



Article

Organisational Factors and Women's Career Progression in the Nigerian Banking Industry

Dr. Ebiwari Otutu¹

1. Accounting and Economics, North East Scotland College, Scotland

* Correspondence: e.otutu@rgu.ac.uk

Abstract: This study examined organisational factors and women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry, with specific focus on recruitment practices, promotion opportunities and mentoring practices. The study was guided by three objectives, which examined the influence of recruitment practices, promotion opportunities and mentoring practices on women's career progression. A qualitative case study approach was adopted. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 40 employees, comprising 20 males and 20 females in the Nigerian banking sector. Participants were selected using snowball sampling, while the data were analysed using thematic analysis. The study revealed that recruitment practices were generally perceived as transparent and merit-based, although informal practices, personal relationships and gender-based assumptions could limit women's access to career opportunities. Promotion practices were largely performance-based at entry and middle levels; however, advancement at senior levels was also influenced by networking, visibility and corporate politics, which could disadvantage women. The findings further showed that formal mentoring programmes were largely unavailable, with mentoring occurring mainly through informal relationships initiated by employees. Nevertheless, mentoring provided women with professional guidance, confidence, career information and developmental support. The study concludes that organisational practices can either facilitate or constrain women's career progression. It recommends transparent and merit-based recruitment, clear and equitable promotion criteria, and structured mentoring programmes to improve women's access to career advancement opportunities in the Nigerian banking industry.

Citation: Otutu, E. Organisational Factors and Women's Career Progression in the Nigerian Banking Industry. American Journal of Economics and Business Management 2026, 9(9), 996-1008.

Received: 4th July 2026

Revised: 10th July 2026

Accepted: 15th Aug 2026

Published: 28th Sep 2026



Copyright: © 2026 by the authors. Submitted for open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>)

Keywords: Organisational Factors, Women's Career Progression, Recruitment Practices, Promotion Opportunities and Mentoring Practices.

1. Introduction

Women's participation in paid employment has increased considerably over the years, and women now occupy important positions across different sectors of the economy. Despite this progress, women continue to experience challenges in attaining senior management and leadership positions within many organisations. Research on women in Nigeria has identified discrimination, gender stereotypes, male dominance, organisational practices and other structural barriers as factors that can constrain women's career advancement [1]. Evidence from the Nigerian banking industry similarly indicates that organisational conditions, including work culture, gender-related practices, promotion processes and work-family demands, can influence women's opportunities for career advancement and access to senior management positions [2], [3]. Career progression is particularly important because it involves employees' movement to

higher positions, increased responsibilities, greater remuneration and participation in organisational decision-making. However, women's career progression is not determined solely by their qualifications, competence and work experience. Organisational structures, policies and practices, including recruitment and promotion practices, mentoring opportunities, organisational culture, leadership practices, gender policies and workplace policies, can either facilitate or constrain their opportunities for advancement [4], [5]. Work-family arrangements may also shape women's career experiences, particularly where organisational and societal expectations place competing demands on women [6]. Consequently, understanding how organisational factors shape women's career progression remains an important issue in contemporary workplaces, particularly within the Nigerian banking industry.

Women's participation in paid employment has increased considerably over the years, and women now occupy important positions across different sectors of the economy. Despite this progress, women continue to experience challenges in attaining senior management and leadership positions within many organizations. Career progression is particularly important because it determines employees' movement to higher positions, increased responsibilities, greater remuneration and participation in organisational decision-making. However, the progression of women is not determined solely by their qualifications, competence and work experience. Organisational structures, policies and practices can either facilitate or constrain their opportunities for advancement. Consequently, understanding the organisational conditions that shape women's career progression remains an important issue in contemporary workplaces.

The banking industry provides an important context for examining women's career progression because it is highly competitive, performance-driven and characterized by hierarchical structures in which recruitment, promotion and professional development decisions can significantly influence employees' movement through the organisational hierarchy. In Nigeria, the banking sector has provided employment and career opportunities for a growing number of women, including opportunities to occupy managerial and executive positions. Nevertheless, women's advancement to the highest levels of banking organizations remains an important concern. Research on women's careers in Nigeria indicates that organisational and structural conditions can contribute to the barriers women experience in progressing to senior positions. Adisa et al. [7] for example, found that gendered organisational and societal expectations can influence women's experiences at work, particularly where workplace practices reproduce wider patriarchal attitudes. Similarly, research on Nigerian organizations has identified recruitment and promotion decisions as important areas through which gender inequalities can become embedded in career advancement processes [4], [8].

Recruitment represents one of the first organisational processes through which career opportunities are distributed. Recruitment determines who enters an organization, the positions for which individuals are considered and the characteristics employers' value when selecting employees. A fair and transparent recruitment process can provide women and men with equal opportunities to enter organizations and establish careers. However, recruitment practices that are influenced by gender stereotypes, personal preferences or assumptions about women's suitability for particular positions may restrict women's access to employment opportunities and career pathways. Ukeje et al. [9], in their examination of recruitment practices in Nigeria, highlighted concerns about recruitment processes that may be affected by factors such as nepotism and interference rather than purely merit-based considerations. Although their study was conducted in the public service rather than banking, it demonstrates the importance of transparent and merit-based recruitment systems within the Nigerian organisational environment.

Recruitment is also relevant to women's long-term career progression because the position and quality of employment obtained at entry can influence subsequent

opportunities for development and advancement. When women are recruited into positions with limited career prospects, or when recruitment decisions are affected by gendered assumptions, their ability to progress to senior levels may be constrained from the beginning of their careers. Dosunmu and Dichaba [10] similarly identified organisational factors and discrimination among the issues that can influence women's career progression in Nigeria. This suggests that organisational equality needs to begin at the point of recruitment and continue throughout the employee's career.

Promotion opportunities constitute another important organisational factor affecting women's career progression. Promotion provides employees with opportunities to move into positions involving greater responsibility, authority and organisational influence. Where promotion decisions are transparent, merit-based and consistently applied, employees are more likely to perceive career advancement as attainable. However, where promotion criteria are unclear or organisational decision-making is influenced by gender stereotypes, women may experience difficulties in progressing to senior positions. The problem is particularly significant where senior positions are disproportionately occupied by men, as existing organisational cultures and informal networks may reinforce patterns of male dominance. Research on women's career experiences in Nigeria has documented barriers associated with organisational discrimination and male-dominated workplace structures [1], [7].

The importance of fair promotion opportunities is further demonstrated by research on women's career advancement internationally. Cheng et al. [11] explain that women may experience a "promotion dilemma" in organizations, with organisational processes and workplace behaviours contributing to the concentration of women at lower organisational levels and their limited representation in senior positions. Although their study was not specific to Nigeria, its findings reinforce the importance of examining promotion practices when investigating women's career progression. In the Nigerian banking industry, where advancement is often associated with movement through clearly defined organisational hierarchies, access to promotion opportunities can therefore have substantial implications for women's ability to attain managerial and leadership positions. Mentoring represents a third organisational factor that can influence women's career progression. Mentoring involves a developmental relationship in which a more experienced employee provides guidance, advice, knowledge, encouragement and professional support to a less experienced employee. Mentors can help employees understand organisational expectations, develop professional skills, identify career opportunities and gain access to networks that may support advancement. This makes mentoring particularly relevant to women who may experience limited access to informal organisational networks or senior decision-makers. Nwosu et al. [12], in a study of Nigerian firms, found that employee mentoring had a significant positive effect on career success and argued that organizations can use mentoring programmes as part of employee development. Their findings demonstrate that mentoring is not merely a social relationship but can constitute an organisational mechanism for supporting employees' professional development and career success.

Within the banking industry, mentoring may be particularly valuable because employees often need guidance to navigate complex organisational structures, performance expectations and career opportunities. Formal mentoring programmes can provide women with access to experienced professionals who can advise them on career planning and leadership development. Informal mentoring can also provide access to information, professional networks and organisational knowledge that may not be equally available to all employees. The absence of structured mentoring opportunities, however, may leave career development largely dependent on an employee's ability to identify and establish relationships with influential individuals within the organization. This may disadvantage women where existing organisational networks are predominantly male.

The relationship between organisational practices and women's career progression is therefore multidimensional. Recruitment determines entry into the organization and the initial career opportunities available to employees; promotion determines opportunities for movement into higher positions; while mentoring can provide the knowledge, guidance and networks required to navigate organisational career structures. These factors are interconnected because women who experience equitable recruitment may still encounter barriers at later stages if promotion processes are not transparent, while women who have access to promotion opportunities may benefit more when mentoring and professional guidance are available. Consequently, examining these factors together provides a more comprehensive understanding of the organisational conditions that may shape women's career progression. The Nigerian banking industry is therefore an important setting for examining these organisational processes. Although women's participation in banking has expanded, representation at senior organisational levels remains an issue of concern. Previous studies have examined gender inequality, workplace barriers, career development and mentoring in Nigerian organizations [1], [7], [12], [13], but there remains a need to examine specifically how recruitment, promotion opportunities and mentoring relate to women's career progression within the banking industry.

Statement of the Problem

The banking industry provides opportunities for professional development and career advancement; however, the existence of opportunities does not necessarily guarantee equal progression for women. Differences in career outcomes may be associated with organisational practices and processes through which employees are recruited, assessed, developed and promoted. Consequently, attention has increasingly shifted from women's individual characteristics to the organisational environment within which career decisions are made. One major organisational factor that may influence women's career progression is recruitment practices. Recruitment is the entry point through which employees gain access to organizations and particular career pathways. Where recruitment processes are transparent, merit-based and free from gender bias, women are more likely to have equal opportunities to enter positions that provide prospects for advancement. However, recruitment practices influenced by gender stereotypes, subjective selection criteria or organisational preferences may restrict women's access to certain positions from the beginning of their careers. In the Nigerian context, concerns about fairness and transparency in recruitment processes remain relevant because the manner in which employees are selected can shape their subsequent career opportunities. Promotion is an important mechanism through which employees advance to higher positions, assume greater responsibilities and gain access to organisational decision-making. However, women may encounter difficulties when promotion decisions are influenced by subjective criteria, gender stereotypes, informal relationships or perceptions about women's suitability for leadership positions. Adisa et al. [7] observed that patriarchal attitudes can extend from the wider society into organisational settings and influence women's workplace experiences. Where such attitudes affect career-related decisions, qualified women may have fewer opportunities to advance compared with their male counterparts. This can contribute to the continued underrepresentation of women in senior management positions despite their participation at lower and middle levels of the banking hierarchy.

Mentoring also presents an important organisational concern. Career progression does not depend only on formal promotion systems; employees may also require guidance, professional advice, organisational knowledge and access to networks that support advancement. Mentoring can provide these forms of support by connecting less-experienced employees with more experienced colleagues who can assist their professional and career development. However, where formal mentoring opportunities are limited or access to influential mentors depends largely on informal organisational

relationships, women may not benefit equally from these developmental opportunities. Nwosu et al. [12] found that employee mentoring was associated with career success, highlighting the importance of mentoring as an organisational mechanism for supporting employees' career development. The problem is therefore not simply that women are underrepresented in senior positions, but that organisational practices may create different career experiences for women and men. Recruitment determines access to employment and career opportunities, promotion determines movement through the organisational hierarchy, while mentoring can provide the guidance and networks necessary for professional advancement. When these organisational processes are not sufficiently inclusive and equitable, they may limit women's ability to progress even when they possess the qualifications, experience and competence required for advancement.

Although previous studies have examined gender-related workplace challenges and career development among women, there remains a need for greater attention to the specific organisational processes that shape women's career progression within the Nigerian banking industry. In particular, limited attention has been given to examining recruitment practices, promotion opportunities and mentoring collectively as organisational factors influencing women's career progression. This creates a gap in understanding how organisational practices may facilitate or constrain women's advancement within the banking sector.

Objectives of the Study

1. Examine the influence of recruitment practices on women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry.
2. Investigate the influence of promotion opportunities on women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry.
3. Assess the influence of mentoring practices on women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry.

Literature Review

Organisational Factors

Organisational factors refer to the policies, practices, structures, procedures and workplace conditions through which organizations manage employees and create opportunities for their development and advancement. These factors influence how employees are recruited, assessed, developed, rewarded and promoted within an organization. In the context of women's career progression, organisational factors are particularly important because formal organisational policies may either provide equal opportunities or reproduce existing gender inequalities. Adisa et al. [7] observed that patriarchal attitudes can be transferred from the wider society into organisational settings, resulting in discrimination and the positioning of women in inferior workplace positions.

Organisational factors are therefore concerned not only with the existence of formal policies but also with how such policies are implemented in practice. An organization may have policies that promote equal opportunities, but their effectiveness depends on whether recruitment, promotion, professional development and mentoring decisions are applied fairly to both women and men. Research on women's progression in the workplace has similarly emphasized that organisational practices can function as either barriers or facilitators of career advancement [14]. For this study, organisational factors are conceptualized specifically in terms of recruitment practices, promotion opportunities and mentoring practices, as these represent important organisational processes through which women gain entry, advance within and receive developmental support in their careers.

Women's Career Progression

Women's career progression refers to the advancement of women from lower to higher positions within an organization through increased responsibilities, authority,

professional status, remuneration and access to leadership roles. Career progression may occur through promotion, movement into positions with greater responsibilities, professional development and increased participation in organisational decision-making. It is therefore broader than simply obtaining employment because it concerns the extent to which women are able to develop and advance throughout their careers. Women's career progression remains an important organisational and gender-equality issue because women may enter organizations in significant numbers but remain underrepresented in senior management and leadership positions. In the Nigerian banking industry, evidence indicates that women have made progress in attaining leadership positions, but challenges concerning advancement remain. Women's World Banking [15], for instance, reported that eight of Nigeria's 24 commercial banks had women chief executive officers at the time of its report, while also highlighting continuing gaps in women's leadership within the financial sector.

Career progression is influenced by both individual and organisational factors. While education, experience, skills and performance can contribute to advancement, organisational practices determine how these qualities are assessed and how opportunities are distributed. Adisa et al. [7] found that patriarchal attitudes in Nigerian organizations could contribute to discrimination against women and maintain women in subordinate positions. Thus, understanding women's career progression requires attention to the organisational processes through which career opportunities are created and distributed.

Recruitment Practices and Women's Career Progression

Recruitment practices refer to the procedures and methods organizations use to attract, assess, select and appoint individuals to available positions. Recruitment may involve advertising vacancies, screening applications, conducting tests and interviews, assessing qualifications and experience, and making final selection decisions. Recruitment is an important organisational factor because it represents the initial point at which employees gain access to particular organizations and career pathways. Fair and transparent recruitment practices can provide women with equal access to employment and career opportunities. Recruitment based on qualifications, competence and relevant experience can reduce the possibility that gender stereotypes will influence selection decisions. However, where recruitment decisions are influenced by gender stereotypes, personal relationships or subjective judgements, women may be disadvantaged at the entry point of their careers. This is particularly important where certain positions are perceived as more suitable for men than women. Evidence from the Nigerian context indicates that recruitment can be affected by organisational and gender-related practices. Tafamel and Akrawah [16], in their study of recruitment strategies in the Nigerian banking industry, examined recruitment approaches used by banks and emphasized the importance of effective recruitment strategies in attracting suitable employees. More directly, research by Adisa et al. [7] on career barriers among women in Nigeria reported that female participants identified bias in recruitment and promotion decisions as a barrier to career progression.

Recruitment can therefore influence women's subsequent career progression because the positions into which employees are initially recruited may determine their access to training, responsibilities, visibility and future promotion opportunities. Where women are recruited into positions with limited advancement prospects, their progression may be constrained from the beginning. Conversely, transparent recruitment systems that provide women access to positions with clear career pathways may create stronger foundations for advancement. In the Nigerian banking industry, recruitment is particularly significant because entry-level and professional positions often provide the foundation for movement into managerial positions. Consequently, recruitment practices that provide equal opportunities for women can contribute to a more equitable career structure, while discriminatory or gender-biased recruitment practices may contribute to continued gender disparities in senior positions.

Promotion Opportunities and Women's Career Progression

Promotion opportunities refer to the availability and accessibility of opportunities for employees to move from their current positions to higher positions involving greater responsibility, authority, remuneration and organisational status. Promotion is a major component of career progression because it represents formal recognition of an employee's performance and provides opportunities for increased organisational influence. For women, access to fair promotion opportunities is particularly important because the underrepresentation of women in senior management cannot be addressed simply by increasing the number of women recruited into organizations. Women must also have equitable opportunities to move through organisational hierarchies. Promotion systems based on clear criteria such as performance, competence, experience and qualifications can support fairness. However, subjective decision-making, gender stereotypes, informal networks and male-dominated organisational cultures may create barriers to women's advancement.

Adisa et al. [7] found that patriarchal attitudes in Nigerian organizations could contribute to discrimination against women and maintain men's dominant position within the workplace. Similarly, Adisa et al. [7] reported that women in Nigeria identified bias in both recruitment and promotion decisions as significant barriers to career advancement. These findings suggest that promotion decisions may represent an important mechanism through which organisational gender inequalities are reproduced. Evidence specifically from the Nigerian banking sector further demonstrates the relevance of promotion opportunities. Pepple et al. [8], in a qualitative study involving senior male employees in four Nigerian banks, found that participants acknowledged challenges faced by women regarding promotion and concluded that organisational culture and leadership contributed to poor female career progression. This suggests that even where formal performance policies appear gender-neutral, the organisational environment in which promotion decisions are made may affect women's advancement.

Promotion opportunities therefore influence women's career progression by determining whether women can move beyond lower and middle organisational levels into management and leadership positions. An equitable promotion system can facilitate women's advancement, while discriminatory or opaque promotion practices may create a glass ceiling that restricts their movement into senior positions.

Mentoring Practices and Women's Career Progression

Mentoring practices refer to structured or informal relationships through which experienced employees provide less-experienced employees with career guidance, professional advice, knowledge, encouragement, feedback and access to organisational networks. Mentoring is an important component of employee development because it can help employees understand organisational expectations, develop competencies and identify opportunities for career advancement. Mentoring may be particularly valuable for women because career advancement can depend not only on formal qualifications and performance but also on access to professional networks and organisational knowledge. A mentor can provide advice on career planning, leadership development and organisational processes while also helping mentees develop professional relationships. Through these functions, mentoring can increase employees' confidence, skills and visibility within an organization.

Empirical evidence supports the relationship between mentoring and career development. Nwosu et al. [12], in a study of Nigerian firms, found a significant positive effect of employee mentoring on career success. The authors argued that mentoring provides employees with developmental support that can contribute to their career outcomes. Mentoring may also help women overcome some of the informal barriers associated with male-dominated organisational environments. Where women have access to experienced mentors, they may obtain information about organisational expectations, promotion requirements and professional opportunities that may otherwise

be difficult to access. Mentors can also provide sponsorship-like support by recommending employees for developmental opportunities and increasing their visibility among organisational decision-makers.

The importance of mentoring is also recognized within the Nigerian banking profession. The Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria relaunched its mentoring scheme in 2021 with the explicit aim of helping younger professionals bridge the gap between learning and practical professional development [17]. This demonstrates the practical relevance of mentoring within the banking environment. However, mentoring opportunities may not automatically benefit women equally. If access to mentors is determined mainly through informal relationships, women may have less access to senior employees, particularly where senior management structures are predominantly male. Consequently, organizations that establish transparent and inclusive mentoring programmes may provide women with greater access to career guidance, networks and developmental opportunities.

Theoretical Framework

The Social Closure Theory was adopted for the study. The Social Closure Theory was developed by Frank Parkin in 1979 [18] and was largely based on Max Weber's earlier concept of social closure. Parkin developed the theory to explain how groups seek to maintain advantages by controlling access to valuable resources, opportunities and positions. According to Parkin [18], social closure occurs when a group uses social, organisational or institutional mechanisms to restrict access to opportunities and privileges, thereby creating advantages for members of the dominant group. Parkin identified two major forms of social closure: exclusion and usurpation. Exclusion occurs when a dominant group restricts other groups from accessing valued opportunities, while usurpation involves disadvantaged groups attempting to gain access to resources and privileges controlled by a dominant group. Social Closure Theory is relevant to the study of women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry because organisational opportunities are not always distributed equally among employees. Recruitment, promotion and mentoring are important organisational processes through which access to employment, higher positions, professional development and organisational networks can be controlled. Where these opportunities are more accessible to men than women, organisational practices may contribute to the exclusion of women from career advancement opportunities.

The theory is particularly relevant to recruitment practices. Recruitment determines who enters an organization and the positions to which employees gain access. Where recruitment decisions are influenced by gender stereotypes, personal preferences or informal organisational networks, women may be excluded from positions that provide better opportunities for career development. From the Social Closure perspective, such practices can create an organisational boundary that favours one group while limiting the opportunities available to another group. The theory also explains the importance of promotion opportunities. Promotion provides employees with access to higher positions, greater authority, increased remuneration and organisational decision-making. If promotion opportunities are controlled through subjective criteria, informal networks or gender-based perceptions, women may face restricted access to senior positions. Social Closure Theory therefore helps explain why women may remain concentrated in lower and middle organisational levels despite possessing the qualifications, experience and competence required for advancement.

Furthermore, Social Closure Theory is applicable to mentoring practices. Mentoring provides employees with access to career guidance, organisational knowledge, professional networks and information about advancement opportunities. Where mentoring relationships are largely informal and dominated by existing senior networks, women may have limited access to influential mentors. Consequently, mentoring can

either reduce social closure by opening access to organisational networks or reinforce social closure when access is restricted to particular groups. The theory therefore provides a useful explanation of how organisational practices can influence women's career progression. Recruitment practices may determine who gains entry into desirable career pathways; promotion opportunities may determine who gains access to higher organisational positions; and mentoring practices may determine who gains access to professional guidance and influential organisational networks. When these opportunities are distributed unequally, they may create mechanisms of exclusion that limit women's advancement.

In relation to the Nigerian banking industry, Social Closure Theory suggests that women's career progression should not be examined only in terms of their individual qualifications, skills or work performance. Attention should also be given to the organisational structures and practices that determine access to career opportunities. If recruitment, promotion and mentoring processes are transparent and accessible to both women and men, social closure can be reduced. However, where these processes favour dominant groups, they may reinforce existing inequalities and restrict women's progression into senior and leadership positions.

Empirical Review

Existing empirical studies have examined various organisational factors that may influence employees' career outcomes, including mentoring, recruitment practices, organisational culture, gender-policy implementation, promotion practices, leadership and work-family conditions. Within the Nigerian context, some studies have specifically investigated these factors in relation to employees' career experiences and women's advancement, particularly in the banking industry. The following empirical studies are reviewed to establish the extent to which these organisational factors have been examined and to identify areas requiring further investigation.

Nwosu et al. [12] examined employee mentoring, career success and organisational success among firms in Nigeria. The study adopted a survey research design and administered questionnaires to 345 respondents. Descriptive statistics and t-tests were used to analyze the data and test the hypotheses. The study found that mentoring had a significant positive effect on career success and concluded that mentoring is an important mechanism for supporting employees' career development and organisational success. The study is particularly relevant to the present research because career success involves employees' advancement and achievement within their careers. However, the study examined employees generally rather than women in the Nigerian banking industry. The present study therefore extends the literature by focusing specifically on whether mentoring practices facilitate women's career progression within the banking sector.

Tafamel and Akrawah [16] investigated recruitment strategies within the Nigerian banking industry, focusing on the use of headhunting as a recruitment strategy. Using evidence from the banking sector, the study examined how recruitment strategies are employed to attract and select employees. The study highlighted the importance of effective recruitment strategies in obtaining suitable employees for banking organizations. Although the study did not specifically examine women's career progression, it provides evidence that recruitment practices are an important organisational mechanism through which employees gain access to banking employment and career opportunities. The present study extends this line of inquiry by examining whether recruitment practices provide women with equitable access to career pathways and progression opportunities in the Nigerian banking industry [16].

Yusuf [19] examined the impact of age-to-grade recruitment policy on career progression, employee retention and organisational productivity in Nigerian deposit money banks. The study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design and collected data from 400 employees of Nigerian deposit money banks across different

organisational levels. Simple linear regression was used to examine the predictive effect of perceived age-to-grade recruitment policies on career progression satisfaction, employee turnover intention and organisational productivity. The study found that recruitment policies relating to age and job grade had significant implications for employees' career progression satisfaction. The study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates that recruitment policies can influence employees' subsequent career experiences and advancement within Nigerian banks. However, the study focused on age-to-grade recruitment rather than gender-specific recruitment practices, leaving a need to examine how recruitment practices affect women's career progression specifically.

Akpera [5] examined women's career advancement and organisational effectiveness in the Nigerian banking industry. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design and obtained data from 476 women employees drawn from seven selected deposit money banks. Using correlation and regression analyses, the study examined work-family balance, women's aspirations, self-development and organisational culture as factors associated with women's career advancement. The findings showed positive relationships between these career-advancement variables and organisational effectiveness. The study is particularly relevant because it provides quantitative evidence linking organisational culture and work-family balance with women's career advancement in the Nigerian banking industry. However, its focus on organisational effectiveness rather than career progression as the primary dependent variable leaves room for further investigation of the direct organisational determinants of women's career progression.

Olotuah, et al. [6] examined the work-family experiences of women in the Nigerian banking sector using interviews with 21 women, comprising 11 Northern and 10 Southern Nigerian women. The study found that patriarchal systems operate at social, organisational and individual levels and shape women's work-family experiences. The findings also showed how cultural expectations and gender norms can restrict women's career choices and opportunities while women simultaneously develop strategies for negotiating these constraints. The study is relevant to the present research because it demonstrates that organisational conditions cannot be separated completely from the wider cultural environment when examining women's career progression. However, because the study focused primarily on work-family experiences and used a qualitative sample, it did not quantitatively establish the effect of specific organisational practices on career progression.

Lawrence [20] investigated the relationship between sexual harassment and the career advancement of female employees in the Nigerian banking industry. The study used in-depth interviews with 43 women who were current or former banking employees and analysed the interview data using content analysis. The findings indicated that sexual harassment and unwanted sexual attention can negatively affect women's career advancement, while a culture of silence may discourage victims from reporting such experiences because of concerns about possible consequences for their careers. The study is relevant because it identifies workplace climate and organisational practices surrounding sexual harassment as potential barriers to women's career advancement. However, the qualitative design means that the study provides contextual evidence rather than statistical estimates of the effect of harassment on career progression.

2. Materials and Methods

The study adopted a qualitative case study approach to examine the influence of organisational factors on women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 40 employees, comprising 20 males and 20 females currently working in the banking sector. The interviews enabled participants to freely express their views and experiences regarding recruitment practices,

promotion opportunities, mentoring practices and their implications for women's career progression. Participants were selected using the snowball sampling technique, which was considered appropriate given the difficulty of accessing suitable respondents with relevant experience. The data collected were analysed using thematic analysis, through which recurring themes and patterns relating to recruitment, promotion, mentoring and women's career progression were identified and interpreted.

3. Discussion

The study indicate that recruitment practices can both facilitate and constrain women's career progression. Most entry- and middle-level respondents perceived recruitment as transparent and merit-based, with candidates assessed based on competence, knowledge, skills and performance. However, the findings also revealed that informal practices, personal relationships and gender-based assumptions could influence recruitment decisions. Such practices may limit women's access to positions that provide better opportunities for future advancement. Thus, although formal recruitment procedures promote equal access, informal recruitment practices can create exclusion.

The study shows that promotion at entry and middle levels was generally perceived as performance-based, with employees assessed using key performance indicators and managerial appraisals. However, meeting the formal requirements did not always guarantee promotion because the number of promotions could be limited by the financial position of the banks. Some employees consequently remained at the same level for several years. At senior levels, promotion was influenced not only by performance but also by networking, visibility and corporate politics. The findings indicate that women were less likely to participate in these informal activities, particularly networking events, which reduced their visibility and opportunities for advancement into boardroom and executive positions. This finding suggests that formal merit-based promotion systems may coexist with informal practices that disadvantage women. In line with Social Closure Theory, control over influential networks and senior positions can restrict women's access to higher levels of organisational power.

Furthermore, the study revealed that formal mentoring programmes were largely unavailable in the sampled banks. Instead, mentoring occurred informally and was usually initiated by employees themselves. This meant that access to mentoring depended on individual confidence, initiative and relationships with senior employees. The findings nevertheless demonstrate that mentoring can support women's career progression by providing professional guidance, confidence, information and career support. However, where mentoring is informal and dependent on existing relationships, some women may have limited access to influential mentors and professional networks. This supports Social Closure Theory because restricted access to organisational networks can limit opportunities for career development.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that organisational factors significantly shape women's career progression in the Nigerian banking industry. Recruitment practices, promotion opportunities and mentoring practices can either facilitate or constrain women's advancement. Recruitment practices were generally perceived as transparent and merit-based, but informal practices, personal relationships and gender-based assumptions could limit women's access to career opportunities. Promotion practices were largely performance-based at lower levels, but advancement at senior levels was also influenced by networking, visibility and corporate politics, which could disadvantage women. Mentoring was found to be beneficial to women's career development; however, the limited availability of formal mentoring programmes meant that access often depended on individual initiative and existing relationships. Thus, improving women's career progression requires organizations to ensure that formal organisational processes are

transparent, equitable and supported by inclusive developmental opportunities. Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were proposed;

Banks should strengthen transparent and merit-based recruitment practices by using clear selection criteria and reducing the influence of personal relationships and gender-based assumptions in recruitment decisions. This will provide women with fair access to positions that offer better opportunities for career advancement.

Banks should establish clear and transparent promotion criteria based primarily on measurable performance, competence and experience. Promotion decisions should also be regularly reviewed to ensure that informal networking, visibility and corporate politics do not unfairly disadvantage qualified women seeking advancement.

Banks should establish structured and inclusive formal mentoring programmes that provide women with access to experienced senior professionals. Such programmes should support career guidance, professional development, networking and preparation for leadership positions, rather than leaving mentoring largely dependent on informal relationships.

REFERENCES

- [1] T. A. Adisa, C. Mordi, R. Simpson, and V. Iwowo, "Social dominance, hypermasculinity, and career barriers in Nigeria," *Gender, Work & Organization*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 175–194, 2021, doi: 10.1111/gwao.12537.
- [2] N. B. Eleje and B. A. Wale-Oshinowo, "Work culture as a driver for gender equality in the Nigerian banking sector," *UNILAG Journal of Business*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 44–68, 2017.
- [3] A. S. Ademola-Thomas, "Women in senior management positions, why so few? An insight into the Nigerian banking sector," *International Journal of Strategic Research in Education, Technology and Humanities*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 79–96, 2022, doi: 10.48028/IJSRETH.V10.I2.08.
- [4] S. A. Ajede and I. P. Onyeonoru, "National gender policy and women's career progression in selected banks in Ogun and Lagos States," *Ibadan Journal of Sociology*, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 21–33, 2023.
- [5] D. M. Akpera, "Women career advancement and organizational effectiveness in the Nigerian banking industry," *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, vol. 7, no. 7, 2022, doi: 10.5281/zenodo.10721603.
- [6] D. E. Olotuah, G. I. Cavlan, and C. Forson, "Contextualizing the work-family experiences of women in the Nigerian banking industry," *Journal of Family Studies*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 507–530, 2024, doi: 10.1080/13229400.2023.2268598.
- [7] T. A. Adisa, F. L. Cooke, and V. Iwowo, "Mind your attitude: The impact of patriarchy on women's workplace behaviour," *Career Development International*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 146–164, 2019, doi: 10.1108/CDI-07-2019-0183.
- [8] D. Pepple, R. Oseghale, and E. Nmecha, "Glass ceiling in Nigeria's banking sector: Perspectives of senior male employees," *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, vol. 39, no. 8, pp. 1133–1148, 2024, doi: 10.1108/GM-07-2022-0258.
- [9] I. O. Ukeje, C. Ndukwe, C. Emma, U. Ogbulu, and J. C. Onele, "Public service recruitment practices and implications for sustainable development in Ebonyi State, Nigeria," *International Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 43, no. 6, pp. 361–372, 2020, doi: 10.1080/01900692.2019.1636394.
- [10] A. G. Dosunmu and M. Dichaba, "Lifelong learning and career progression of women in Nigeria," in *The Education Systems of Africa*, K. S. Adeyemo, Ed. Cham, Switzerland: Springer, 2020, pp. 401–420, doi: 10.1007/978-3-030-44217-0_18.
- [11] Y. Cheng, M. Chang, and Y. Xue, "Understanding the promotion dilemma for females based on a computational model," *Communications in Nonlinear Science and Numerical Simulation*, vol. 84, Art. no. 105173, 2020, doi: 10.1016/j.cnsns.2020.105173.
- [12] H. E. Nwosu, J. N. Ugwu, B. N. Okezie, C. C. Udeze, N. U. Azubuike, and L. Adama, "Employee mentoring, career success and organizational success," *Humanities and Social Sciences Letters*, vol. 8, no. 4, pp. 464–480, 2020, doi: 10.18488/journal.73.2020.84.464.480.

- [13] M. U. Orbih and D. Imhonopi, "Women in banking: Career choice and advancement," IOP Conference Series: Materials Science and Engineering, vol. 640, no. 1, Art. no. 012127, 2019, doi: 10.1088/1757-899X/640/1/012127.
- [14] L. Jones, *Women's Progression in the Workplace: A Rapid Evidence Review for the Government Equalities Office*. London, U.K.: Government Equalities Office, 2019.
- [15] Women's World Banking, *Advancing Women as Leaders in Nigeria's Finance Industry*. Women's World Banking, Nov. 17, 2022.
- [16] E. A. Tafamel and O. D. Akrawah, "Recruitment strategies of the banking industry in Nigeria: The head hunting panacea," *African Journal of Business Management*, vol. 13, no. 13, pp. 449–455, 2019, doi: 10.5897/AJBM2019.8836.
- [17] Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria, "CIBN relaunch mentoring scheme to address gaps identified in the banking industry," Feb. 21, 2021.
- [18] F. Parkin, *Marxism and Class Theory: A Bourgeois Critique*. New York, NY, USA: Columbia University Press, 1979.
- [19] A. A. Yusuf, "The impact of age-to-grade recruitment policy on career progression, employee retention, and organizational productivity in Nigerian deposit money banks," *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 711–725, 2025, doi: 10.30574/wjarr.2025.28.2.3774.
- [20] M. E. Lawrence, "Sexual harassment and career advancement of female employees in the Nigerian banking industry," *African Journal for the Psychological Studies of Social Issues*, vol. 28, no. 1, 2025.