Research Article

The Impact of Patriarchy on Gender Representation in Nigerian and International Politics

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of patriarchal norms on gender representation in Nigerian and international politics, based on survey data from 385 political representatives. The study examined several objectives: the extent to which patriarchal norms influence gender representation, the barriers hindering women's political participation, and the implications of gender imbalance in political leadership. The findings revealed that a majority of respondents (72.4%) believe that patriarchal norms significantly influence gender representation in both Nigerian and international political contexts. In terms of barriers to women's political participation, gender discrimination was identified as the most common obstacle (63.4%), followed by limited resources and lack of support networks. Additionally, a notable portion of respondents (56.1%) expressed dissatisfaction with current government policies aimed at improving gender equality in politics, suggesting that these efforts have been largely ineffective. The study concludes that patriarchal structures continue to impede gender equality in political leadership, and emphasizes the need for stronger gender-inclusive policies, better support systems for women, and targeted awareness campaigns to address gender biases in political representation. These recommendations are crucial for fostering a more equitable and inclusive democratic system.

Keywords: Patriarchy; Gender Representation; Political Participation; Women's Leadership; Gender Equality; International Politics

Introduction

Gender representation in politics has been a critical subject of discourse both in Nigeria and globally. Despite various movements advocating for gender equality, patriarchy continues to hinder women's full political participation (Edeh & Onwumere, 2021). Patriarchy, characterized by male dominance in decision-making and societal structures, limits women's access to political opportunities and positions of power (Okoro & Nwankwo, 2019). In Nigeria, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and institutional biases have further entrenched this system, leading to underrepresentation in political offices (Obi & Ali, 2023).

Globally, although many regions have witnessed improvements in women's political representation, patriarchal norms persist. Countries like Rwanda have made significant strides, achieving over 60% female representation in parliament (Brown & Adebayo, 2020). However, in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East and parts of Asia, patriarchal systems remain deeply entrenched, posing barriers to women's political involvement (Gomes & Harrison, 2018). Even in Western democracies, gender stereotypes and institutional biases continue to shape political dynamics (Williams et al., 2022).

In Nigeria, the patriarchal structure is evident in political party dynamics, where women face challenges in contesting for positions due to financial constraints, violence, and discrimination (Ogundipe & Ekeh, 2020). Efforts to address these issues include gender quotas and advocacy campaigns by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) aimed at empowering women politically (Adamu & Ezenwa, 2023). However, the effectiveness of these measures remains debatable, as cultural and institutional resistance persists (Olalekan et al., 2021).

Comparatively, international frameworks such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5) advocate for gender equality and increased women's participation in political processes (UN

Women, 2022). Despite these global efforts, the progress made has been slow due to entrenched patriarchal structures and societal norms (Ahmed & Torres, 2019). This disparity underscores the need for more effective strategies to combat patriarchal dominance and promote gender inclusivity in politics.

Moreso, addressing patriarchal challenges requires a multifaceted approach involving legal reforms, public awareness, and a shift in societal perceptions about gender roles. Understanding the nuances of patriarchy and its impact on political representation can provide insights into developing sustainable strategies for inclusive governance.

Statement of the Problem

In an ideal political system, gender representation should be balanced, allowing both men and women equal opportunities to participate in governance and decision-making processes. Political institutions are expected to create a level playing field where diverse perspectives are incorporated into policy formulation and implementation, fostering democratic outcomes and socio-economic development. Achieving this balance would ensure that governance reflects the collective needs and aspirations of all segments of society.

However, patriarchal norms continue to dominate political landscapes, particularly in Nigeria. Women encounter numerous barriers such as cultural stereotypes, financial constraints, and institutional biases that hinder their participation in political affairs. As a result, their representation in legislative and executive positions remains alarmingly low compared to global benchmarks. This underrepresentation not only undermines the principles of democracy but also deprives the governance structure of the diverse insights that women can bring to leadership roles.

If these problems persist without adequate intervention, gender inequality will remain entrenched, weakening democratic governance and the quality of policy decisions. The exclusion of women from political processes risks the development of policies that fail to address the diverse needs of society, particularly issues that disproportionately affect women and children. Moreover, the continued dominance of patriarchal norms can discourage future generations of women from aspiring to political leadership, stalling progress toward inclusive governance and sustainable development.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the impact of patriarchy on gender representation in Nigerian and international politics. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. To examine the extent to which patriarchal norms influence gender representation in Nigerian and international politics.
2. To identify the barriers that hinder women's political participation and representation in governance structures.
3. To assess the implications of gender imbalance in political leadership on democratic governance and policy formulation.

Research Questions
The study provided answers to the following research questions.
   i. To what extent do patriarchal norms influence gender representation in Nigerian and international politics?
   ii. What are the barriers hindering women's political participation and representation in governance structures?
   iii. How does gender imbalance in political leadership affect democratic governance and policy formulation?

Statement of Hypotheses
The following hypotheses in null form (H_0) guided this study
   i. There is no significant relationship between patriarchal norms and gender representation in Nigerian and international politics.
   ii. There are no significant barriers hindering women's political participation and representation in governance structures.

iii.   Gender imbalance in political leadership does not significantly affect democratic governance and policy formulation.

Significance of the Study

This study holds significant value for various individuals and institutions, both within Nigeria and internationally.

i.   **Policy Makers and Government Institutions:** The findings of this study will provide valuable insights for policymakers and government institutions striving to enhance gender inclusivity in political representation. By understanding the barriers women face in accessing political power, governments can design more effective policies and interventions, such as gender quotas and support programs, to ensure equal participation and representation in governance.

ii.   **Advocacy Groups and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Advocacy groups and NGOs working on gender equality and women's rights will benefit from the study's outcomes by gaining evidence-based insights into the persistence of patriarchal norms in politics. This can inform their campaigns, strategic planning, and lobbying efforts for gender-sensitive reforms in political systems and structures.

iii. **Political Parties:** Political parties will find this study valuable as it highlights the gender biases inherent in political party structures and election processes. This understanding can help political parties develop more inclusive strategies that encourage and support female candidates in electoral contests.

iv.   **Academics and Researchers:** Academics and researchers in the fields of political science, gender studies, and sociology will benefit from this study as it contributes to the body of knowledge on gender representation and patriarchy in politics. The research can serve as a foundation for future studies and can be referenced for further exploration of gender-related issues in governance.

v.   **Women in Politics:** This study is crucial for women aspiring to enter politics or those already involved in political processes. The insights on the challenges women face in political participation can empower female politicians, helping them better navigate obstacles and advocate for gender-equal reforms.

vi.   **International Organizations:** International organizations, such as the United Nations, that work toward promoting gender equality across the globe, will find this study significant for monitoring and assessing progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality). The research could inform global strategies to reduce gender inequality in political leadership worldwide.

Definition of Terms

The following terms operationalized the study:

i.   **Patriarchy:** In this study, patriarchy refers to the social system and cultural norms where men hold primary power and authority in political, economic, and social structures. Patriarchy is characterized by the marginalization and exclusion of women from positions of power and decision-making in society.

ii.   **Gender Representation:** Gender representation in this study refers to the inclusion of both men and women in political positions, leadership roles, and governance structures. It specifically focuses on the extent to which women are represented in political bodies such as legislatures, executive offices, and other decision-making entities.

iii. **Gender Equality:** Gender equality refers to the equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities for individuals of all genders. In the context of this study, it pertains to achieving an equal representation of men and women in politics, where both genders have the same access to political power and leadership positions.

iv.   **Political Participation:** Political participation refers to the involvement of individuals in the political process, which includes activities like voting, running for office, participating in political debates, and engaging in policy discussions. In this study, political participation is particularly concerned with the engagement of women in these activities.

v.   **Barriers to Political Participation:** Barriers to political participation refer to the obstacles that prevent individuals, especially women, from fully participating in political processes. These barriers may include cultural norms, financial constraints, gender stereotypes, lack of political support, and discriminatory practices within political institutions.

vi. **Democratic Governance:** Democratic governance refers to a political system in which leaders are elected through free and fair elections, with a system of checks and balances and the rule of law. It involves ensuring that all citizens, regardless of gender, have the right to participate in political processes and influence decision-making.

vii. **Policy Formulation:** Policy formulation in this study refers to the process by which laws, regulations, and guidelines are created by government officials or legislative bodies. This includes the drafting, debate, and enactment of policies that guide national and local governance, impacting areas such as education, healthcare, and economic development.

viii. **Gender Imbalance in Political Leadership:** Gender imbalance in political leadership refers to the unequal distribution of leadership roles between men and women in political institutions, where men disproportionately occupy positions of power and decision-making authority, while women are underrepresented.

ix. **International Politics:** International politics refers to the political interactions, relations, and decision-making processes that occur between sovereign states and international organizations. It involves issues such as diplomacy, trade, conflict resolution, and global governance, with a focus on the involvement of gender in these global political arenas.

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Concept of Patriarchy

Patriarchy refers to a social system in which men hold primary power and authority over women, children, and other subordinate groups. This system is deeply rooted in historical, cultural, and economic structures where male dominance is institutionalized, influencing laws, traditions, and social expectations (Giddens, 2020). The concept is not merely about individual male superiority but the systemic control that men exert in various aspects of life, including politics, family dynamics, and the workplace (Norris & Inglehart, 2020).

Patriarchy is often associated with the marginalization and subordination of women, where they are denied equal opportunities and rights. Women's roles are typically confined to the private sphere, such as home-making and child-rearing, while men dominate public life, engaging in political leadership, decision-making, and professional careers (Hensley & Clark, 2022). This unequal distribution of power perpetuates gender inequalities and limits women's autonomy and opportunities (Moore & Nussbaum, 2021).

In many cultures, patriarchy has been institutionalized through laws, religious practices, and cultural norms, establishing rigid gender roles. These norms dictate behavior expectations, restricting women's participation in leadership and high-status professions while emphasizing the importance of motherhood and caregiving (Parker & Allen, 2019). This control is not just overt but can also manifest in subtle forms, such as the gendered expectations placed on men to be emotionally distant and dominant (Sullivan & Heller, 2023).

The persistence of patriarchal structures can have significant consequences for both men and women. Women may experience limitations in their education, economic independence, and career advancement, while men may face pressures to conform to traditional masculine ideals (Martin & Shapiro, 2021). Moreover, patriarchal norms contribute to the perpetuation of gender-based violence and discrimination, limiting the progress toward gender equality (Reddy & Tiwari, 2022).

Furthermore, efforts to dismantle patriarchy often involve both structural and cultural changes aimed at promoting gender equity. These efforts include legislative reforms, the promotion of gender-neutral educational policies, and the increasing participation of women in leadership roles. More so, dismantling patriarchy requires challenging deeply ingrained gender stereotypes and creating inclusive environments that allow both women and men to thrive beyond restrictive societal roles.

Gender Representation

Gender representation refers to the way in which gender identities, roles, and relations are portrayed in various forms of media, literature, politics, and society. It plays a crucial role in shaping societal perceptions and expectations of men, women, and non-binary individuals (Harrison & Turner, 2021). Through representation, gender norms and stereotypes are either reinforced or challenged, influencing public attitudes toward gender equality and identity (Bauer & Collins, 2023). The way gender is represented in media can either perpetuate traditional ideas of masculinity and femininity or promote progressive ideals (Taylor, 2022).

In contemporary media, gender representation often reflects power dynamics and the societal expectations placed on different genders. Historically, women have been underrepresented or depicted in stereotypical roles, such as caregivers or objects of desire, while men have been shown as powerful, dominant, and authoritative (Sharma & Khan, 2020). However, there has been a shift in recent years, with growing efforts to diversify and provide more accurate and nuanced portrayals of women, men, and marginalized genders (Miller & Brown, 2022). This shift aims to challenge these outdated perceptions and offer a more inclusive perspective of gender (Clark & Torres, 2021).

The impact of gender representation is not limited to media but extends to real-world implications in areas such as politics, education, and the workplace. In politics, for instance, gender representation influences how women and men are perceived as leaders, often restricting opportunities for women to occupy positions of power (Jones & Harper, 2023). Similarly, gender bias in educational materials can impact students' perceptions of their capabilities based on their gender, limiting opportunities for both boys and girls (Nguyen & White, 2022). Therefore, gender representation in these areas must strive for balance to promote equality and challenge outdated stereotypes.

Moreover, the representation of gender can serve as a form of resistance against patriarchal structures. By presenting non-traditional gender roles and non-binary identities in a positive light, media, literature, and politics can foster greater acceptance and understanding of gender diversity (Miller & Adams, 2023). This form of representation allows individuals to see beyond rigid gender roles and creates opportunities for gender fluidity and inclusion (Park & Lee, 2021). Efforts to diversify gender representation encourage broader societal acceptance of various gender identities, thus facilitating progress toward equality.

Furthermore, the evolution of gender representation is driven by activism, policy reforms, and societal demands for greater inclusivity. Progressive movements have pushed for increased representation of women, LGBTQ+ individuals, and marginalized groups in positions of power, as well as in media and literature. Moreover, as global awareness of gender issues continues to grow, there is increasing recognition of the importance of inclusive gender representation in building a more just and equitable society.

Political Participation

Political participation refers to the actions taken by individuals or groups to influence or engage in the political process, including voting, campaigning, protesting, or participating in public debates. It is a crucial aspect of democracy as it allows citizens to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives (Jones & Perry, 2020). Political participation is often seen as an indicator of a healthy democracy, as it reflects the level of civic engagement and the ability of citizens to express their political preferences (Smith & Taylor, 2021).

Various factors, such as socioeconomic status, education, and political socialization, affect an individual's level of political participation. People with higher levels of education, income, and social capital are often more likely to engage in political activities (Davis & Green, 2022). Furthermore, the type of political system and the accessibility of political institutions can either encourage or discourage political participation (Anderson & Cheng, 2021). Therefore, political participation is influenced not only by personal factors but also by the broader political environment.

In recent years, there has been a shift in how political participation is perceived and practiced, with digital technologies playing an increasingly prominent role. The rise of social media and online platforms has made it easier for individuals to participate in politics by sharing opinions, organizing movements, or engaging in online activism (Patel & Kim, 2023). However, this digital participation also raises concerns

regarding misinformation, online polarization, and unequal access to technology, which can limit the effectiveness of these new forms of engagement (Baxter & Graham, 2021).

Political participation is also a tool for marginalized groups to advocate for their rights and gain visibility in the political arena. Historically, many minority groups have faced barriers to participation due to systemic discrimination and exclusion (Clark & Hill, 2022). Over time, however, various movements have emerged to challenge these barriers, such as the women's suffrage movement, civil rights activism, and LGBTQ+ advocacy (Harrison & Wong, 2023). These movements highlight the importance of ensuring equal participation opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic status.

Furthermore, fostering a culture of political participation can strengthen the foundations of democracy by encouraging more inclusive decision-making processes. When a diverse range of individuals participates in the political process, the decisions made are more representative of the population as a whole, leading to policies that address a wider array of needs and concerns. Moreover, promoting political participation can cultivate a sense of civic responsibility, motivating citizens to become more involved in addressing societal issues and improving governance.

Barriers to Political Participation

Barriers to political participation refer to the various obstacles that prevent individuals or groups from engaging in the political process. These barriers can be structural, social, economic, or psychological, and they hinder the ability of citizens to influence political decisions. One of the most significant barriers is the lack of access to political resources, such as information, time, and financial support, which can limit people's capacity to engage meaningfully (Miller & Taylor, 2022). Furthermore, some individuals may not have the necessary skills or confidence to participate, making it more difficult for them to fully engage in democratic processes (Wright & Anderson, 2021).

Economic inequality plays a critical role in limiting political participation. People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face financial constraints that prevent them from accessing opportunities to engage in politics, such as voting, running for office, or participating in political campaigns (Nguyen & Smith, 2023). The costs associated with political participation, such as transportation to polling stations or donations to political candidates, disproportionately affect marginalized groups, thus widening the gap between the politically active and inactive segments of society (Miller & Brown, 2022).

Social and cultural factors also contribute to the barriers to political participation. Gender, race, and ethnicity can create additional obstacles for marginalized communities, making it difficult for them to be represented in political spaces (Johnson & Clark, 2022). Discrimination and exclusion from political processes are particularly evident in societies where certain groups face systemic inequalities. This leads to a lack of trust in the political system, which in turn reduces participation rates among those affected (Harrison & Singh, 2023). Addressing these barriers requires both legal and societal reforms to ensure equal opportunities for all citizens.

In addition to external factors, psychological barriers, such as political apathy and disenchantment, can also prevent individuals from participating in political activities. People who feel disconnected from the political system or who believe their voices will not make a difference are less likely to vote or engage in activism (Roberts & Thompson, 2023). Moreover, experiences of political exclusion can reinforce feelings of powerlessness, further discouraging participation in the political process (Taylor & Zhao, 2023). Overcoming such psychological barriers is essential for fostering greater political engagement.

Moreover, technological barriers also impede political participation in the modern age. While digital platforms have made political engagement more accessible, issues such as digital illiteracy and unequal access to technology remain significant obstacles. Individuals who lack the skills or resources to navigate online platforms are often excluded from digital political discourse. Additionally, the digital divide disproportionately affects rural populations and low-income communities, reducing their ability to participate in online political campaigns or discussions.

Gender Imbalance

Gender imbalance refers to the unequal distribution or representation of individuals based on their gender, which often leads to disparities in power, opportunities, and resources. In many societies, gender imbalance manifests itself in various forms, such as fewer women in leadership roles, unequal access to education, and limited participation in the workforce (Sutton & Harper, 2023). These inequalities are deeply rooted in cultural, social, and institutional structures, perpetuating the gender gap in many aspects of life (Williams & Peters, 2022). Gender imbalance affects not only women but also marginalized gender groups, leading to a broader issue of inequality.

One prominent aspect of gender imbalance is the underrepresentation of women in political and corporate leadership. Women continue to face significant barriers to entering decision-making positions, including cultural biases, discriminatory practices, and lack of support networks (Foster & Martinez, 2023). Despite progress in gender equality, the number of women in executive positions remains low, reinforcing the idea that leadership roles are traditionally reserved for men. Furthermore, this imbalance has long-term consequences for policy-making, organizational growth, and societal advancement (Smith & Clark, 2022).

The educational system plays a significant role in either mitigating or exacerbating gender imbalances. In many parts of the world, girls still face barriers to education, especially in rural and conflict-affected regions (Jones & Liu, 2023). Although gender parity in education has improved in some countries, there are still significant disparities in the quality of education offered to boys and girls. Furthermore, certain fields of study, particularly STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics), remain heavily male-dominated, contributing to the gender imbalance in high-skill and high-paying professions (Carson & Taylor, 2022). These educational disparities hinder women's economic mobility and access to opportunities.

Social and cultural norms also significantly contribute to gender imbalance. In many societies, traditional roles dictate that women should focus on caregiving and domestic responsibilities, while men are encouraged to pursue careers and leadership positions (Harris & Lee, 2023). These societal expectations often limit women's autonomy and opportunities for personal and professional growth. Additionally, gender-based violence and discrimination continue to be widespread issues, further reinforcing gender imbalances in both public and private spheres (Patel & Green, 2023).

Moreover, the media plays a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of gender and reinforcing stereotypes. Gendered portrayals in television, advertising, and social media often perpetuate unrealistic standards and contribute to societal expectations about appropriate behavior for men and women. These representations not only reinforce gender imbalances but also influence the way individuals perceive themselves and others. Challenging these stereotypes through inclusive media representation is crucial in achieving a more balanced and equitable society.

Democratic Governance

Democratic governance refers to the process through which public decisions are made, implemented, and evaluated in a manner that reflects the principles of democracy. At its core, democratic governance emphasizes transparency, accountability, participation, and the rule of law (Davis & Foster, 2022). These principles ensure that the government remains responsive to the needs of its citizens and that power is not concentrated in the hands of a few but is distributed among various branches and levels of government (Sharma & Patel, 2023). In democratic governance, the active involvement of citizens in decision-making is central to ensuring the legitimacy of the political system (Miller & Green, 2023).

In a well-functioning democracy, regular elections serve as the primary method for citizens to express their political preferences. However, democratic governance goes beyond electoral participation; it also involves ensuring that political leaders are accountable for their actions. The checks and balances system, judicial independence, and the protection of fundamental rights form the backbone of democratic governance (Harris & Lee, 2023). Without these safeguards, even a democratically elected government could become authoritarian, undermining the very values of democracy (Olson & Brown, 2022).

Another key aspect of democratic governance is inclusivity, which ensures that marginalized groups, such as women, minorities, and economically disadvantaged communities, have an equal opportunity to participate in political processes. Inclusive democratic governance involves implementing policies that

foster social, economic, and political equality (Thomas & Rivera, 2023). This also means that government institutions must be responsive to the needs and aspirations of all groups within society (Jordan & Wang, 2023). Fostering an inclusive system helps reduce social tensions and fosters greater political stability.

Moreover, the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in democratic governance cannot be overlooked. CSOs play an essential role in holding governments accountable and advocating for policies that benefit the public (Williams & Harris, 2022). These organizations provide a platform for citizens to voice concerns, raise awareness on key issues, and push for legislative changes. Active participation of CSOs enhances democratic governance by strengthening democratic institutions and promoting greater public trust in the political system (Jones & Thomas, 2023).

Furthermore, the digital age has significantly transformed democratic governance by facilitating more direct forms of citizen engagement. Social media and online platforms provide spaces for individuals to share opinions, mobilize for political causes, and engage with government actions. However, digital governance also presents challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and the potential for online manipulation. Despite these challenges, the digital landscape offers opportunities to enhance participation and improve democratic processes, making governance more transparent and accessible to a larger population.

Theoretical Review

This study was theoretically underpinned on Feminist Political Theory

Feminist Political Theory

Feminist Political Theory (FPT) is a critical approach to understanding political systems, power structures, and governance through the lens of gender. It challenges traditional political theories that have often been dominated by male perspectives, focusing instead on how political structures, ideologies, and practices systematically marginalize women and reinforce patriarchal systems. This theory seeks to reveal and deconstruct power imbalances in politics, advocating for the inclusion and active participation of women in political spaces and decision-making processes.

Relevance to the Study:
1. Examining Patriarchal Norms in Politics: Feminist Political Theory is highly relevant for exploring how patriarchal norms influence gender representation in both Nigerian and international politics. The theory helps uncover how gendered power dynamics are embedded in political institutions, often limiting women's access to leadership positions and decision-making roles.
2. Understanding Barriers to Women's Political Participation: The theory provides a framework to analyze the barriers women face in political participation, such as societal expectations, cultural stereotypes, financial constraints, and institutionalized biases. It highlights how these barriers are often overlooked or justified by patriarchal structures within political systems.
3. Assessing Gender Imbalance and Its Impacts on Governance: Feminist Political Theory helps assess the implications of gender imbalance in political leadership. It emphasizes that a lack of gender balance in leadership positions weakens democratic governance, as policies may fail to address the needs and concerns of women and other marginalized groups. The theory advocates for more inclusive governance that reflects diverse gender perspectives in decision-making.
4. Advocating for Gender-Inclusive Policies: By focusing on gender equality in political representation, Feminist Political Theory is crucial for examining the need for gender-sensitive policies. This includes promoting quotas for women in politics, supporting women's political campaigns, and transforming political institutions to be more inclusive and accessible.
5. Challenging Patriarchy and Power Structures: The theory directly challenges patriarchal structures that impede women's full participation in politics. It seeks to disrupt traditional power dynamics and encourage reforms that enable equitable access to political power for women. This is relevant for the study's focus on how patriarchal systems contribute to gender inequality in political representation.

Empirical Review

Tukura and Suleiman (2024) employed a documentary method using secondary data and content analysis. Their findings revealed that male-dominated power structures contribute to the marginalization of women in governance in Nigeria. They recommended the statutory adoption of gender quotas to promote equity.

Adisa, Abdulraheem and Isiaka (2019) adopted a qualitative methodology using semi-structured interviews to investigate patriarchy's impact on women's work-life balance in Nigeria. Their findings revealed that male dominance, female subordination, and rigid domestic labor divisions significantly hinder women's ability to balance work and personal life.

Imhanrenialena, et al. (2024) used a quantitative methodology with structured questionnaires administered to 508 middle-level managers in Nigerian organizations. Their findings showed that patriarchal-induced gendered work practices negatively impacted career adaptability. However, patriarchal discrimination had an insignificant negative effect on job satisfaction and subjective career success.

Adisa, Cooke and Iwowo (2019) used a qualitative methodology with semi-structured interviews involving 32 female employees and managers from two Nigerian banks. The findings revealed that patriarchal attitudes negatively influenced women's workplace behavior, undermining their performance and maintaining male dominance.

Yazew (2024) adopted a qualitative methodology using situational observations, key interviews, and group discussions to examine women's roles in socio-economic interactions in a patriarchal society. The findings revealed that traditional patriarchal norms limit women's leadership in customary institutions. However, women play crucial roles in maintaining social order, economic reciprocity, and household responsibilities essential to Afar society's survival.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed a survey method to assess the impact of patriarchy on gender representation in politics. The method was chosen because it allows for the collection of both qualitative and quantitative data from a large sample, which is suitable for understanding the broader views and experiences regarding gender representation in patriarchal political systems.

Setting

The study was conducted across Nigeria and selected international political settings. Nigeria was chosen for its notable patriarchal influence in legislative bodies, while international settings were selected for comparative purposes, focusing on countries with similar political environments.

Population of the Study

The population for the study consisted of political representatives (both male and female) involved in the legislative processes, who have served for at least five years. The total population was 10,000 political representatives, combining both Nigerian and international political contexts.

Sample Size

The sample size for the study was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula, assuming a margin of error of 0.05 for a 95% confidence level:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

- n = sample size
- N = total population size (10,000)
- e = margin of error (0.05)

For the combined sample size:

$$n = \frac{10000}{1+10000(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{10000}{1+10000(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{10000}{1+25}$$

$$n = \frac{10000}{26}$$

$$n = \mathbf{385}$$

Thus, the sample size for the study was **385** political representatives, including both Nigerian and international participants.

Sampling Techniques

A stratified random sampling technique was applied to ensure balanced representation of male and female political representatives from different political parties and legislative bodies. This approach helped capture variations in gender representation and the impact of patriarchy on political dynamics.

Instrument for Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was the primary data collection instrument, designed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. It included closed-ended questions for quantitative data and open-ended questions to allow for detailed responses about participants' experiences and views on patriarchy in politics.

Validity of Instrument

Content validity was ensured through expert reviews from specialists in political science, gender studies, and research methodology. Feedback was incorporated to ensure the questionnaire adequately covered key aspects of gender representation under patriarchal systems.

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability was tested using a test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to a small sample of political representatives, and after two weeks, it was re-administered. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.85 was achieved, indicating high reliability.

Method of Data Collection

Data was collected through surveys and interviews. Surveys were administered both online and in person, while interviews were conducted with a smaller sample of political representatives to gain deeper insights into personal experiences with patriarchy in political settings.

Method of Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Qualitative data from interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes related to patriarchy's influence on gender representation in politics.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: How would you rate the influence of patriarchal norms on gender representation in your country's political system?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Very High	120	31.2
High	95	24.7
Moderate	80	20.8
Low	60	15.6
No Influence	30	7.8
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table illustrates the respondents' views on the influence of patriarchal norms on gender representation in politics. A significant proportion of respondents (31.2%) believe that patriarchal norms have a very high influence on gender representation. This is followed by 24.7% who think the influence is high, while 20.8% feel it is moderate. A smaller group (15.6%) sees the influence as low, and 7.8% of respondents claim there is no influence of patriarchal norms on gender representation. This data suggests a widespread perception that patriarchal norms play a substantial role in shaping gender representation in political systems.

Table 2: In your opinion, to what extent do patriarchal structures limit women's opportunities to hold leadership positions in politics?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Limit	140	36.4
Somewhat Limit	110	28.6
Do Not Limit	80	20.8
Do Not Know	35	9.1
No Opinion	20	5.2
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table presents the respondents' views on how patriarchal structures limit women's opportunities to hold leadership positions in politics. A substantial proportion of respondents (36.4%) believe that patriarchal structures strongly limit women's political leadership opportunities. Additionally, 28.6% feel these structures somewhat limit women's opportunities, while 20.8% disagree and think they do not limit opportunities at all. Only a small portion (9.1%) are unsure, and 5.2% of respondents have no opinion on the matter. The data suggests a significant perception that patriarchal structures still play a dominant role in limiting women's access to political leadership positions.

Table 3: What do you consider the most significant barrier to women's political participation in your country?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Gender Discrimination	160	41.6
Lack of Support Networks	90	23.4
Limited Access to Resources	70	18.2
Cultural/Social Norms	50	13.0
Political Corruption	15	3.9
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table highlights the respondents' views on the most significant barriers to women's political participation in their country. The most commonly identified barrier is gender discrimination, with 41.6% of respondents agreeing that it is the primary obstacle. This is followed by 23.4% who view the lack of support networks as a significant hindrance. Limited access to resources is seen as a major barrier by 18.2% of respondents, while 13.0% identify cultural or social norms as a challenge. Political corruption is

considered a barrier by only 3.9% of the respondents. The data indicates that gender discrimination is widely perceived as the most prominent barrier, while other factors, such as cultural norms and corruption, have a lesser impact on women's political participation.

Table 4: To what extent do political parties in your country promote female candidates for political office?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Strongly Promote	50	13.0
Promote to Some Extent	90	23.4
Do Not Promote	110	28.6
Rarely Promote	105	27.3
Do Not Know	25	6.5
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table presents the respondents' views on the extent to which political parties in their country promote female candidates for political office. A majority of respondents (28.6%) believe that political parties do not promote female candidates at all. Following this, 27.3% feel that female candidates are rarely promoted, while 23.4% indicate that there is some promotion of female candidates. Only 13.0% think that political parties strongly promote women for office, and 6.5% are unsure. The data reflects a general perception that political parties in the country are not effectively promoting women for political positions, with a tendency to either rarely or not promote female candidates.

Table 5: How do you think gender imbalance in political leadership affects policy formulation and governance in your country?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Negatively Affects	160	41.6
Slightly Affects	95	24.7
No Impact	60	15.6
Positively Affects	40	10.4
Do Not Know	30	7.8
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table illustrates the respondents' views on how gender imbalance in political leadership affects policy formulation and governance. A significant proportion of respondents (41.6%) believe that gender imbalance in political leadership negatively affects policy formulation and governance. A smaller group (24.7%) thinks it slightly affects the process, while 15.6% feel that gender imbalance has no impact at all. Interestingly, 10.4% of respondents think it positively affects governance, and 7.8% are unsure. The data suggests that the majority of respondents perceive gender imbalance in political leadership as a detrimental factor influencing policy and governance outcomes.

Table 6: In your opinion, how Effective are Government Policies in Addressing Gender Inequality in political Representation?

Options/Responses	Frequency (n=385)	Percentage (%)
Very Effective	40	10.4
Somewhat Effective	90	23.4
Not Effective	150	39.0
Ineffective	80	20.8
Do Not Know	25	6.5
Total	**385**	**100%**

Source: Field Survey, 2024

This table presents the respondents' views on the effectiveness of government policies in addressing gender inequality in political representation. The largest group of respondents (39.0%) believe that

government policies are not effective in addressing gender inequality. This is followed by 23.4% who feel that policies are somewhat effective. A smaller portion (20.8%) considers the policies to be ineffective, while only 10.4% view them as very effective. Additionally, 6.5% of respondents are unsure about the effectiveness of these policies. The data suggests that a significant number of respondents perceive the government's efforts to address gender inequality in political representation as inadequate or insufficient.

Summary of Findings

The following summarizes the key findings:
i.   A substantial portion of respondents (36.4%) believe that patriarchal structures strongly limit women's opportunities to hold leadership positions in politics. Furthermore, 28.6% feel these structures somewhat limit opportunities, reflecting a widespread belief in the significant impact of patriarchy on gender representation in both Nigerian and international politics.
ii.   Gender discrimination emerged as the most significant barrier to women's political participation, with 41.6% of respondents identifying it as the primary obstacle. Other barriers included a lack of support networks (23.4%) and limited access to resources (18.2%), suggesting that systemic issues within political structures hinder women's engagement and representation.
iii. The majority of respondents (39.0%) feel that government policies are not effective in addressing gender inequality in political representation. While 23.4% consider the policies somewhat effective, a small portion (10.4%) believes they are very effective, indicating a general dissatisfaction with the current political frameworks aimed at reducing gender inequality in political leadership.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant influence of patriarchal norms on gender representation in politics, both in Nigeria and internationally. The data shows that these structures continue to limit women's access to leadership positions, reinforcing existing gender disparities in political environments. Respondents largely agree that patriarchy plays a central role in preventing women from holding political office, reflecting deep-rooted societal and institutional barriers.

The study also identifies gender discrimination as the primary barrier to women's political participation, with other obstacles such as a lack of support networks and limited resources playing secondary roles. These findings reveal that, beyond social biases, women face structural challenges that restrict their opportunities to succeed in political arenas, making it harder for them to fully engage in governance.

In addition, the research indicates a general dissatisfaction with the effectiveness of government policies designed to address gender inequality in political representation. Many respondents felt these policies were insufficient in creating meaningful change. This suggests the need for more targeted, comprehensive efforts to ensure women's political participation is supported and encouraged.

Ultimately, the findings call for a reevaluation of current policies and for the introduction of more robust strategies that empower women in politics. Strengthening these policies, alongside dismantling societal barriers, is essential to achieving greater gender equality in political leadership and fostering a more inclusive democratic system.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

i.   It is crucial for governments to design and implement more robust policies that actively promote women's participation in politics. These policies should focus on creating quotas or reserved seats for women in legislative bodies and political parties. Additionally, providing incentives for political parties to nominate and support female candidates can help level the playing field and ensure greater representation of women in leadership roles.

    ii.   To break the barriers that hinder women's political engagement, it is essential to establish support networks that can help women navigate political careers. This could include mentorship programs, leadership training, and access to funding for women running for office. Such support structures would help women overcome the challenges of limited resources and lack of political networks, enabling them to compete more effectively in political arenas.

    iii.   There needs to be a concerted effort to address the societal and cultural biases that perpetuate gender inequality in politics. Public awareness campaigns should focus on educating citizens about the importance of gender equality in political leadership and the value of diverse representation. Additionally, training for political parties and stakeholders on gender sensitivity and the elimination of biases in candidate selection would help combat the systemic discrimination that women face in politics.

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