

Globalisation and Gender-Based Inequality in the Ondo State Local Government Service Commission's Recruitment Process

Dare Ezekiel Arowolo¹ *

1-Adekunle Ajasin University

*Corresponding Author: dare.arowolo@aaua.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

At the centre of societal development is a virile and efficient public service; the process of recruiting and selecting the right people is vital to achieving a development-oriented public service. However, globalisation consistently shapes recruitment and selection processes, which have widened and raised the question of gender inequalities. As sufficient as the literature on recruitment and selection in the Nigerian civil service has been, there is a dearth of literature linking gender inequality in the recruitment process at the Ondo State Local Government Service Commission (OSLGSC) to globalisation. Using survey and evidence-based research methods, as well as thematic approach to analyse qualitative data, this study examines the extent to which globalisation widens the existing gender inequality in the recruitment process at the OSLGSC. Findings reveal that globalisation significantly skews the recruitment process towards men and emphasises how it exacerbates gender inequality and clogs women's access to opportunities in the OSLGSC.

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INTRODUCTION AND THE PROBLEM

Since the beginning of the twenty-first century, and this is a global trend, economic processes associated with globalisation have profoundly affected the lives of men and women playing a role in society (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). However, economic policies are deliberately calibrated to divide roles on a gender basis. These economic policies, liberal in outlook, have reinforced some processes that have created and further widened a gulf between men and women in their socially constructed roles in society. These processes are being criticised as anti-poor and gender-biased (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). Globalisation and its discontents represent and symbolise these processes.

Though unequal gender relations (which refer to the sum of social norms, conventions and practices regulating the complex roles and relationships between men and women in a given society at a given time (Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004) are not new, what is perhaps new is the dimension that globalisation has brought to them. Globalisation has shaped unequal gender relations, which can be strictly described as gender-biased.

These multifaceted gendered relationships manifest at all levels of societal spectra: international, national and local. In most cases, they have been reinforced by cultural practices, in another breath, and facilitated by policies of government both at international and national levels, and yet at another dimension, they occur as a result of the natural creation of women, consigned to a particular role complementary to that of men. In essence, the role played by both sexes is natural and artificial. Natural to the extent that women are created to get pregnant, carry a child in their womb for months and nurse them for a year or two. This period of conception, delivery and nursing of the baby naturally reduced their production capacity and rendered them sedentary. Artificial, in this sense, is tangential to the policies of governments or public organisations, including the pervasive force of globalisation that has further widened the social gulf that had hitherto existed between men and women.

At the national level, for instance, globalisation has made it possible for women to be productively engaged but in the lower rung of the socio-economic ladder of modern society. Mainly in the services sector, women provide services to interface with customers at the front desk office and service points. Their exemption from the managerial or decision-making organ of services in organisations is generally assumed. In banks, women usually work at customer care units, either as cashiers or at Point of Sales (POS) services. Mostly in-service sectors, they are operators paid on commission by their male counterparts who engage them as POS operators in the neighbourhood.

At tertiary institutions, the number of women in the helms of affairs as vice-chancellors, rectors or provosts is paltry. For instance, out of 262 universities in Nigeria, there are six female vice-chancellors, representing 2.67% of the total vice chancellors in Nigerian universities (NUC (2024)). The table below captures this disturbing situation:

Table 1.
Female Vice Chancellors in Nigerian Universities

S/n	Name	University	Appointment Year
1.	Prof. Lilian Salami	University of Benin	2019
2.	Prof. Florence Obi	University of Calabar	2020
3.	Prof. Kaletapwa Farauta	Adamawa State University	2020
4.	Prof. Nnenna Oti	Federal University of Technology, Owerri	2021
5.	Prof. Ibiyemi Bello	Lagos State University	2021
6.	Prof. Folasade Ogunsola	University of Lagos	2022

Source: Punch (2024)

On employment, the situation is the same, as the marginalisation of women continues. Nigeria has an estimated population of 226 million as of 2024 (Worldometer, 2024). Out of this, women constitute about 49.5% and males 50.5% (Bank, 2024). Despite this high population ratio, women are more exposed to serious life challenges than men. According to the National Demographic Survey 2018, about 84% of women in Nigeria earn less than their husbands (NPC (2018)). In 2019, the National Bureau of Statistics' (NBS (2021) Poverty and Inequality Report indicated that only 25.37% of women were involved in income-generating activities, while about 74.63% were not (NBS (2021)). In the same vein, the 2020 Q4 labour statistics report by the NBS, female unemployment was highest at 35.2%, while male unemployment was 31.8%. A similar case was recorded for underemployment: 24.2% was reported for females, while males reported an underemployment rate of 21.8% (NBS (2021)). This situation is not different at the state and local government levels. No woman is a governor of all 36 states in Nigeria. All of them are male (Oluyemi, 2016). All these suggest male domination of social, economic, political and religious sectors of the society.

From the foregoing, it could be deduced that gender inequality has gained currency in the national discourse and has been sufficiently engaged in existing literature. The literature on gender is stuffed with causes, effects and a general history of unequal gender relations (Arowolo and Aluko (2010b); (Colineaux

et al., 2023; Eckett & McConnell-Ginet, 2023; Martinez, 2022; Musopero & Lee, 2021). This current article intends to add to the existing literature on the interrogation of gender inequality in the recruitment process at the Ondo State Local Government Service Commission (OSLGSC). This becomes expedient as the impact of women's marginalisation continues to be felt more at this level of government. If the impact of unequal gender relations on Nigerian society is to be investigated, it ought to be examined from the grassroots level, where the mass of the population resides. This study contributes to the debate by investigating the effects of unequal gender relations on the recruitment process in the OSLGSC.

Research Objectives

The general objective is to examine the recruitment process in the OSLGSC; specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the extent to which globalisation widens the existing gender inequality in the recruitment process at the OSLGSC.

INVESTIGATE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER CONSIDERATION AND APPOINTMENTS IN THE OSLGSC

Conceptual and Contextual Exploration of Globalisation and Gender Roles in Society

The ongoing debate about globalisation has had a dramatic effect on domestic governance. This is because globalisation intensifies trans-borders' interaction and transaction, which torches all aspects of the process - historical, economic, technological, political, social and cultural (Arowolo and Aluko (2010a) ; (Held et al., 2000). The key factor accounting for this global integration is the accelerated revolution which has taken place in information and communication technologies (Held et al., 2000). Globalisation emblematises a world in which development in one region can come to shape the life chances of communities in distant parts of the globe. Its embrace and impact are uneven. It divides and also integrates. It brings fortune as well as misfortune, with its wave not only ubiquitous but inexorable as well.

This is why Held et al. (2000) conceive globalisation as the diffusion of ideas, goods, information, capital and people, as well as the growing extensity, intensity and velocity of global interaction, which can be associated with their deepening impact such that the effects of distant events can be highly significantly felt elsewhere, in a way that specific local developments can come to have considerable global consequences. According to Hashemi-Pour and Lutkevich (2023), globalisation is the process by which ideas, knowledge, information,

goods and services spread around the world. In the same vein, James and Steger (2014) perceive globalisation as the process of interaction and integration among people, companies and governments worldwide.

Deduced from the foregoing conceptualisations, globalisation homogenises the world. Second, it facilitates the unrestricted movement of people, goods, services, technology, information and ideas. Third, it 'villagises' the world such that the impact of what happens in one region can be felt in another. The uneven impact of globalisation has also been reflected in the recruitment process of the Ondo State Local Government Service Commission (OSLGSC). This will be explained later.

Historically, gender implies different ways of treating things as a result of their inherent differences (Spicer et al., 2020). In Social Sciences, gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviour, activities and attributes that a particular society considers appropriate for men and women (Kaarbo and Ray (2011); (Potrafke & Ursprung, 2012). Gender is the cultural practice and social norms that have come to define roles, behaviour, expectations and values of males and females in societies (Kaarbo and Ray (2011) . This cultural delineation compels a particular sex to behave in a particular way. These social constructions attach themselves to behaviour, expectations, roles, representations, and sometimes values and beliefs that are specific to either males or females (Kaarbo and Ray (2011) . Gender differences derive their roots from the cultural practices and social norms that have come to characterise social relations in any society (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). The more acute these characteristics, the more they tend to favour a particular sex, depending on societies. It would seem that these characteristics are skewed towards masculinism in Africa and Asia Paper (1999) .

Relationship between Globalisation and Gender

The relationship between globalisation and gender has provoked the following questions: How has globalisation shaped gender? In what way has globalisation upheld or changed the culturally defined roles between the two sexes? Has globalisation provided more roles for women? Or does it further skew the advantage in favour of men? This section will provide answers to the foregoing questions.

To start with, globalisation, no doubt, has impacted gender relations in so many ways. Since the fragmentation of state power and sovereignty, other layers of actors have come to play a major role in domestic governance. This has shaped the roles played by both sexes. In effect, and as argued by Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004), it has increased the volume of manufacturing, services and exports, which, by their nature, are favourable to and increase the employment

chances of women but in the lowest rung of the sectors. The liberalisation, democratisation, privatisation and internationalisation of trade have all made it possible to have more roles for females in politics and the economy.

However, the power structures of the nation-state have been organised around patriarchal assumptions that have accorded to men monopoly over power, authority and wealth (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). A number of structures have been erected to achieve this imbalance that has disguised its inequality by making it appear as natural and universal. For example, constructions of citizenship that concentrated upon civic duty (payment of taxes, military service, public office, and so on), from which women were excluded through the public/private dichotomy and the subordination of women within the family in the case of wife to husband and female siblings to their brothers. At the same time, the role of men in the public sphere has been supported by divisions between productive and un(re)productive work, presenting women's work as unproductive elements that lack economic value (of Philosophy (2020)).

The natural role of women, enforced on her by her womanness, being a source of procreation, has created a natural attachment between a woman and her child, having the responsibility and body characteristics of conceiving a child in her womb for the period of nine months and a maternity period of six months, naturally, compel a woman to be sedentary and somewhat less productive than their male counterparts. The process of maternity and motherhood works against women's productive engagement and gives men an advantage. Globalisation, which emphasises efficiency and productivity, works against women in this direction, as the private sector and multinational corporations, regarded as drivers of globalisation, prefer men to women in production (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). Furthermore, corporate enterprises, markets and movement of capital, considered undemocratic forces driving global economies, have weakened the capacity of the national government to assert and enforce labour law and policies, as such would discourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) (Bacchus, 2005). Consequently, social exclusion, gendered unemployment and the weakening of trade union organisations have altogether created a gendered dimension that has furthered the discrimination of women (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004). Since the government could not enforce laws that protect women and their rights in the workplace, further abuses of women and their harassment are on the increase.

Nonetheless, it is an oversimplification to assume that the consequences of globalisation have been exclusively detrimental to women. In some instances, globalisation has increased the capacities of women globally through empowerment and employment opportunities and has facilitated some degree of economic independence. Access to quality education has provided the space

for women to assert their own agency and increase their self-esteem, which comes from access to quality education and economic independence.

Positively speaking, globalisation's insistence on unrestrained interaction and interconnectivity has improved the information and communication sector. The free flow of information and movement of people, goods, and services has also birthed cultural exchanges, which have led to and boosted the tourism sector. Encouragement in international trade has led to improvement in the export of goods and services in the area of international malls and international communication companies. In these sectors, tourism, exports, and services, female employees are preferred. This has led to an increase in the empowerment of female employees. There are multiplier effects of these empowerment opportunities on global outputs and sustainable development. It has altered the hitherto culturally defined roles women play in societies; women have become active players in the global economy. For instance, Okonjo Iweala is the current Director-General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). The list of women in powerful global political and economic positions is endless, including: Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany; Erna Solberg, Prime Minister of Norway; Mette Frederiksen, Prime Minister of Denmark; Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of Bangladesh; Kaja Kallas, Prime Minister of Estonia; Katrin Jakobsdottir, Prime Minister of Iceland; Mia Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados; Rose Christiane Raponda, Prime Minister of Gabon; Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister of New Zealand; Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of Tanzania; Victoire Tomegah Dogbe (Robinson & James, 2024).

Be that as it may, men continue to dominate the global scene in politics and the economy. As of October 2019, the global participation rate of women in national-level parliaments is 24.5%, while that of men is 75.5%. In 2013, women accounted for 8% of all national leaders and 2% of all presidential posts (Robinson & James, 2024). Furthermore, 75% of all female prime ministers and presidents have taken office in the past two decades. Women holding ministerial portfolios have increased marginally from 21.3% in 2020 to 21.9% in 2021. Women serve as Heads of State or Government in only 22 countries, and 119 countries have never had a woman leader, including the United States of America. The highest the US has moved close to is the current Vice President, Kamala Harris (Robinson & James, 2024; Women, 2021). At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years (Robinson & James, 2024; Women, 2021). Just ten countries have a woman Head of State, and thirteen countries have a woman Head of Government. Only 21% of government ministers were women, with only 14 countries having achieved 50% or more women in cabinets. With an annual increase of just 0.52 percentage points, gender parity in ministerial positions will

not be achieved before 2077 (Women, 2021).

Women may face a slew of challenges that affect their ability to participate in political life and become political leaders, but several countries are taking measures to reverse this trend and increase women's participation in government at all levels. The United Nations has identified six avenues by which female participation in politics and government may be strengthened. These include equalisation of educational opportunities; quotas for female participation in governing bodies; legislative reforms to increase focus on issues concerning women and children; financing gender-responsive budgets to equally taking into account the needs of men and women; increasing the presence of sex-disaggregated statistics in national research and data; and, furthering the presence and agency of grassroots women's empowerment movements (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004).

In Nigeria, in 1992, out of 300 governorship aspirants, 8 were women, representing 2.6%. In the National Assembly, for instance, 8.3% of members were women. Moreover, this was the highest representation of women in the National Assembly. In 1999, there were 978 contestable seats in the 36 States' Assemblies; men occupied 966, and women occupied 12 seats, representing 1.2%. In 2003, men had 951 and women 39, representing 4%. In 2007, men occupied 936 and women 54, representing 5.5%. In the House of Representatives, in 1999, there were 13 women, who had a total of 360 seats, representing 3.6%. In 2007, women occupied 25 seats (Arowolo & Aluko, 2010a). Even though this was unacceptably low, the case was worse in 1980, as there was only one woman in the Senate and three women in the Lower House (Makama, 2013).

In developing countries, manufacturing employment in global female employment increased from 6% to 17% between 1987 and 2007. Female service employment rose from 44% to 46% within the same period. Improvements in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have allowed women around the world to access markets in growing numbers by lowering information barriers and reducing the transaction costs associated with market work (Sankay et al., 2019).

Globalisation has also helped in the enrolment of women in schools across the globe. In South Korea, women's employment in manufacturing grew from 6% to 30% between 1970 and 1980s. In Mexico, female employment grew in manufacturing from 12% in 1960 to 17% in 2008. In Malaysia, 67% of employees in manufacturing are women (Çağgtay & Ertürk, 2004; Connolly et al., 2020).

However, globalisation has also impaired on women in several ways. Though globalisation addressed the culturally defined roles against women, it has

nonetheless opened a new vista of slavery (Stamarski and Hing (2015); Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004). Women are now being subjected to modern slavery, especially sex slavery, international prostitution and international forced labour, including human trafficking and private-sector discrimination against women. Women are now being objectified, an object that could be bought and used anyhow. In addition, there is a growing trend of family discrimination against women, compounded by the disadvantages inherent in natural creation that work against them (Kolb et al., 2024).

Study Areas and Methods

This study was carried out between January 2023 and December 2023 in the three senatorial districts of Ondo State, Nigeria. The three senatorial districts are Ondo North, Ondo Central and Ondo South. One local government per senatorial district was surveyed. In the north senatorial district, Owo local government was selected, Ondo West local government was selected for the central senatorial district, and Ilaje local government was selected for the southern senatorial district. These three local governments were selected because they had more workers than the remaining fifteen local governments. The study used survey and evidence-based research methods as primary sources of data collection to examine the relationship between globalisation and gender inequality in the recruitment of workers into the OSLGSC. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data, while evidential data were analysed quantitatively using simple percentage calculations to support or validate claims. The adoption of this analytical design helped to complement the results obtained from a quantitative method with the ones from evidential data, thereby increasing the validity and accuracy of the findings.

Gender Inequality in the Recruitment Process of Ondo State Local Government Commission

Arguments are on the increase on the specific economic role women should play in society. Opinions are divided on whether the role of women is predominantly in the home front or whether women can also engage in other socio-economic activities like their male counterparts. It is, however, believed that while the natural relationship between mother and her child may compel and confine her to sedentary activities, it is also important that such a mother should contribute her quota to the development of her family and that of her society at large.

As it is in the banking and services sectors, it is also in the public service sector. In the Ondo State Local Government Service Commission (OSLGSC), for instance, which is the focus of the study, the available statistics suggest that the recruitment process is gender-based and that it is skewed against womenfolk.

The current study chooses 3 local governments out of eighteen as its case studies. The justification for the case studies is, among other things, influenced by the population, as the three local governments are part of the largest in Ondo State with cases of gender inequality in their recruitment processes.

In OSLGSC, globalisation enables a gender-biased recruitment process. This is because of the introduction of technology, such as Information and Communication Technology (ICT), e-governance, International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), codes and codification in public service operations, computer-based tests for promotion, zoom meetings, electronic budgeting system, new thinking in governance and administrative procedures have negatively worked against women in the recruitment process. These factors have now reinforced and widened the existing gulf between men and women created by cultural factors.

As it will be shown later in the tables below, the gap between men and women at the lowest rung of the OSLGSC is not noticeably significant. This is because the responsibilities of such offices are not affected by the forces of globalisation. They are offices requiring little or no technological operations. Women can still cope with and easily meet the demands of the office. Gender inequalities have become so pronounced at the directorate cadre and managerial level in the OSLGSC. The tables below explain the intricacies:

Gender Distribution of Workers in Ilaje, Ondo West and Owo Local Governments

Table 2.
Gender Distribution of Junior Workers (GL 1-6) in the Three Selected Local Governments of Ilaje, Ondo West and Owo

S/n	Local Government	Employees		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female %	Male %
1.	Ilaje Local Government	27	68	28.4	71.6
2.	Ondo West Local Government	122	138	46.9	53.1
3.	Owo Local Government	21	52	28.8	71.2

Fieldwork (2023a)

bove indicates that in Ilaje Local Government, female workers were 27, representing 28.4%, while male workers were 68, representing 71.6% in the junior worker category (Grade Level 1-6). In the same category, there is an indication of a reduced gap between the two in Ondo West Local Government. Women had a population of 122, constituting 46.9%, while the male counterparts had 138, representing 53.1%. Like in Ilaje, the case in Ondo West also shows that

there are more men than women in the local government. Similarly, in Owo Local Government, female workers were 21, 28.8%, while male counterparts were 52, representing 71.2%.

Table 3.
Gender Distribution of Senior Workers (GL 7-16) in the Three Selected Local Governments of Ilaje, Ondo West and Owo

S/n	Local Government	Employees		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female %	Male %
1.	Ilaje Local Government	334	438	43.3	56.7
2.	Ondo West Local Government	377	654	36.6	63.4
3.	Owo Local Government	227	423	34.9	65.1

Fieldwork (2023a)

bove is about the gender distribution of workers in the senior category (Grade Level 7-16). In Ilaje Local Government, female workers were 334, representing 43.3%, while male workers were 438, representing 56.7%. In the same category, in Ondo West Local Government, women had the population of 377, constituting 36.6%, while the male counterparts had 654 representing 63.4%. Like in Ilaje, the case in Ondo West also shows that men are more than women in the local government. Likewise, in Owo Local Government, female workers were 227, 34.9%, while male counterparts were 423, representing 65.1%.

Table 4.
Gender Distribution of Directors in the Three Selected Local Governments of Ilaje, Ondo West and Owo

S/n	Local Government	Employees		Percentage	
		Female	Male	Female %	Male %
1.	Ilaje Local Government	1	8	11.1	88.9
2.	Ondo West Local Government	2	7	22.2	77.8
3.	Owo Local Government	1	8	11.1	88.9

Fieldwork (2023a)

bove centres on the gender distribution of workers at the directorate level in the three sampled local governments of Ilaje, Ondo West and Owo. There are nine directorate positions in each of the 18 local governments in Ondo State. In Ilaje local government, out of these nine, male workers are 8, representing 88.9%, while female is one, representing 11.1%. There is a slight difference in Ondo West Local Government as the local government recorded two directorate positions, representing 22.2%, while males had seven, representing 77.8%. The

situation in Owo Local Government was not different from what was obtainable in Ilaje, with male workers having 8 directorate positions, representing 88.9%, while female workers had one, representing 11.1%.

Table 5.

Gender Distribution of Heads of Local Govt. Admin. (HOLGA) in the 18 Local Govts, Local Govt. Service Comm., Local Govt. Loans Board, Pension and Transition and Local Govt. Staff Training School in Ondo State

S/n	Employees		Percentage	
	Female	Male	Female %	Male %
1.	8	19	29.6	70.4

Fieldwork (2023c)

bove shows the gender distribution of workers in the headship of the eighteen local governments in Ondo State, Local Government Service Commission, Loans Board, Pension and Transition, and Local Government Staff Training School, all at the local government level. Of the 27 available headship positions, women occupied 8, representing 29.6%, while men occupied 19, representing 70.4%.

Table 6.

Gender Distribution of Permanent Secretaries in the Local Govt. Service Comm. and Local Govt. Loans Board, Pension and Transition in Ondo State

S/n	Employees		Percentage	
	Female	Male	Female %	Male %
1.	1	2	33.3	66.7

Fieldwork (2023b)

bove shows the gender distribution of workers at the accounting officers' level. There are three permanent secretaries in the services of local government in Ondo State. Out of these, one was female (33.3%) and two were male (66.7%).

DISCUSSION AND ACHIEVEMENT OF RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Objective I: Globalisation's Impact on Gender Inequality in OSLGSC Recruitment

The study's findings substantiate that globalisation has had significant effects on gender inequality in the recruitment process at the OSLGSC. Reports from the field showed that the introduction of e-governance, IPSAS, codification,

virtual meetings, electronic budgeting systems and computer-based tests in promotion had created a condition that further widened inequalities in the OSLGSC's recruitment process. Although these ICT tools improved efficiency, at the same time, they inexplicably discriminated against and deprived women of getting job opportunities, especially in leadership positions.

The findings are in agreement with the study of Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004), which acknowledges that in spite of globalisation's proclivity to create and deepen women's opportunities, it, in the same manner, creates inequalities by stifling women's chances to get senior positions. Likewise, some respondents' submissions that women's social roles, especially as mothers, curtail the rate of their career progression agree with the view expressed by the of Philosophy (2020), which emphasises how gender roles shape labour market participation. The penchant for technologically adept candidates in recruitment, as noted by respondents, further reinforces Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004) assertion that globalisation places preeminence on efficiency and productivity, which indirectly gives men an advantage over women in recruitment processes.

Moreover, the study discovered that family considerations, rather than personal preferences, were the major motive for particular career decisions made by some women in OSLGSC. This finding corroborates earlier research by Saini (2022) and Erban (2023), which indicates that cultural considerations often influence women to prioritise family commitment over career progression. The findings, therefore, affirm that globalisation has brought about a new dimension into the gender dynamics of recruitment, further discriminating against women who lack the capacity or dexterity to adapt to or cope with the speedily emerging demands of technology.

Objective II: Gender Considerations in OSLGSC Appointments

Although some respondents, including Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Local Government Administration (HOLGA), claimed that recruitment at the OSLGSC was competence-based and not based on gender consideration, other respondents, especially workers in non-managerial position opined that that key leadership appointments, such as directorates, permanent secretaries, and Head of Local Government Administration (HOLGA) positions, were influenced by subjective criteria such as political loyalty, religion, and the nocturnal nature of the roles (Fieldwork (2023a)). This finding agrees with Çağgtay and Ertürk (2004) submission, which says that patriarchal arrangement in governance skews opportunities in men's favour while perpetuating male dominance in leadership positions, thereby impairing women's progression in public administration.

The structural composition of the workforce further exemplifies this gender inequality. The study discovered that while women constituted a significant

number of the junior employees, their representation in the top echelon of the service was very low. In Ilaje, women constituted 28.4% of junior workers and 43.3% of senior workers, while in Ondo West, female workers were 46.9% of the total workforce. In Owo, the figures were 28.8% and 34.9% for junior and senior positions, respectively (Fieldwork (2023a)). However, there were only three female directors in the three sampled local governments. This is an indication of deep gender inequality, especially in leadership positions. In addition, out of three permanent secretary positions and 27 other leadership positions, women occupy one and eight, respectively. This further reinforces the study's findings that there are gender disparities at the leadership positions because of the nature and demands of such offices (Fieldwork (2023b)).

It would seem that these statistics reflected global trends. This is more so as Robinson and James (2024) emphasised female underrepresentation in leadership positions at a global level. According to them, only 24.5% of national parliamentary seats were occupied by women as of 2019. Similarly, Women (2021) reports that it might take another 130 years for gender socio-economic equalization, especially in political leadership, to be achieved. These global trends, according to the current study's findings, are mirrored in the OSLGSC, where barriers within OSLGSC continue to impair women's access to leadership roles.

Furthermore, the study's findings support Spicer et al. (2020) argument that gender inequality in public administration is a function of systemic and cultural biases. Even though there are qualified female candidates, recruitment processes continue to be skewed in men's favour, often under the pretext of political exigencies and administrative necessities. The underrepresentation of women at the highest levels of governance within OSLGSC ultimately undermines efforts to promote gender equality and diversity in local government administration.

In synopsis, the study's findings highlight the complex relationship between globalisation and gender equality in recruitment at the OSLGSC. While globalisation has introduced modern technological processes aimed at improving efficiency, these advancements have disproportionately favored men, as women encounter systemic and cultural barriers that limit their participation. Additionally, subjective criteria in recruitment and leadership appointments have further entrenched gender inequality within the institution. These findings are in line with global trends that previous studies amplified. This has further highlighted the urgent need for reforms to correct the gender imbalance in the OSLGSC's recruitment process.

CONCLUSION

The central focus of this paper was to examine the extent to which globalisation widened the existing gender inequality in the recruitment process at the OSLGSC. The paper showed evidence that globalisation influenced and widened the existing gulf in the recruitment process in favour of men. The paper found pervasive incidences of male domination in the services of local governments sampled. This has implications for both the productive sector of the economy as well as its sustainability.

In addition, the study investigated the relationship between gender consideration and appointments in the OSLGSC. The study found that appointment into OSLGSC is gender-biased, as the recruitment process was tilted towards men. As important as public service is to national development, gender equality is pivotal to an inclusive and accountable Nigerian public service. This is not because of the preponderance of women in terms of population but because of their role and contributions to national growth and development. It is therefore proposed that women should have equal rights as men in public service. Where there is an equal level of involvement and contribution of women and men in public service, it can bring about and hasten development for all.

The critical challenge of unequal gender relations in OSLGSC is, therefore, how to equalise gender relations and participation in the service of OSLGSC. Gender inequality, as identified in this study, was being influenced and reinforced by globalisation. Therefore, efforts should be focused on reversing this drift. The current study proposes a holistic approach towards reversing this trend. Such a holistic approach should be national and policy-based. In this regard, a national gender equality agenda should be implemented. A policy should be enacted in the OSLGSC to equalise gender relations in public service. There should be an awareness program of the centrality of women's equal participation in the Ondo State public service. There should be deliberate governmental support for women's education and empowerment. This should be sustainable by promoting equal education at primary and secondary levels of education. Laws should be enacted compelling equal participation of women and men in the Ondo State public service. Such gender equality laws will deepen and uphold gender equality in the OSLGSC. In order to have sustainable, equal participation in OSLGSC, the Ondo State government should provide a platform where women's capacity can be strengthened. This capacity-building programme should provide technical assistance that will empower women to favourably compete with their male counterparts.

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