner of Police through the State Police Command where she is currently employed, asking for permission to do so and providing the name, address, and profession of the prospective spouse. If the intended husband is at least three years old, permission to marry will be given. Because the guys they genuinely have and would be willing to settle down with might be disqualified during the interview, these processes leave some female officers powerless. Because the ladies may not be ready to wait two years, it takes them quite a few of years to find another partner. Many women have also been deterred from entering the force by this. However, married women are being hired for this position both consciously and inadvertently because of knowledge and Nigerian culture.

Maternity Related Issues

The way the police have treated pregnant women and those returning from maternity leave has been less than considerate. Role allocation during pregnancy is unclear; some pregnant women are obliged to do their usual duties without any accommodations, such as patrolling late in their pregnancy, while others are confined to secretarial labour (Hamilton, 2011). Pregnant women must frequently use their personal leave, use up all of their sick leave, or take unpaid absence in order to receive routine and required pre-natal treatment that necessitates many hospital visits. Losing seniority as a result of exceeding their allotted absence and losing compensation has a negative impact on their career prospects. Policewomen frequently hesitate to tell their coworkers and reporting officers that they are pregnant out of fear of endangering their career prospects, which puts both the unborn child and themselves in grave danger (Haas et al., 2009). When a pregnancy ends in a successful birth, a new set of challenges arises, including managing work and family disputes and childcare concerns, all of which have a negative impact on job satisfaction. Breastfeeding women experience extreme stress when they return to work since they must constantly see their baby.

Police women's stressful experiences are exacerbated by the absence of a clean, private area to express and store milk at work (Leskinen et al., 2011). Due to unjust laws, police officers who become pregnant while on service without being married must resign. Unmarried policewomen are unfairly victimized when they fall pregnant outside of marriage and are thereafter abruptly suspended or fired from their jobs. Unmarried policewomen frequently become pregnant due to the high prevalence of sexual assault and exploitation at work by male coworkers. Because of unfair laws, women are compelled to end their pregnancies without disclosing the sexual offender at work out of fear of being fired or losing their jobs (Hamilton, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

The study adopted the Radical Feminist Theory which emerged during the second wave of feminism, where the feminist movement prioritized combating violence against women. Proponents of this theory, such as Dobash and Dobash (1979) and Walker (1979), underscore the link between patriarchy and domestic violence, advocating for a critical examination of power dynamics within relationships and societal structures. The Radical Feminist Theory posits that patriarchal structures and the subordination of women are central factors contributing to domestic violence. Rooted in second-wave feminism, this theory asserts that male oppression of women, stemming from entrenched patriarchal norms, is a primary cause of domestic abuse (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1979). It highlights how gender socialization patterns, marital privacy, and systemic failures perpetuate violence against women within a male-dominated societal framework.

The main proponents of the Radical Feminist Theory of Domestic Violence include Dobash & Dobash (1979), Walker (1979), Millett (1971), and Bograd et al. (1988). These theorists have contributed significantly to understanding how patriarchal ideologies perpetuate violence against women and the importance of challenging systemic inequalities to address domestic abuse. The theory asserts that domestic violence is a consequence of patriarchal systems that maintain male dominance and female subordination, manifesting in abusive behaviors within intimate relationships (Bograd et al., 1988). Also, the theory emphasizes how societal norms and stereotypes regarding gender roles contribute to the perpetuation of violence against women, highlighting the impact of patriarchal gender socialization patterns. Radical feminists argue that combating male dominance within societal institutions, including law enforcement agencies like the police, is crucial to addressing domestic violence effectively. They critique the masculinized culture prevalent in policing, calling for gender-inclusive approaches in tackling violence or discrimination against women (Dobash & Dobash, 1979; Walker, 1979).

The Radical Feminist Theory offers a pertinent framework for examining gender dynamics and role performance among female police officers in Kwara State, Nigeria. By highlighting the intersection of patriarchy, power dynamics, and institutional structures in perpetuating discrimination against women, this theory provides a lens through which to explore the challenges faced by female officers within a male-dominated law enforcement environment. Understanding how patriarchal ideologies influence policing practices and women's experiences in law enforcement is vital for addressing gender disparities and enhancing the role performance of female officers in combatting domestic violence effectively.

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative research methodology to study the gender dynamics and role performance among female police officers in Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed to facilitate a comprehensive examination of the subject, supported by Mukherjee (2020) and Kothari (2006). The study targeted female officers from the ranks of Corporal to Chief Inspector at the Kwara State Police Command Headquarters, chosen for their accessibility and relevant experience. The sampling technique was purposive sampling, utilizing Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) and Taro Yamane's (1967) methods to achieve a sample size of 50 respondents at a 95% confidence level. The population of female police officers in Kwara State is 662 which represents the sample frame. The researcher utilized all the female police officers present at the station for data collection. The total number of officers present at the command during the course of carrying out this research was seventy four (74). Only fifty (50) collected and filled the questionnaires.

The research instrument, a questionnaire titled Gender Dynamics and Role Performance among Female Police Officers Questionnaire (GDRPFPO-Q), consisted of five sections focused on demographics, gender gaps, recruitment factors, role performance, and motivation for female officers. Validity was ensured through while reliability was assessed through the experts in the field (Professors and readers). Data collection involved using a letter of introduction and survey administration through a trained assistant, adhering to ethical considerations that prioritized voluntary participation and confidentiality. Lastly, data were obtained through questionnaire and data analysis was done with the use of descriptive statistics, including percentages, frequency counts, mean and standard deviation, to interpret the findings of the study.

Results and Discussion

This section analyses the data of the study on gender dynamics and role performance among Female Police Officers in Kwara state Nigeria. The results are presented below as follows:

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Data	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Present Rank (Cadre)	Corporal	12
	Sergeant	11
	Sergeant Major	14
	Inspector of Police	8
	Chief Inspector	5
	Total	50
Age	21 – 30years	10
	31 – 40years	10
	41 – 50years	20
	51years & above	10
	Total	50
		100
Qualification	Primary	6
	Secondary	19
	Tertiary	25
	Total	50
Length of Service Year	1 – 5years	6
	6 – 10years	12
	11 – 15years	7
	16 – 20years	14
	21 – 30years	5
	31years & above	6
	Total	50
		100
Salary Range	Less than N50,000	2
	N50,000 – N100,000	26
	N100,000 – N150,000	18
	Above N150,000	4
	Total	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the demographic data of Female Police Officers in Kwara State Police Force. The Female Police Officers occupy various Ranks or Cadre with Sergeant Major coming first. 12 (24%) are Corporal, 11 (22%) are Sergeant, 14 (28%) are Sergeant Major, 8 (16%) are Inspector of Police while the remaining 5 (10%) are Chief Inspector. This table shows that women by virtue of their sex and strength, hardly enjoy promotion in the police force compared to their male counterpart. The age of the female officers varies; 10 (20%) are between 21 – 30years, 10 (20%) are between 31 – 40years, 20 (40%) are between 41 –

50years while 10 (20%) are between 51years & above. Based on their qualification, 6 (12%) possesses Primary Education, 19 (38%) possesses Secondary Education while 25 (50%) possesses Tertiary Education. This is also an attestation to the fact that despite the qualification of female police officers, they often face some level of discrimination in the force. The length of service year of the female officers was also captured; 6 (12%) have been in the service for 1 – 5years, 12 (24%) have been in the service for 6 – 10years, 7 (14%) have been in the service for 11 – 15years, 14 (28%) have been in the service for 16 – 20years, 5 (10%) have been in the service for 21 – 30years while 6 (12%) have been in the service for 31years & above. On their salary range, only 2 (4.0%) female officers earn less than #50,000, 26 (52.0%) earn between #50,000 and #100,000, 18 (36.0%) earn #100,000 – #150,000 while 4 (8.0%) earn above #150,000.

Table 2: Gender relations experience of respondents

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Reamrk
1.	Female Police Officers are often victims of sexual harassment by their male counterparts.	1.59	.260	Affirmed
2.	Female officers feel that they receive unfair treatment and inadequate recognition for their work in the Force.	1.44	.250	Affirmed
3.	Female officers face bullying and intimidation from superior male officers.	1.69	.330	Affirmed
4.	Female officers perceive a lack of representation and visibility of women in leadership roles within the Force.	1.87	.340	Affirmed
5.	Female Police Officers believe that their male colleagues do not respect their contributions and professionalism.	1.64	.360	Affirmed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 2 presents the analysis of the respondents' view on the gender gap between male and Female Police Officers in Kwara State Police Force. The study shows that most female police officers are the victims of sexual harassment by their male counterparts. More than half of the respondents opined that they have been abused sexually and they are also receiving unfair treatment and inadequate recognition at their work. Other discriminatory gestures against female officers are bullying and intimidation from superior male officers. Lack of representation and visibility of women in leadership roles, lack of respect for their contributions and professionalism and many more are the various gender gap between male and Female Police Officers in the State according to the female police officers of varying

ranks. Thus, gender gap exists between male and female police officers in Kwara State Police Force headquarters.

Table 3: Factors responsible for differences in recruitment of male and female police Officers.

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Reamrk
1.	Male officers have better employment opportunities than female officers in the Nigerian Police Force.	1.52	.280	Affirmed
2.	Female officers face challenges reaching top ranks compared to male officers.	1.62	.420	Affirmed
3.	Female officers are less recognized for their contributions compared to male officers.	1.49	.310	Affirmed
4.	Male officers are provided with better training opportunities than female officers.	1.58	.340	Affirmed
5.	Male officers have better access to resources and support than female officers.	1.63	.360	Affirmed
6.	Female officers lack requisite strength and ability to work and adapt than male counterpart	1.63	.360	Affirmed
7.	Female officers are weak and less rigid compared to male counterpart.	1.51	.250	Affirmed
8.	Female Police Officers usually have family issues such as children.	1.55	.240	Affirmed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 3 presents the analysis of the respondents' view on the factors responsible for differences in recruiting more male than Female Police Officers in Kwara State Police Force. The Female Police Officers opined that the factors responsible for differences in recruiting more male than female police are multifaceted; for instance, female officers have less employment opportunities than male and other challenges of reaching top ranks compared to male officers. Female officers get less recognition for their contributions compared to male counterpart. Training opportunities are less accessible to the majority of female police. According to the report, among other significant concerns, female officers frequently lack the necessary strength and capacity to work and adapt, have less access to resources and assistance than their male counterparts, and deal with family difficulties like children. Taking these things into consideration, there are a lot of reasons why Kwara State Police recruits more male than female police officers.

Table 4: Role performed by male officers above their female counterparts

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Reamrk
1.	Male police officers in Kwara State perform field operations more effectively than their female counterparts.	1.52	.280	Affirmed
2.	Male officers in Kwara State excel in conducting investigations compared to female officers based on their experience and approach.	1.62	.420	Affirmed
3.	Male officers are better suited for managing traffic control duties than female officers due to their physical presence and command.	1.49	.310	Affirmed
4.	Male officers in Kwara State exhibit stronger capabilities in community policing efforts than female officers, resulting in better community engagement.	1.58	.340	Affirmed
5.	Male officers assigned to specialized units demonstrate superior skills and expertise compared to female officers in handling specific criminal activities.	1.63	.360	Affirmed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4 analysis the respondents' view on role performed by male officers above their female counterparts in Kwara State Police Force. According to the study, the majority of female officers stated that, because of their expertise and methodology, male police officers in Kwara State are being deployed to the field, perform field operations more successfully, and excel in conducting investigations. It is also crucial to remember that, according to the study, female officers believed that male officers were more qualified to handle traffic control responsibilities because of their physical presence, command, and stronger capabilities in community policing initiatives, which led to better community engagement. They also believed that male officers were better equipped to handle particular criminal activities at their assigned specialized units than female officers compared to female officers. In essence, these and many more are the various role performed by male officers above their female counterparts in Kwara State Police Force.

Table 5: How female gender can be motivated to join Police Force.

S/N	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	Supportive work environment plays a crucial role in motivating female officers to excel in their roles in the Force.	1.77	.350	Affirmed
2.	Specialized training programs tailored to the needs of female officers are beneficial for their professional development in the Force.	1.72	.320	Affirmed
3.	Mentorship programs led by experienced female officers can positively impact the career progression of new recruits in the Force.	1.63	.290	Affirmed
4.	Recognizing the achievements of female officers through awards and promotions is essential for their morale in the Force.	1.56	.280	Affirmed
5.	Providing work-life balance support can help female officers in to effectively manage their professional and personal responsibilities.	1.59	.260	Affirmed
6.	Creating an inclusive work environment is crucial for the success of female officers and motivating others to join the Force.	1.44	.250	Affirmed
7.	Diversity in the Police Force in Kwara State can lead to better performance outcomes among female officers thereby, motivating more females to join the Force.	1.69	.330	Affirmed
8.	Gender equality policies within the Police Force can positively impact the morale and job satisfaction of female officers, thereby inviting more females to join the Force.	1.87	.340	Affirmed
9.	Involving female officers in decision-making processes improves the overall effectiveness of the Police Force, thereby motivating more females to join the Force.	1.64	.360	Affirmed
10.	Fostering a culture of respect and equality to female officers in Kwara State can motivate more females to join the Force.	1.71	.250	Affirmed
11.	Promotion as and when due can motivate more females to join the Force.	1.58	.340	Affirmed
12.	When welfare packages are effective, it can motivate more females to join the Force.	1.63	.360	Affirmed
13.	A level playground for both male and female officers is a motivation for more to join.	1.62	.420	Affirmed
14.	Gender reconciliation between male and female is a motivation strategy.	1.52	.280	Affirmed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 5 presents the analyses of the respondents' view on how female officers can be motivated to join Police Force. Despite all of the challenges and disappointments, female

police officers stated that by offering them a friendly work atmosphere, women might be encouraged to join the force and encourage retention in numerous noteworthy ways, which will lower the prevalence of gender discrimination in the police force. They also said that initiatives like mentorship programs run by seasoned female police officers and specific training programs ought to be made available to female police officers. Women will be inspired and encouraged to join the force as a result. A mentorship program from seasoned female officers, acknowledging female officers' accomplishments with awards and promotions, offering assistance with work-life balance, establishing an inclusive workplace, implementing gender equality policies, including female officers in decision-making, and cultivating an environment of equality and respect are all significant motivators for female officers to join the force. Effective welfare programs, an equal playing field for men and women, and other initiatives can encourage women to enter the workforce. In summary, there are several strategies to encourage women to join the police force.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from the research question one suggestion on gender relation between male and Female Police Officers in Kwara State, Nigeria, highlight the prevalent issues of sexual harassment, discrimination, and lack of recognition that women experience in the law enforcement sector. The study found that the majority of female officers reported experiencing various forms of discrimination and abuse, including sexual harassment from male coworkers. This indicates the deeply ingrained patriarchal norms that still shape societal perceptions and professional dynamics. According to recent studies, women in law enforcement frequently encounter structural obstacles that limit their efficacy and power (Cohen & Felson, 2019; McLean, 2020).

The study revealed that several factors contribute to the significant disparity in recruitment between male and female police officers in Kwara State, Nigeria. These factors encompass limited employment opportunities for female officers, challenges in ascending to higher ranks, inadequate recognition of their contributions, fewer training opportunities, and lesser access to resources and support compared to their male counterparts. Additionally, societal expectations concerning family responsibilities further exacerbate these challenges, creating a multifaceted barrier to women's advancement in the police force.

Moreover, the lack of recognition for women's contributions in the force significantly undermines their motivation and professional development. Female officers

frequently report feeling undervalued compared to their male colleagues, which can have a detrimental impact on their job satisfaction and career progression (Rabe-Hemp, 2009). This sentiment is echoed in the literature, which suggests that when women's contributions are marginalized, it not only affects their morale but also perpetuates the cycle of underrepresentation (Morash et al., 2018). The disparities in training opportunities and access to resources further illustrate the systemic inequities that female officers face. Research indicates that women in policing are often provided with fewer professional development opportunities, which limit their skills and competencies compared to male officers (Harris, 2016). This lack of training can hinder their ability to adapt to the evolving demands of police work, contributing to the perception that women are less capable in operational roles (White et al., 2018).

Additionally, societal expectations regarding family responsibilities play a crucial role in influencing women's careers in law enforcement. Many female officers struggle to balance their professional obligations with familial duties, which can lead to career interruptions and a reluctance to pursue demanding positions within the police force (Schafer et al., 2019). This is consistent with existing literature that emphasizes the impact of gendered societal roles on women's career trajectories, particularly in male-dominated fields (Cochran et al., 2019).

Another finding of the study is that male police officers in Kwara State are perceived to perform field operations more effectively than their female counterparts. This perception stems from various factors, including experience, physical presence, and traditional gender roles entrenched in society. Male officers are often viewed as having more substantial field experience, which contributes to their effectiveness in conducting investigations. Literature suggests that experience plays a pivotal role in law enforcement effectiveness, as seasoned officers tend to have a deeper understanding of crime dynamics and investigative techniques (Bennett, 2016; Smith & Holmes, 2019). This can create a cycle where male officers are favored for critical roles due to their perceived efficacy, further marginalizing female officers who may not have had equal opportunities for field exposure.

Additionally, the study established that male police officers exhibit stronger capabilities in community policing efforts, leading to better community engagement. Community policing relies heavily on building trust and relationships within the community, and literature indicates that male officers may be perceived as more authoritative figures in community interactions (Rosenbaum, 2017). However, it is crucial

to note that female officers often possess unique interpersonal skills that can enhance community relations, which may be underutilized due to existing biases (Davis & Bowers, 2018). The effectiveness of community policing should not solely hinge on traditional perceptions of authority but should also incorporate the diverse skill sets that both male and female officers bring to the table (Kappeler & Gaines, 2019).

Given the above, the study reveals that female police officers in Kwara State can be motivated to join the Police Force through various supportive mechanisms that foster a conducive work environment. These findings resonate with contemporary literature emphasizing the importance of supportive workplace structures in enhancing female participation in law enforcement agencies. A supportive work environment not only attracts women but also helps retain them, thus addressing the gender disparity prevalent in this sector (Baker et al., 2019). Specialized training programs emerged as a pivotal factor in motivating female officers. Research indicates that when women receive targeted training that equips them with the necessary skills and knowledge, they are more likely to perform effectively and feel confident in their roles (Schneider et al., 2020). This aligns with findings from the literature, which argue that comprehensive training programs tailored to the unique challenges faced by female officers can significantly improve job satisfaction and career advancement opportunities (Katz, 2018).

Moreover, providing work-life balance support is essential in retaining female officers. The literature indicates that flexible working conditions and support for family responsibilities can significantly reduce turnover rates among women in law enforcement (Sinha & Reddy, 2019). Furthermore, involving female officers in decision-making processes enhances their sense of agency and ownership, which can positively affect their motivation (Kirkpatrick et al., 2017). The literature highlights that organizations that value diverse perspectives are better equipped to address the needs of all officers, thus fostering a more equitable and effective law enforcement agency (Katz, 2018). Fostering a culture of respect and equality is crucial for building a sustainable and motivated workforce. Studies indicate that a respectful workplace not only enhances employee satisfaction but also improves overall organizational performance (Baker et al., 2019). Effective welfare packages that consider the unique needs of female officers can further support their well-being and professional growth, reinforcing their commitment to the police force (Sinha & Reddy, 2019).

Conclusion

This study highlights significant gender inequalities within the Kwara State Police Force, by shedding light on the challenges faced by female officers, such as sexual harassment, unfair treatment, lack of recognition, intimidation from male superiors, and underrepresentation in leadership positions, all of which contribute to the gender gap between male and female police officers. Moreover, recruitment processes favour male officers due to various factors: female candidates often have fewer job opportunities, encounter greater obstacles in ascending to higher ranks, receive less acknowledgment for their contributions, experience limited training opportunities, and have less access to necessary resources. Societal expectations, including family obligations, further complicate these challenges (Harris, 2016). Male officers are generally seen to perform field operations more effectively, excel in investigative tasks, control traffic due to their physical presence, and display enhanced skills in community policing and specialized criminal activities compared to their female colleagues (Davis & Bowers, 2018).

Nonetheless, the study indicates that female officers could be encouraged to join and stay in the Police Force through the development of a supportive workplace, the provision of specialized training and mentorship programs, recognition of their achievements, initiatives for work-life balance, and the enforcement of gender equality policies that promote inclusivity and respect (Katz, 2018). Adopting this well-rounded approach could foster a more equitable environment within the police force, ultimately enhancing the organization as a whole.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following recommendations to mitigate the incidence of gender discrimination in the police force:

- i. Police departments should establish mandatory training programs focused on gender sensitivity, diversity, and inclusion. Efforts should be made to create support networks, mentorship programs, and flexible work arrangements to help retain female officers.
- ii. Police forces should develop and promote transparent reporting mechanisms for incidents of harassment and discrimination.
- iii. To address the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions, police departments should implement policies that encourage the promotion of female officers into leadership roles.

- iv. Police force should perform periodic gender audits to assess the current status of gender equality within the department.
- v. Further investigations on this study could be replicated in other companies or organizations within the State and throughout the country.

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