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INVESTIGATING GENDER INEQUALITY IN THE WORKPLACE: A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE*

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Abstract. This review provides a comparative analysis of gender equality practices in the workplace, with a particular emphasis on Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa. The research employed a qualitative review of existing literature to gain an in-depth understanding of gender inequality in KwaZulu-Natal and to inform potential policy interventions to promote gender equity in the workplace. Gender equality is essential for promoting inclusive workplaces, economic development, and societal advancement. Wage disparities, unequal promotion opportunities, and under-representation in leadership roles are common consequences of gender inequality in the workplace, which is a persistent issue. Cultural norms, organisational biases, misogyny, patriarchal influences, intersectional marginalisation, and gendered organisational structures are contributing factors. Legal reforms, diversity initiatives, personal empowerment strategies, and solutions such as bridging the gender pay disparity, promoting work-life balance, and challenging gender biases are necessary to address this issue. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing an overview of research on gender inequality in Kwa-Zulu-Natal and identifying gaps that warrant further investigation. Through feminist theory as its framework, the paper explores gender inequalities in South Africa, advocating for the equal and fair treatment of men and women. Furthermore, it is an essential resource for government sectors, emphasising the necessity of effective policies and interventions to resolve workplace inequalities, thereby assisting policymakers in implementing targeted initiatives. The research paper employed a systematic review approach to collect information from qualitative studies, thereby ensuring a context-sensitive analysis and improving the rigour and precision of the search process.

Keywords: gender; discrimination; inequality; bias; workplace

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JEL Classification: J70, J71

1. Introduction

In South Africa, gender inequality is influenced by a range of interconnected factors, including the enduring legacies of apartheid and colonialism, which have undermined family structures and worsened economic disparities (Kirkwood, 2018). Patriarchal traditions and cultural norms further contribute to gender-based violence and the marginalisation of women (Helman & Ratele, 2016; Snodgrass, 2018). Although regulatory frameworks promoting gender equality, such as policies encouraging women's participation in managerial roles, have been established, significant challenges persist. These include the gender wage gap and limited resource access (Janse van Rensburg et al., 2020; Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2023). Sexism remains a central factor in the unequal treatment of women in the workplace, reinforcing barriers to employment and hindering career advancement while sustaining male-dominated advantages (Zhu, 2021). Gender disparities in the labour market are complex, encompassing labour force participation, employment opportunities, pay, job quality, and access to benefits, rights, and career

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progression. A 2020 analysis of the World Bank's Women, Business, and the Law (WBL) study examined the effectiveness of legal frameworks in promoting gender equality in the workplace across various countries (Malinga, 2024).

In response to these challenges, South Africa enacted the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 52 of 2002, which aims to accelerate gender equality in the workplace. This Act addresses issues of gender-based discrimination and harassment, promotes equality, and safeguards human rights. Its additional objectives include advancing gender equality, fostering unity in diversity, and supporting the country's transition to a democratic society. Kok et al. (2016) contend that the Act addresses the injustices and oppression resulting from apartheid by prohibiting unfair discrimination and promoting equity. However, despite the presence of such legal frameworks, gender inequality persists, particularly in industries like construction, where women remain vastly underrepresented. According to Statistics South Africa, women comprised only 9% of the construction workforce as of the second quarter of 2018 (Stats SA, 2018). In response, the South African government has introduced initiatives such as appointing women to construction committees and developing targeted recruitment programs. However, these efforts have yet to improve female representation in the industry significantly.

This research aims to examine the impact and manifestations of gender inequality within the KwaZulu-Natal construction industry, focusing on the factors contributing to disparities in career advancement, pay, and employment opportunities. Despite advancements in female education and skills development, women in KwaZulu-Natal's construction sector continue to experience discrimination in recruitment, promotion, and remuneration (Mkhize & Ngwenya, 2021). Women have proven their competence in various traditionally male-dominated trades. Yet, they persistently face discrimination, even when performing supervisory roles under challenging conditions or operating heavy machinery. This study is motivated by the absence of localised research addressing the specific dynamics of KwaZulu-Natal, which are frequently overlooked in broader discussions of gender inequality. Understanding these regional dynamics is essential for developing targeted interventions sensitive to the area's unique cultural, social, and economic context, a gap that this study intends to fill.

2. Problem statement

Despite the implementation of legislative measures aimed at eradicating discrimination and promoting equality, gender disparity in the workplace remains a significant issue in South Africa (Musetsho et al., 2021; Ndzabela & Lukman, 2023). Research across various sectors, including academia (Shober, 2014), mining, and the automotive industry (Lloyd & Mey, 2007), reveals persistent gaps in hiring opportunities, career advancement, and leadership roles. Women continue to face challenges such as bias, stereotypes, and sexual harassment (Zhu, 2022), along with discrimination often linked to their roles as mothers (Shober, 2014). Sinden (2017) highlights that women remain disproportionately underrepresented in senior management roles predominantly held by men across all industries (Khuzwayo, 2016). Proposed solutions to address these disparities include empowering women, offering flexible work arrangements, raising awareness about gender discrimination (Lloyd & Mey, 2007), and using education to promote equality (Zhu, 2022). Despite some advancements, the slow pace of progress underscores the ongoing need for sustained efforts to eliminate gender inequality in South African workplaces (Musetsho et al., 2021; Sinden, 2017).

Gender inequality in the workplace continues to be a global issue, driven by pay disparities, limited opportunities for career advancement, and a lack of female representation in leadership positions (Du, 2024). Contributing factors include deeply ingrained gender stereotypes, intersectional marginalisation, and gendered organisational structures (Du, 2024). Occupational segregation remains a significant determinant of the gender pay gap, particularly in specific industries, despite improvements in educational access for women (Zhu, 2024). Other challenges women face include the "motherhood penalty", perceptions of diminished competence, and balancing

work with family responsibilities (Ozer, 2023). Addressing these inequalities requires a comprehensive approach, including policies that promote work-life balance, diversity initiatives, and campaigns to combat gender bias. Achieving gender equality in the workplace necessitates empowering women, increasing awareness, and leveraging legal and educational reforms (Zhu, 2024). Numerous initiatives, many focused explicitly on women, have emerged in response to the ongoing underrepresentation of women in various fields (Lambert et al., 2023).

While prescriptive advice such as "lean in" (Sandberg, 2015), "push back" (Rezvani, 2024), "dare to lead" (Brown, 2018), and "be a girl boss" (Amoruso, 2015) is intended to empower women and boost their self-esteem, it risks implying that women themselves are to blame for the challenges they face (Kim et al., 2018). Women remain underrepresented in many areas, including fields such as surgery, where they make up less than 20% of the workforce; research and development, where they account for less than 30% (UIS, 2019); military personnel, at just 7% (NATO, 2019); and senior roles in financial services, where they represent fewer than 20% of leaders (Ryan & Morgenroth, 2024). Women are also underrepresented in influential and powerful positions, such as in political leadership (UN Women, 2022), senior corporate roles, and on corporate boards (Ryan & Morgenroth, 2024). This ongoing underrepresentation not only hinders the career advancement of individual women and impedes progress toward gender equality but also negatively impacts society. The lack of female leaders skews the prioritisation, handling, and resolution of key societal issues (Perez, 2019; Little et al., 2001).

3. Methodology

This review utilised a qualitative source investigating gender inequality in the workplace in Kwa-Zulu Natal Province. This review paper followed a rigorous system that involved peer review of journals and reports from the past 4 years. Several databases, such as Google Scholar, Spring Link, Science Direct and Academic Edu, were utilised to find relevant qualitative studies using a Document matrix to find appropriate keywords, such as "gender", "inequality", and "workplace". The authors found thousands of articles and studies, which were narrowed down by language, subject area, study area, year of publication, and open access. The Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses framework guided the study selection process. The inclusion criteria were qualitative studies that investigated gender inequality in the workplace. However, studies examining similar experiences were also included. A total of 55 articles were utilised after careful consideration and screening. The screening procedure recorded by the PRISMA 2020 flow diagram below (see Table 1 and Figure 1) was used as a guide in this study. The screening process narrowed the data down to three themes, which you will discuss below.

Table 1. Document Matrix

Block 1	Block 2	Block 3
Gender	Inequality	Workplace
Male/ Female	Imbalance	Organisation
Sexuality	Bias	Enterprise
	Discrimination	
	Unfairness	

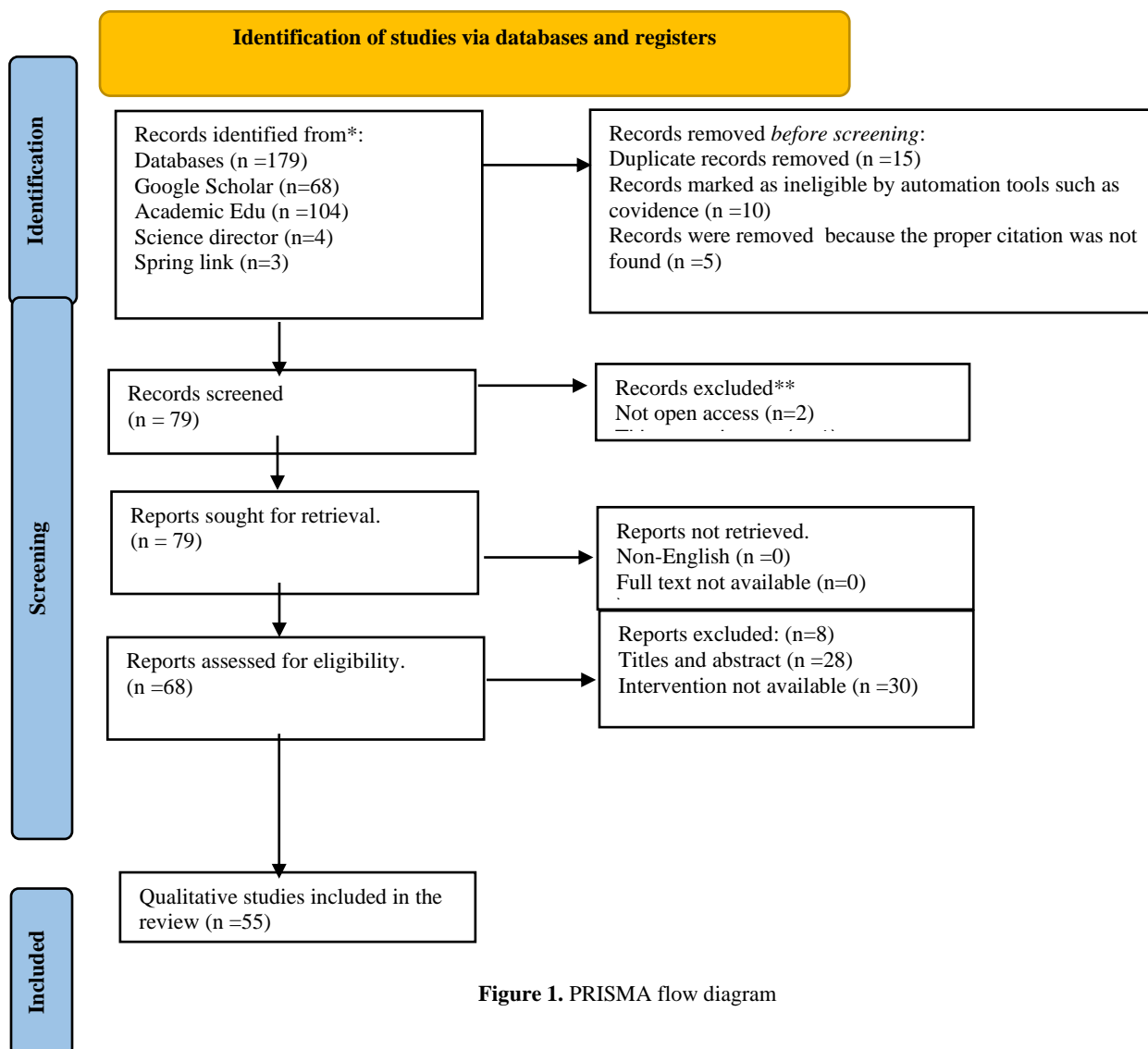


Figure 1. PRISMA flow diagram

Theoretical framework. This research paper employs feminist theory as its theoretical framework to examine gender inequalities in South Africa, advocating for the equal and fair treatment of both men and women. Feminist theory centers on women's experiences as key to understanding gender inequality while promoting their interests and rights (Min, 2016). It highlights how societal values often overlook gender disparities, underscoring the enduring nature of this issue (Ji et al., 2017). The theory also emphasises the importance of gender politics and power dynamics in perpetuating imbalances and discrimination (Wu & Dong, 2017). By focusing on the detrimental effects of gender discrimination, feminist theory aims to address systemic inequalities that undermine women's rights and opportunities (Zurndorfer, 2018).

Given these considerations, feminist theory is regarded as the most suitable lens for this research, particularly in examining the treatment of employees in workplace contexts (Liu, MacPhail & Dong, 2018). Investigating workplace gender inequality through a feminist perspective reveals the systemic barriers women face and stresses the need for broader societal change. By considering the historical context and contemporary dimensions of these inequalities, feminist theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing women's challenges in professional settings. Furthermore, feminist theory contributes valuable insights for developing

practical solutions to workplace gender inequality. By focusing on systemic issues and advocating for meaningful change, this research aims to significantly contribute to advancing gender equity in professional environments.

4. Literature review

Women's work-life balance as gender discrimination factor in the workplace

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to achieving an appropriate equilibrium between professional responsibilities and personal life, enabling individuals to perform optimally in their careers while enjoying quality time with family and friends (Wood et al., 2020). It is a crucial aspect of contemporary life that aids individuals in managing both their professional and personal commitments (Hill & Carroll, 2014; Verma & Gautam, 2022). A balanced life contributes to employees' overall wellbeing and satisfaction (Kelliher et al., 2019), and organisations increasingly acknowledge the value of fostering work-life balance, recognising its positive impact on employee engagement (Yadav et al., 2022). However, women, in particular, encounter unique challenges in balancing their work and personal lives, often due to societal expectations that place additional roles on them, such as those of wife, mother, and homemaker (Atteh et al., 2020; Sarker et al., 2021). Responsibilities such as marriage, childcare, and household duties often hinder women's career progression, leading to greater dissatisfaction with their work-life balance than their male counterparts (Saks et al., 2022). While the traditional view of work-life balance emphasises maintaining a clear separation between work and personal life, work-life integration offers a more flexible approach, seeking harmony between both spheres (Afif, 2019).

The demand for work-life balance has grown more urgent, particularly in light of global shifts such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which reshaped workplace dynamics (Kniffin et al., 2021). In many countries, including the United States and across OECD nations, dual-earner households have become the norm, with women representing nearly half of the workforce (OECD, 2023; Schaeffer, 2024). A 2023 survey identified work-life balance as one of the top three factors influencing job satisfaction, highlighting its increasing importance to employees (Eren & Toy, 2024). Despite the rising participation of women in the workforce, they are often relegated to non-decision-making roles, particularly in male-dominated industries like manufacturing, construction, and mining, where their representation in senior positions remains disproportionately low (Gaston & Simon, 2021). Gender-based discrimination and societal norms frequently restrict women's access to higher positions, contributing to their underrepresentation in leadership roles (Enaifoghe & Idowu, 2021; Abalkhail, 2020). In South Africa, for example, women are still predominantly employed in lower-level positions, despite having equivalent qualifications, especially in sectors such as mining, where they are often assigned non-specialised roles instead of positions of authority (Kaggwa, 2020; Sinden et al., 2017).

The challenges of achieving work-life balance are not confined to South Africa but extend globally, where women face similar struggles. In Ahmedabad, India, for instance, women in the IT sector experience difficulty balancing professional responsibilities with domestic duties despite progressive workplace policies intended to improve their work-life balance (Vijayaraghavan & Martin, 2020; Rajesh & Rajini, 2022). Job satisfaction, working hours, and working conditions are key factors influencing women's ability to achieve work-life balance. Job satisfaction is vital in fostering employee loyalty and contentment (Jalaja, 2020). In public sector banks in Ahmedabad, perceptions of work-life balance initiatives significantly affect women's ability to maintain a healthy balance between work and personal life (Balamurugan & Sreeleka, 2020). These examples highlight the widespread work-life balance challenge, with women across diverse cultural contexts navigating the complexities of balancing professional and personal obligations in the face of societal expectations and workplace dynamics.

Remuneration discrepancies among genders in the workplace

Earnings disparities can arise from various factors, including education, experience, gender, race, occupation, and geographic location (Casale & Posel, 2020; Hill, 2020; Mosomi, 2019). Wage inequality has long been a persistent issue in South Africa, deeply rooted in the historical context of apartheid, which created significant

socio-economic divisions between the affluent and the impoverished. While there has been notable progress in reducing income inequality since the end of apartheid, wage inequality remains a significant challenge nationally, at regional, and local levels (Bassier & Gautham, 2024; Moyo et al., 2024). One of the main contributors to wage inequality in South Africa is the disparity in education and skills. Research by Burger and Fourie (2019) highlights the critical role of education in determining wage levels, with individuals with higher education levels earning higher wages.

Gender discrimination is another significant factor contributing to wage inequality in South Africa. Studies by Olawuyi et al. (2024) reveal that women, on average, earn less than men and are more likely to work in lower-paying sectors. This gender wage gap is partly driven by occupational segregation, where women tend to be employed in traditionally female-dominated industries, such as caregiving and domestic work, which typically offer lower wages compared to male-dominated sectors like manufacturing and mining (Statistics South Africa, 2018). Furthermore, the structure of South Africa's labour market exacerbates wage disparities, particularly within the informal sector, where women, especially Black African women, are disproportionately represented. This reinforces gender and race-based wage disparities in the formal sector (Statistics South Africa, 2018). For example, in the healthcare sector, the gender pay gap is evident among registered nurses, with male nurses generally earning more than their female counterparts (Wilson et al., 2018). The studies reviewed indicate that men typically have access to more benefits, including higher salaries and better job opportunities (Ovadia, 2022).

The gender pay gap in industries like oil, gas, and mining is further exacerbated by gender segregation, where male-dominated fields tend to offer higher-paying positions and greater opportunities for career advancement (Perks & Schulz, 2020). Addressing gender inequality in these sectors could yield broader developmental outcomes, as women could gain more influence and power, potentially narrowing the wage gap (Ovadia, 2022). However, societal norms often place women in more passive roles, while men are generally more assertive in negotiating better compensation and career progression (Maotoana et al., 2024). Additionally, women are more likely than men to leave the workforce due to family obligations, which negatively impacts their career trajectories and earnings. In contrast, men are more likely to remain in the workforce, receiving merit-based promotions and wage increases (Maotoana et al., 2024). This pattern of inequality is also reflected in international studies of nursing staff. In six studies examined, including research from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Germany, male nurses consistently earned more than their female counterparts. For instance, Jones and Gates (2004) found that male nurses in the U.S. earned 7.8% more than female nurses. Similarly, Wilson et al. (2018) reported a 10% gender pay disparity between male and female registered nurses in the U.S., while Muench et al. (2019) identified significant pay gaps across different healthcare settings. The gender pay gap is also evident in speciality areas, with surgical specialities showing the largest pay disparity, reaching up to \$24,285 (Punshon et al., 2019). These findings suggest that the gender pay gap is a national issue and a global challenge, requiring systemic changes to address its underlying causes.

Interventions that address gender inequality

Reducing the gender wage gap is particularly critical for female-headed households, which account for 42.1% of households in South Africa (Stats SA, 2022). As long as gender-based income disparities persist, individuals in female-headed households are more likely to experience poverty compared to those in male-headed households (Mosomi, 2019). This, in turn, adversely affects the wellbeing of future generations. By addressing the gender wage gap, the welfare and empowerment of women—and, by extension, their families can be significantly improved (Danquah et al., 2021). This underscores the importance of tackling gender pay disparities not only as a matter of fairness but also as a critical factor influencing broader societal wellbeing.

Organisations have a unique opportunity to lead cultural transformation efforts that challenge stereotypes and promote more inclusive norms. By cultivating workplace cultures prioritising diversity, companies can create environments where all employees, regardless of gender, feel supported and valued (Thomson et al., 2022).

Additionally, engaging in community initiatives that promote gender equality can further this transformation. Collaboration between organisations and local communities can raise awareness about the benefits of gender equality and foster a shared understanding of the need for diverse and inclusive workplaces (Thomson et al., 2022). Socioeconomic factors, such as access to education, affordable healthcare, and work-life balance policies, are pivotal in advancing gender equality (Thomson et al., 2022). Disparities in these areas disproportionately affect women, limiting their full participation in the workforce. Addressing these gaps through comprehensive legislation and workplace policies that support women—such as maternity leave, affordable childcare, and flexible work arrangements—can create a more equitable work environment (Rees et al., 2023).

Beyond structural and policy changes, organisations must focus on inclusive leadership to promote gender equality. This involves implementing mentorship programs, leadership development initiatives, and transparent promotion processes (Simmons & Yawson, 2022). Encouraging diverse representation at decision-making levels is crucial, and organisations can provide mentorship, sponsorship, and networking opportunities to support women's professional growth within their respective organisational cultures. To combat bias and discrimination, companies should implement diversity and inclusion training, foster a culture of openness and accountability, and regularly review their hiring and promotion practices (Davenport et al., 2022). Addressing gender bias requires a multifaceted approach, which includes educational campaigns, sensitisation programs, and the enforcement of anti-discrimination policies. Furthermore, organisations must continue advocating for gender equality legislation, such as paid family leave, equal pay laws, and anti-discrimination measures, to establish a legal framework that promotes equality (Hervías Parejo & Radulović, 2023).

In South Africa, despite some progress, the pace of change in addressing gender inequality remains slow, highlighting the need for continued efforts (Musetsho et al., 2021; Sinden, 2017). Effective solutions require a comprehensive strategy that combines legal reforms, diversity initiatives, and empowerment strategies (Hu, 2024). Global studies have shown that organisational culture barriers and leadership commitment to gender equality are key factors in overcoming these challenges (Andrade, 2023). Therefore, fostering cross-cultural dialogue, empowering women, and enacting supportive policies are essential to closing the gender gap (Zhu, 2022).

5. Findings and discussions

Theme 1. Women in low management level

The representation of women in leadership positions remains low in industries traditionally dominated by men, such as manufacturing, construction, mining, and quarrying. South Africa must implement a more comprehensive and targeted action plan to address this disparity and increase the number of women in managerial roles (Simon & Gaston, 2021). Research indicates that countries with higher female labour force participation tend to have more women involved in politics, highlighting the broader societal importance of gender equality (Sinden et al., 2017). In the mining sector, Kaggwa (2020) found that most women were employed in lower-level, non-specialised roles, such as "general workers," rather than in positions of authority or expertise. Even when women possess the same qualifications as their male counterparts, men are more likely to be promoted (Maotoana et al., 2024).

Women in lower management positions continue to face substantial barriers to career advancement, including limited access to mentorship, unequal promotional opportunities, and gender biases that undermine their leadership potential. These challenges are further exacerbated by the tendency to overlook women for high-profile assignments, which are critical for career progression (KPMG, 2020). Additionally, women often receive less organisational support than men, which hampers their ability to build the networks and skills required for advancing to higher management roles (McKinsey & Company, 2021). The intersection of gender and race amplifies these challenges, as women of colour face even more significant disadvantages. Despite some progress

toward gender equality, the "glass ceiling" remains a significant barrier for women in lower management, restricting their access to leadership roles. These findings emphasise the need for organisations to implement more inclusive policies, including mentorship programs, transparent promotion criteria, and leadership development initiatives, particularly for women at lower management levels.

Theme 2. Harassment

The reviewed studies indicate that men are more likely to have access to benefits such as higher-paying jobs and salaries (Ovadia et al., 2021), a disparity that is particularly evident in sectors like oil, gas, and mining, where gender segregation exacerbates gender pay inequality (Perks & Schulz, 2020). Despite some progress toward gender equality, recent research shows that women continue to earn less than their male counterparts across nearly all industries, even when controlling for factors such as experience, education, and job role (McKinsey & Company, 2021; OECD, 2020). This persistent pay gap is compounded by systemic biases, with women—especially women of colour—facing greater wage disparities due to historical underrepresentation in higher-paying fields.

Furthermore, women are more likely than men to exit and re-enter the labour force due to family obligations, often for extended periods, while men are more likely to receive continuous merit-based promotions and salary increases (Maotoana et al., 2024). Women are also less likely to negotiate their salaries, and when they do, they often face negative perceptions or penalties, exacerbating the issue. Some studies report that a few female employees do not receive overtime compensation, while many women earn wages insufficient to meet their basic needs (Kaggwa, 2020). Research also suggests that if gender inequality were reduced and the proportion of women in sectors like oil, gas, and mining increased, women could gain greater economic power through higher incomes, potentially challenging patriarchal structures and contributing to broader developmental outcomes (Ovadia et al., 2021).

While some organisations have introduced pay transparency initiatives, the gender pay gap remains significantly broad, underscoring the need for more comprehensive policies, such as equal pay audits and more vigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws (KPMG, 2020). Closing the gender pay gap is not only essential for advancing gender equality but also for improving organisational performance, as studies show that companies with more equitable pay structures tend to experience higher employee satisfaction and retention rates (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

Theme 3. Inequality in Remuneration Compared to Men

The studies reviewed indicate that men are more likely to have access to benefits such as higher-paying jobs and salaries (Ovadia et al., 2021). This trend is particularly prevalent in industries like oil, gas, and mining, which are characterised by gender segregation and contribute to the widening gender pay gap (Perks & Schulz, 2020). Despite some progress in achieving gender equality, recent research shows that women continue to earn less than their male counterparts across most sectors, even when factors such as experience, education, and job roles are considered (McKinsey & Company, 2021; OECD, 2020). This persistent wage disparity is further exacerbated by systemic biases, with women—particularly women of colour—experiencing even greater pay gaps due to their historical underrepresentation in higher-paying fields.

Additionally, women are more likely than men to temporarily leave and re-enter the workforce due to family obligations, often for extended periods. In contrast, men in similar roles are more likely to receive continuous merit-based promotions and salary increases (Maotoana et al., 2024). Women are also less likely to negotiate their salaries, and when they do, they are often penalised or viewed negatively, which only exacerbates the issue. Some studies also report that a small proportion of female employees do not receive overtime pay, and many women earn insufficient wages to cover their basic needs (Kaggwa, 2020).

Moreover, research suggests that reducing gender inequality and increasing women's participation in industries like oil, gas, and mining could increase women's economic empowerment through higher wages. This, in turn, could challenge patriarchal structures and contribute to broader socio-economic development (Ovadia et al., 2021). Although some organisations have implemented pay transparency initiatives, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly wide, highlighting the need for more comprehensive policies, such as equal pay audits and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination laws (KPMG, 2020). Closing the gender pay gap is crucial not only for advancing gender equality but also for improving organisational performance, as studies show that companies with more equitable pay structures tend to experience higher employee satisfaction and retention rates (McKinsey & Company, 2021).

Conclusions

The studies highlight the ongoing challenges women face in industries dominated by men, especially in leadership roles, pay, and workplace harassment. Although progress has been made in gender equality, women are still underrepresented in senior management and face obstacles like limited access to mentorship, unequal promotion opportunities, and gender bias that hold back their career growth. Women also continue to earn less than men, partly due to factors like family responsibilities, less confident salary negotiations, and discrimination. These issues are even worse for women of colour, who face additional barriers in both pay and career advancement. To address these problems, a comprehensive approach is needed, including stronger equal pay policies, mentorship programs, clear promotion criteria, and stricter enforcement of anti-discrimination laws. Also, increasing women's presence in industries like mining, oil, and gas could help empower them economically, challenge gender-based power structures, and contribute to broader societal progress. Ultimately, closing the gender pay gap is vital not just for achieving gender equality but also for improving company performance, as businesses with fairer pay practices tend to have higher employee satisfaction and retention.

Recommendations

To guarantee a secure work environment, the researchers will suggest that policymakers should reinforce laws and policies that penalise employees who sexually harass their colleagues. Furthermore, the researchers recommend that the state reinforce laws that safeguard women in the workplace, as it is clear that gender discrimination persists in these environments. Lastly, the researchers suggest that female employees, particularly those who are married, be afforded equal opportunities to occupy managerial roles without discrimination.

Limitations of the study

This investigation was restricted to a specific Kwa Zulu Natal, South Africa province. A number of constraints has impacted the research. The availability of outmoded or incomplete data was a significant issue that distorted the comprehension of current gender dynamics. The researchers could not capture the nuanced experiences of individuals affected by workplace inequalities due to the absence of primary data collection, resulting in an oversimplified perspective. Furthermore, the analysis' restricted scope also impeded the examination of intersectional factors, such as race and class. Finally, the temporal constraints of the data limited the incorporation of recent advancements in workplace policies, underscoring the necessity of additional primary research to gain a more thorough comprehension of gender inequality in the region.

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