

# Wage Differentials and Discrimination Against Women in Informal Construction Sites: A Study in Ibadan, Nigeria

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## Abstract

*Women venturing into building construction workforce in Ibadan Nigeria encounter some form of exploitation and discrimination even though they are considered a major occupational group in this sector. This article examined the determinants of wage differentials in the informal building construction sites in Ibadan. The study adopted patriarchal theory to explain male dominance over women and gender stereotypes which determines the type of job performed at site, thereby creating inequality in wages. Findings revealed that discrimination of women persist at sites. Bricklayers consider gender factor while issuing wages. Men and women-labourers who perform same work at site receive different wages irrespective of similar work being performed. In addition, bricklayers are more satisfied with men-labourers work than women. This paper concludes that at the workplace, the patriarchal nature of the society relegates women to subordinate roles. Policies targeted at eradicating forms of discriminatory practices should be enforced in order to promote women willing to participate in men's dominated work.*

**Keywords:** Wage differentials, informal sector, discrimination, construction sites, Ibadan

## Introduction

The informal employment system such as the construction sector provides a means of livelihood for a large number of workers who are not able secure employment in the formal sector (Chukuezi, 2010; Horn, 2010; ILO, 2010; Meagher, 2007; Kohnert, 2006; De Souza, 2000). Informal sector employment is usually undertaken by people with little education or skill (Adejumo and Dominic, 2013; Ubiraci, 2000). In many developing countries for instance, the education obtained by informal sector workers is particularly low with few receiving secondary education (Pina, Kotin, Hausman and Macharia, 2012). For instance, 77% of the total labour force in Cambodia do not possess more than a primary education while 89% of the informal workers in Senegal never started secondary school. Also, the level of education of the informal workers in the Nigerian construction industry is relatively low. This was revealed in a study by Odediran and Babalola (2013) that indicated that only about 30% of the respondents had primary school certificate as the highest academic degree obtained. Education of informal construction workers in India is also low (Vaid

1999 and Anand, 2000) while education was not required for those in Brazil, Malaysia and China (Abdul-Aziz, 2001 and Lu and Fox, 2001). In recent times, women are rapidly entering the workforce especially the informal construction sector. The construction sector provides employment for a large number of people (Amaratunga, 2006). Jobs in this sector in many countries are done by men (Adejumo and Dominic, 2013) while women perform unskilled jobs which attract low wages (Wells, 1990).

Differences in jobs performed by men and women present challenges of unequal opportunities especially for women at the informal building construction sites. Although women in recent times play more noticeable role in occupations tagged to be men's (Akindele, 2002), women are employed mostly in unskilled labour (Vanita and Savita, 2012; Baruah, 2010). They are involved mostly in jobs that require physical labour and strength such as head loaders. On another note, men and women follow different job paths at construction sites (Watt, 2007b; Charles, 2003). However, from the foregoing, there is a reflection of a form of inequality at construction sites and this still persist in the form of wage differentials between men and women labourers. Women encounter varying experiences and challenges at the informal building construction sites. This include unequal pay (Azhar and Griffin, 2014) and male dominance (Chun, Ardit and Balci, 2009). These women's challenges and experiences are due to the unstructured patterns of relationship and unstructured state of the system (Ogunmola, 2012). In the same vein, they are subjected to forms of exploitation and discrimination at the informal building construction sites and remain vulnerable to exploitation and cheap labour. Irrespective of women work input, they continue to receive low wages compared to men despite performing monotonous and manual jobs. These, however reveals that there are lots of problem associated with allocation of wages to labourers at building construction sites.

According to Fagbenle, Ogunde and Owolabi (2011), one of the factors identified as affecting performance of construction labour was unfair wages. George and Chukwuedozie (2014) and Yusuf (2014) have also established that women face significant wage differentials as they do not earn the same wages as men for the same work especially in casual or unorganized labour. From literature, attention has not been given to various forms of discriminatory practices at building construction sites, and factors responsible for wage differentials between men and women labourers. Based on this problem, this article examined the factors that determine differentials in wages between men and women workers at the informal building construction sites in Ibadan. This article is significant because it looks at wage differentials especially among those who perform the same task and the reasons why men receive higher wages than women.

## **Brief Literature Review**

### ***The Concept of Informal Sector***

One of the most important characteristics of developing countries is the presence of informal sector (Franciso and Obri, 2006). The formal and informal sectors provided employment for both men and women who found themselves in the urban areas (Young, 1993). According to the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2001), the informal sector is defined as a non-structured sector which emerged in the urban sector as a result of the inability of the modern sector to absorb labour. Several schools also have emerged to interpret and explore the informal sector concept in development literature (Fapohunda, 2012; Ekpo and Umoh 2008; Oduh, 2008; Adem, 2006; Akintoye, 2006; Henley, 2006; Chowdhury, 2005; Munboddh, 2003; Schneider, 2002; Bhattacharyya, 1999; Ray, 1998; Loayza, 1997; Ajakaiye and Akerele, 1996; Feige, 1990) with dominant perspectives from purview of government regulations, social security, the number of people employed in an enterprise, physical and human capital per worker, mode of operation of the enterprise (such as customer base and location of the enterprise), legal framework and source of income. Soyibo (1997) also posited that informal sector activities are legal but unregulated. From these scholarly interpretation of the informal sector, activities in this sector can be described to have little state regulation, work has easy entry and exit, tax evasion can be rampant and the income is unmeasured and unrecorded.

The informal sector provides employment for the groups excluded from employment in the formal sector (Chukuezi, 2010; Horn, 2010; ILO, 2010). It captures certain peculiarities, such as informality of business organization, lack of separation of consumption and production, use of rudimentary technology, ease of entry and exit, reliance on family labour and apprentices, and small requirements for capital (Fapohunda, 2012). According to Uwakwah (2000), there are more informal construction programmes in the rural areas than in the cities but informal construction also flourishing in the urban areas because of the illegal structures that exist on the outskirts of the urban areas. The informal sector rarely attracts high caliber workers who prefer to work for the larger contractors and the foreign firms. Majority of people who engage in the informal economy are women. Policies and developments affecting the informal economy consequently have a distinctly gendered effect. The International Labour Organization ILO (2006) estimates 19.5 million women in sub-Saharan Africa engaged in the sector in 2005. However, as Berger and Byvinie (2003) asserts although the representation of women in the informal sector is higher than that of men, the participation of women is underestimated.

### ***The Construction Industry and Discrimination of Women***

The construction industry is not only a male dominated profession (Fagbenle, Ogunde and Owolabi, 2011; Watt, 2007b; Charles, 2003), it is also believed that the profession is for men (Rajikumar, Swaathi and Sivaranjani, 2016; ILO, 2001). This is because construction work demands physical labour, hard work

and strain (Clough, Sears and Sears, 2005). Studies however have discussed reasons why women shy away from this industry (Wangle, 2009; Agapiou, 2002; Whittock, 2002). Among these barriers are the social acceptances of employment, sexually-inappropriate occupation, sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, physical incapability, unqualified for blue-collar jobs and labor conditions such as extreme weather, unsociable work-hours and exposure to hazards. The most important contributor to women hesitating to enter the industry or choose construction as a viable career and women leaving the industry is the image of the industry (Hatipkarasulu & Roff, 2011). Scholars (Amaratunga, Thurairajah and Haigh, 2007; Ginige *et al.*, 2007) noted the industry's image as militating against women's entry. They identified prevalence culture of male-dominance, long hours of work at sites, inclement weather, inappropriate language and unwelcome sexual conduct as the factors that make the profession unattractive to women. From these factors, it is evident that the industry involves masculinity such as bricklaying, carpentry, plumbing, plastering, and a host of others, which only are more suitable for men.

Alarmingly, in the informal sector, women in construction are some of the worst victims of discrimination (Chrisna du Plessis, 1998). Nigerian women, like their counterparts, around the world, face a lot of discrimination that limit their opportunities to develop their full potential on the basis of equality with men. Women are far from enjoying equal rights in the labour market due mainly to their domestic burden, low level of educational attainment, poverty, biases against women's employment in certain branches of the economy or types of work and discriminatory salary practices. Furthermore, since the advent of colonialism in Africa, women have always been exposed to varying forms of discrimination due to the simple fact of their 'femaleness', which ought to have been understood on the basis of its mutual usefulness (Obbo, 2005). It is observed that most African countries have not had specific laws or policies to stem the tide of gender disparity. However, the colonial hegemonic philosophy, dependent political ideology and identifiable socio-economic exigencies are seen as factors aiding the prevailing distinctions between men and women in our society (Adeniran, 2006). The economic sector of our society is one area where discrimination against women has been richly pronounced. This is because women's role in employment and economic activities is often underestimated because most women work in the informal sectors where productivity and income is usually low, working conditions very poor and little or no social protection.

#### ***Wage differentials in the Informal Construction Industry***

Low income earning is one of the challenges faced by women in informal building construction sites compared to men who receive higher wages (Fapohunda, 2012). Aderounmu and Soetan (2013) and Nyu (2011) findings also revealed that persistent wage gap still exists between men and women in the workplace. Irrespective of similar work input by men and women labourer

at building construction sites such as head loaders and carriers, women receive lower wages compared to their male counterpart. In the same vein, George and Chukwuedozie's (2014) and Yusuf's (2014) studies also established that women face significant wage differentials as they do not earn the same wages as men for the same work especially in casual or unorganized labour. The ILO report (2001) pointed out the existing discrimination in the payment of wages within the construction industry. The gap in this wage payment is more in the developing countries where there is little or no formal recruitment of workers in the industry or in another turn, low adherence to the rules in respect to expected procedures and conducts within the industry. Evidence from the study of Vaid (1999) showed that in a survey of 2,600 construction workers, there was an obvious and open inequality in wage payment between men and women with women earning 10-20 percent less than men for a similar work done. Vaid (1999) also indicated that in addition to the short changing of women in the construction industry, women who are not employed are engaged as part of a family work unit where the piece-rate system encourages workers to engage their wives and children in order to increase output in the industry. Arrangement such as this reduces or better still further degrades the fortunes of women as they are not likely to receive any form of payment from their labour.

Kolade and Kehinde (2013) in their study pointed out that there are no significant differences in payment between male and female workers in construction industry. According to them, both the males and females engaged in their study on glass ceiling syndrome effect agreed that gender differences do not feature in influencing the payment of workers especially at managerial or organizational level. On the contrary in another related study, Hick (2012) and Ashraf (2007) implicated discrepancies in the nature of payment between the two gender as major barrier to women career advancement. This is because not only that the women involved are meant to go home with lesser pay irrespective of the fact that they may have performed the same role with men, they are equally made to feel inferior to their male counterparts. According to these scholars, a greater effect of this is that the practice breeds and sustains inequality both at the level of performance and relations hence encouraging gender discrimination. The foregoing revealed that the construction industry provides employment opportunities for both men and women. However, women engage in the informal building construction due to unemployment, global recession, need to augment income and the current economic hardship in Nigeria. Irrespective of women's engagement in this sector, they have not been able to gain expected grounds in the midst of overwhelming dominance of men in the industry. Consequently, women both in the formal and informal construction sector encounter setbacks which range from glass ceiling syndrome to rise in the profession for those in the formal sector and; discrimination, harassment and segregation amongst a host of others for those in the informal sector. Similarly, wage differentials at the building construction sites between men and women even when they perform similar task is a reflection of the reinforcement of the gender roles which starts from the home.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The word "patriarchy" establishes the origins and conditions of men's oppression of women (Kamarare, 1992). It was originally used to describe the power of the father as head of household. Patriarchy has been used within post 1960s feminism to refer to the systematic organization of male dominance and supremacy; and female subordination (Aina, 1998; Stacey, 1993; Kamarare, 1992). Patriarchy's defining elements are its male-dominated, male-identified and male-centered characters. Patriarchy is centred on the belief that supports and promotes the idea of superiority of men over women. Or in other words, a sort of power arrangement sustained by strong and deliberate intention aimed at the oppression of women for the benefit of men. According to Ritzer (2012) the claim of the discourse around patriarchy is that women were inferior to men and that this natural inferiority explained their social subordination. Patriarchy presupposes a form of gender oppression in which exist subversion in power relation between men and women. As a consequence, women are believed to be restrained, subordinated, molded, used and abused by men. This situation suggests circumstances where men have attempted to define woman's essence by application of various categories of stereotyping that deny women the opportunity of choosing who they want to become.

Flowing from this perspective is that maleness is enthroned as the male child grows up in a culture that positively values maleness and devalues femaleness. This, as a result, leads to the emergence of self-identity that is differentiated from that of the female that is hence regarded as the other. The same equally applies to female child who grows up to discover her identity in a culture that devalues women. According to Ritzer (2012: 472) the "woman grows up with deeply mix positive and negative feelings about herself and about the woman/mother and in that ambivalence dissipates much of her potential for mobilized resistance to her social subordination". In addition to this, radical feminists view patriarchy as the first structure of domination and submission which sustains an enduring and pervasive system of inequality. Within patriarchal structure, men are encouraged to hold women in contempt and as non- humans who are meant to be controlled. This, invariably, breeds violence which exists whenever one group controls in its own interest the life chances, environments, actions, and perceptions of another group as men do to women (Ritzer, 2012). The patriarchal theory has also been found to be relevant in the explanation of wage differentials at building construction sites. This theory holds that men dominate in the society. This however reflects in the building construction site where men dominate. Male dominance and supremacy continue to keep men in advantageous positions where men control and determine women wages. In the same vein, women are discriminated against because of the societal attached roles expected of women thereby making men issue women lower wages compared to men. For instance, at the building construction sites, men constitute majority of the workforce and they also determine labourers wages at site. Women are segregated in terms of the type of job they are assigned such as fetching of water, serving of masons,

carrying of sands, concrete, cements and other materials used for building construction, running errands in the sites. Even when men and women engage in the same job, most of the time, men are paid higher than women.

### **Methodology**

The study was purely qualitative and was carried out in Ibadan. The city was purposively selected because it is the largest indigenous city in Africa, and, historical antecedents have witnessed influx of people into the city. It is also a city emerging in construction which has major commercial and industrial centers with fast development in infrastructure and building constructions (Makinde, 2012). The city is a traditional setting where original gender dynamics can be seen and explored. Concentration of labourers known as *birisope* in Yoruba language engage majorly in informal building construction sites in Ibadan.

Three local government areas namely Ibadan South West, Lagelu and Oluyole were purposively selected. This was because of the peculiarity of the study which demands for developing areas which are highly associated with building construction at present. It was conducted among bricklayers, men and women labourers working at informal building construction sites in the selected local government areas. Purposive sampling method was used in the selection of areas within each local government selected for the study. This is because, due to the nature of the study; areas with fast growing development in building construction needed to be selected in order to capture the problem of the study. The purposively selected areas within the local governments selected are: Oluyole extension, Orita challenge, New garage, Akobo, Olorunda, Elewuro, Podo, Arapaja and Idi ayunre.

It utilized both in depth interviews (IDIs) and key informant interviews (KII) to elicit information from respondents in the areas of study. A total of nine (9) IDIs were conducted. Three (3) IDIs were conducted in each LGA. Bricklayer, men and women labourer were purposively selected and interviewed from the selected LGAs for the study. For key informant interviews, a total of 3KIIs were conducted. One KII was conducted at purposively selected building construction site in each LGA. Foreman/supervisor who has worked in building construction for at least 5years were purposively selected and interviewed. Respondents found to be less than 18years of age were excluded from the study. This was done in order to have an in-depth opinion from adults on the problem of the study. Digital tape recorder was used in recording information. Data collected through IDIs and KIIs were first sorted, then transcribed verbatim and thereafter reported.

### **Findings and Discussions**

Marital status of respondents showed that all were married, majority (7 out of 12) were male, majority (10 out of 12) were muslims and most of the respondents were between 33-42 years. On respondents educational level, six out of twelve had primary school education while three had junior secondary

school education. Majority (11 out of 12) lived in the rural area. Differences in wages between men and women at construction sites were established at both the rural and urban areas in Ibadan. However, various factors are accountable for this wage differentials. Irrespective of the fact that wage differentials is as a result of human capital such as education and training in the formal sector, findings revealed that in the case of the informal building construction sites where labourers have no education and training, wage differentials still persist. Men and women at site receive different wages even though they both have no education and training. Suffice also to say that, site supervisors determine labourers wages at the informal building construction sites. However, where there is no site supervisor at site, but bricklayer acting as the supervisor, such bricklayer determines labourers' wages at the close of work. The reason for supervisor or bricklayer (mostly men) being the sole determinant of labourer wages is because they are mostly the individual that contract work to most labourers; therefore they take charge and supervise activities at the building construction sites. In the same vein, the construction environment which operates a male gender factor as the sole determinant of wages depicts a patriarchal system of the Nigerian society where men rule and are in charge while female gender are subservient to men in all aspect. These findings imply that the male factor is highly evident at informal building construction sites. This is because, men constitute the head and dominate key roles at sites. This enables them to rule and control women's activities ultimately making them more relevant, thus, responsible for the gap in wages between men and women. These also serve as pointers to the factors identified as responsible for wage differentials at sites which include: gender roles, bricklayers' satisfaction with men's job and wage differentials irrespective of workers performing similar job. These factors are discussed below.

### ***Gender Roles***

Gender is concerned with the socio-cultural construction of role of males and females in the society. It also explains the differences between men and women as created by societies on the basis of masculinity and femininity in relation to their expected roles (Akinmade, 2000; Pearson, 2000). However, gender roles differ at building construction sites in Ibadan. This role differentials in the workplace is a reflection of the societal expected roles of men and women. Women are believed to be weaker than men, and, are expected to perform roles which match their feminine nature. This social construction of sex differences consequently, is a major contributing factor to wage differentials of workers at site. The construction industry is a male dominated one and it is considered a non- traditional occupation for women. This is because the work demands physical labour, hard work and strain (Clough, Sears and Sears, 2005). This reflects in the findings where when men and women labourer perform same work at site, they receive different wages irrespective of the fact that similar work was performed. Women are mostly paid lesser than men at sites which is an indication of discrimination against women. From the foregoing, gender is a

major factor in determining roles performed and this ultimately determine wages given to both men and women after the day's job at site. Evident at building construction sites is the fact that men wage is different from that of women. The table below is a depiction of the wages given to workers in accordance to roles performed at site.

**Table 1: Workers' Wages according to Roles Performed**

| Role of Respondent | Male                                  | Female                                |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bricklayer         | <del>₦2,501</del> - <del>₦3,000</del> | -                                     |
| Labour             | <del>₦1,000</del> - <del>₦2,000</del> | <del>₦1,000</del> - <del>₦1,500</del> |

From table 1 above, it is apparent that there are no female bricklayers at building construction sites. Females only perform labour work at sites. Also, it is obvious that male and female labourers' wages differ despite the fact that they both perform labour work. Male labourers receive up to ₦2,000 while female labourers receive maximum of ₦1,500. This finding is also obvious from a respondent's view who explained that:

Women cannot do what men do. Men wage is different from that of women because men work is different. So, whatever makes a bricklayer to receive ₦3,000 (\$9.05cents), then a woman labourer receives ₦1,500 (\$4.75cents) and a male labourer receives ₦2,000 (\$6.33cents). (*KII/Oluyole LGA/Site Supervisor March 12, 2014*)

The statement above shows that men bricklayers receive more wages than women labourer. This wage differentials however is not unexpected because of the difference in skill possessed by both work group. Bricklayers are skilful because they are trained on the job and have acquired expertise through apprenticeship programmes and constant practice on the job. However, in a situation where men and women labourer perform the same job at site, despite the fact that both do not have the required skill and education, men still earn more than women after completion of job. This finding was revealed through an in-depth interview with a woman labourer who expressed that:

There is disparity in labourers' wages. Daily wages of women is ₦1,500 (\$4.75cents) while men receive between ₦2,000 to ₦2,500 (\$6.33cents-\$7.92cents) ... Many a times also, women may refuse to take up a particular job when it is realized that the job to be done is more than the wages to be paid. (*IDI/Ibadan South West LGA/Woman Labour March 22, 2014*)

Similarly, a female key in-depth interviewee established the disparity in men and women labourers' wages. According to her:

Women wages is between ₦1,300 to ₦1,500 (\$4.08cents-\$4.75 cents) while men labourer receive ₦2,000 (\$6.33cents).  
(KII/Lagelu LGA/Woman Labour March 12, 2014)

On the same note, a woman labour during an in-depth interview also attested to wage differentials at site. She explained that:

...men labourer receive higher wages than women labourer whenever we complete our job. For instance, I went for a construction work and at the close of work, men labourer that I performed the same work with were paid more than me. Even though we performed the same job, the bricklayer told me that they are 'men' and so he cannot pay us equally.  
(IDI/Lagelu LGA/Woman Labour March 20, 2014)

Attesting to this factor, a female respondent explained that some bricklayers put into consideration gender factor even when both men and women perform similar job at site. This however creates differences between wage men and women who perform similar tasks are paid at building construction site. She said that:

There is a difference in wages given to men and women labourer because some bricklayers put into consideration male gender factor...bricklayers most times do not accept to pay men and women labourers same wages... (IDI/Lagelu LGA/ Woman Labour March 16, 2014)

The fact that both men and women labourers perform unskilled job such as carrying sand, gravel, concrete and other building equipment at site, there should be equality in wages. Instead, inequality between gender in relations to wages continue to deepen at construction sites because construction work is male dominated, and, women societal constructed roles continue to place women in disadvantageous positions compared to men. Gender determines array of roles, relationships, attitudes and behaviour of both sexes on a differential basis. Gender stereotype also, which brands some jobs as "male jobs", any female in such jobs is seen as one trying to "close rank "with or equal men. In other words, at the informal workplaces such as the building construction sites, women still carry out 'supportive roles' they are identified with in the home into the workplace. Their jobs at building construction site are seen as that of 'assistance/supportive' to men even when men perform same job.

#### ***Bricklayers Satisfaction with Men's Job***

Another factor found to be responsible for wage differentials at site was the fact that some bricklayers were more satisfied with male labourers work than that of women. Since the building construction is a male dominated occupation, men bricklayers most times prefer to employ services of their fellow men at sites. This factor was opined by a bricklayer who expressed that:

...pertaining to work at site for instance, bricklayers are more satisfied with men labourers input than that of women. There is no way you can compare women's input with men's. Due to this, wages given to both gender at the end of work differs. Women receive ₦1,300 (\$4.08cents) while men receive ₦2,000 (6.33cents). It is not possible for men and women labourer to receive the same wage. How men will perform the work will be different from that of women. When a man labourer has carried 100blocks, a woman labourer will still be battling with 50blocks...even the engineers that contract the work out to us or house owner know that men and women wages differ. (IDI/Lagelu LGA/Bricklayer March 12, 2014)

From the above response, it is clear that some bricklayers prefer to engage men than women at sites. Reason being that bricklayers know that male labourers input on the job will be more than that of women. As a result, labour productivity at the close of work by men will be more than that which women can achieve when compared at the end of the day's job. This bricklayers' satisfaction is borne out of male preference as a result of gender where men are seen to be more perfect and fit for the job since it is considered a male profession.

#### ***Wage Differentials Irrespective of Similar Job***

It is pertinent to note that although gender roles and bricklayers satisfaction with men's job are factors responsible for wage differentials, findings also showed that a contributing factor is that even men and women perform similar tasks, wages are different at building construction site. According to the respondents, men and women labourer who perform same work at site receive different wages irrespective of the fact that similar work was performed. This was revealed during an in-depth interview with a bricklayer:

Men and women wage is different. Although men and women labourers perform same work; still work input of men is different from women. For instance, if both men and women are to carry building blocks at site, what men will be able to carry will be more than what women will carry. Men labourers can carry 2 blocks each while women will only be able to carry 1 each. A bricklayer will be unable to use a woman labourer as he would use a male labourer because the capacity of the work demand can only be achieved by men...for example, I prefer to take men labourers to site than women labourers because the work to be achieved in a little time by men will be more than what women can achieve at the same stipulated time. For example, a fellow bricklayer yesterday took 2 men labourers and 1 woman labourer to site. The bricklayer was supposed to set 600blocks for the day but 450 blocks were set. The woman

mixed cement and fetched water while men were serving building blocks to the bricklayer. If the bricklayer had gone to site with only 3 women labourer, the bricklayer won't have been able to mould 450 blocks...men labourers are mostly employed in order to make work faster at sites. (*IDI/Lagelu LGA/Bricklayer March 16, 2014*)

From the foregoing, male dominance, supremacy and discrimination of women according to findings cannot be ruled out in the informal building construction due to gender. Inequality and women discrimination arise first from the supervisors/bricklayers who are solely responsible for determining wages of labourers, and base wages on labourers gender. These supervisors/bricklayers are men while others work under the conditions set by them in order to receive wages. The continued exploitation and discrimination of women in the industry is also reflected in findings where wages given to both gender at the end of work differs, hence making women labourers vulnerable to accepting less wages compared to men labourers.

Although men and women labourers both lack required construction skill, yet differences in wage persist between them at sites. Discrimination is one of the causes of this wage differentials. The patriarchal societal nature which sees women as weaker vessels thereby tagged with supportive roles reflects in the construction sites. This finding supports Nelson and Bridge (2003) studies while relating to fundamental issues involved in discrimination between male and female pointed out that societal role expectation contribute to the reasons why women are not reckoned with at workplaces. They further explained that inequality existing between male and female in workplaces especially regarding payment and role assignment which depends on the existing nature of gender relation. Hence, part of the consequences is that women tend to earn less than men. This scholarly assertion is however visible from the findings. Wages given to men and women labourers after the day's job differ notwithstanding same job performed at site. Most times, women's labour is not commensurate to their wages compared to men. They are vulnerable to accepting low wages because the job is seen as that of men. On another note, unlike women, some men are semi-skilled or have attained reasonable number of years of experience on the job. This result corroborates the studies of Sultana (2010) who noted that women are victims of exploitation such as unequal pay and low wages and that of Fapohunda (2012) who found some of the challenges faced by women to include low income earning as men continue to have the upper hand while women continue to work twice as hard to prove themselves in male dominated industries. Bricklayers and supervisors who are mostly men at sites determine labourers' wages and also control work activities and workers at site. Men occupy positions of power and leadership while women comply with their directives and instructions. Hitherto, women continue to strive to be relevant in a male dominated occupation. It also supports Aderounmu and Soetan (2013) and Nyu (2011) findings which

revealed that persistent wage gap still exists between men and women in the workplace. Women do not earn much as men in the workplace in spite of all efforts to equalize earnings.

Meanwhile, Kolade and Kehinde (2013) in their study pointed out that there are no significant differences in payment between male and female workers in construction industry. Their study however reflects the formal sector where both the males and females engaged in their study on glass ceiling syndrome effect agreed that gender differences do not feature in influencing the payment of workers especially at managerial or organizational level. These levels are however not evident in the informal building construction where wage differences is evident. On the contrary in another related study, Hick (2012) and Ashraf's (2007) associated discrepancies in the nature of payment between the two gender as major barrier to women career advancement. This they explained that not only do women labourer go home with lower wages irrespective of performing the same job with men, women are equally made to feel inferior to their male counterparts. According to these scholars, the effect of this is that it causes inequality both at the level of performance and relations hence encouraging discrimination at site. This finding also buttresses George and Chukwuedozie (2014) and Yusuf's (2014) studies which established that women face significant wage differentials as they do not earn the same wages as men for the same work especially in casual or unorganized labour. From literature and findings however, wage differentials exist between men and women more prominently in the informal sector such as the building construction sites. Men train and attend apprenticeship programmes which help to improve their skills on the job whereas women remain subservient to men.

Furthermore, the finding of this study was in consonance with the theory of patriarchy which explained male patriarchal dominance over female. The theory explains a social system where male act as the central figure or assigned primary authority on women. The relationship between patriarchy and gender is crucial to women's subordinate positions. The key explanation offered by the patriarchy theory for women's subordination is that segregation by occupation is used to restrict women to the "ghetto" of low paid work, resulting in women invariably earning less than men. This theoretical position is buttressed from the findings which revealed that women earn the least wages ₦1000-₦1,500 (\$3.17cents-\$4.75cents) while men earn the highest ₦2,501-₦3,500 (\$7.95cents-\$10.96cents) at sites. In other words, gender stereotypes determines the type of job performed at site, hence creating inequality in wages amongst labourers. In addition, part of the culture of male dominance in the society is also reflected at informal building construction sites. Also, discrimination towards women on the job at building construction sites confirmed propositions of patriarchy on male dominance. Male gender sustains the dominance through various discriminatory practices. Hence, masculine values are at the foundation of both the informal and formal organizational structures. From the forgoing therefore, it can be posited that male domination at informal building construction sites shapes women's relationship in the

industry. It creates a gender relations hierarchy where men are more privileged. In other words, men determine what role women play thereby being subsumed under the male. Discrimination against women continue to manifest both in formal and informal construction industry. This exhibits through glass ceiling in formal construction and; job segregation and wage gaps in the informal construction. However, these discriminatory practices characterized by the construction workplace culture poses problems to female labourers at sites. On a whole, jobs classified as 'women's work' command lower wages than those classified as 'men's work'.

### **Conclusion**

Informal building construction industry has informal nature because it mainly comprises of casual workers with no or little education. The construction industry is an example of labour market segregation because of its male dominance. Wage issues are fundamental in work environment. An exploration of wage differentials is important in the informal sector of the Nigerian economy because it reflects the gender relations dynamics within the sector. In fact, it is impossible to consider forms of exploitation and discrimination at the informal building construction sites without recourse to wage differentials. It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females.

The patriarchal society sets the parameters for women's unequal position in families and at workplaces thereby permitting wage differential wages for equal or comparable work. Patriarchy justifies the marginalization of women in education, economy, labour market, politics, business, family, domestic matters and inheritance. Also this culture of patriarchy is a very strong determinant of male dominance over female and as a result, men will sit back in the family to keep the family name and lineage growing while women will be married out. Thus men are being trained for leadership activities while women are confined to domestic activities; roles ascribed to them by culture which affect them later in life, thereby making them to lose self-confidence and have low self- esteem in their career and other spheres of life. This patriarchal nature is also evident at sites where site supervisor is saddled with the responsibility of determining labourers' wages. In some cases, when there is no site supervisor on construction site, the bricklayer takes up this responsibility.

This function of site supervisors/bricklayers are associated to being a man. Furthermore, tasks men perform on sites goes a long way in determining men's wages. This therefore reflects in the non-equal payment of wages between men and women as they both perform different tasks on site. Although workers' wages are fair, there are situations where men and women perform similar tasks and they receive different wages. The paper therefore recommends for eradication of all forms of discriminatory practices which could hinder women willing to participate in a male dominated work.

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