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## Organizational Culture and Female Networking Systems in Manufacturing Firms in South-South of Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines organizational culture and female networking in manufacturing firms in South-South of Nigeria. One specific objective was formulated alongside a corresponding hypothesis which was tested during the study. Drawing on Social Dominance theory, it explores how hierarchical and patriarchal organizational structures hinder the development and efficacy of female networking systems. The cross sectional research design was used as the design adopted for the study using the survey method. A sample of 306 was obtained from a population of 1308 with the aid of Taro Yamane sample size derivation formula. Multistage sampling method that has both properties of probability and non-probability sampling technique was used to select the respondents that participated in the survey. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. A reliability score of  $r^2 = 0.78$  was obtained which showed a strong reliability value. Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique was used to run the analysis. Descriptive data were analysed using frequency and percentage and the hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation technique. The research revealed that women often face barriers in accessing networks in manufacturing firms due to male-dominated nature of the industry. Organizations are encouraged by way of recommendation to institutionalize practices that empower female networks and dismantle cultural barriers, fostering a more equitable and productive workplace.

**Keywords:** Organismisational culture, Female, Networking system, South-south

### Introduction

Organizational culture plays a crucial role in shaping workplace dynamics, influencing how employees interact, and determining the overall effectiveness of an organization. It encompasses the values, beliefs, and practices shared by members of an organization, which collectively guide behaviors and decision-making (Daft & Marcic, 2021). In the South-South area of Nigeria, organizational culture is significantly impacted by socio-cultural norms, gender expectations, and communal ties. These factors shape the networking patterns within organizations, particularly for women. Despite global advancements in gender equity, female professionals in this region keep on experiencing challenges navigating organizational structures that are often male-dominated (Okon & Effiong, 2023).

The concept of female networking systems is integral to understanding how women in the workplace build professional relationships and support systems to advance their careers. Networking enables individuals to access resources, mentorship, and opportunities, but gendered barriers often limit the effectiveness of women's networks in male-centric organizational cultures (Ekanem & Akpan, 2022). In the South-South, these barriers are compounded by societal norms that prioritize male leadership and undervalue women's contributions in professional settings. Consequently, female networking systems often operate informally and struggle to achieve the same influence as their male counterparts.

Existing literature highlights the impact of organizational culture on the inclusivity of networking opportunities. Studies reveal that establishments with a hierarchical and patriarchal practices seem to marginalize female employees, limiting their access to influential networks and leadership positions (Adebayo, 2020). In contrast, organizations that embrace diversity and inclusivity foster stronger female networks, which contribute positively to organizational performance and employee satisfaction (Iyangbe & Omoruyi, 2021). These findings underscore the importance of re-evaluating organizational cultures to ensure equitable opportunities for women.

Furthermore, the South-South region of Nigeria presents a unique context where cultural practices and economic activities, such as oil production, influence organizational structures. Women in this region often encounter additional barriers, such as discriminatory practices, lack of mentorship, and limited access to professional development programs (Usoro et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced understanding of how local socio-cultural factors intersect with organizational dynamics to shape female networking systems.

In addition, there is a special setting in the South-South precinct of Nigeria where organizational organogram are influenced by economic activities like oil extraction and belief systems. Usoro et al. (2022) stressed that women in this area frequently face extra setback like discriminatory behaviors, in the form of a lack of mentorship, and restricted access to professional development programs. A sophisticated grasp of how organizational dynamics and regional sociocultural elements interact to influence female networking systems is necessary to address these issues.

Theoretical perspectives, such as social capital theory, provide valuable insights into the dynamics of female networking systems. Social capital, which refers to the resources gained through interpersonal relationships, is critical for career advancement. Women's networks, however, often lack the structural and relational resources necessary to exert significant influence in male-dominated environments (Onuoha & Udoh, 2023). Organizational culture that supports gender inclusivity can enhance social capital for women, fostering more effective networking and collaboration.

This study aims to explore the interplay between organizational culture and female networking systems in the South-South region of Nigeria. It seeks to identify the cultural factors that inhibit or promote women's participation in professional networks and propose strategies to enhance gender inclusivity in organizational settings. By focusing on this region, the study contributes to the broader discourse on gender equity in the workplace, offering insights that are both context-specific and globally relevant.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The general objective of the study is to examine the relationship between organizational culture and female networking system in manufacturing in the South-South of Nigeria. The specific objective is to:

1. Determine how organizational culture influences female networking systems in manufacturing in South-South, Nigeria.

### ***Research Hypothesis***

1. There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and female networking systems in manufacturing in South-South, Nigeria.

## **Review of Related Literature**

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### **Concept of Organisation culture**

Organizational culture has been defined in various ways by scholars to emphasize its multifaceted nature. Schein (2021) describes it as the shared basic assumptions, values, and practices that guide behavior within an organization. This definition highlights the deeply ingrained and often unconscious elements of culture that influence how employees perceive and interact with their organizational environment. According to Cameron and Quinn (2022), organizational culture is a

dynamic system of shared meanings that evolve over time, shaped by internal and external constituents such as leadership, employee relationships, and expectations in the commercial domain. These perspectives underscore the complex interplay between traditions and institutional effectiveness.

Conversely Hofstede (2021) explicated organizational culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one organization from another. This definition draws attention to the distinctiveness of organizational cultures and how they reflect broader societal values and norms. In the context of the South-South region of Nigeria, this is particularly relevant as organizations often mirror the hierarchical and patriarchal structures prevalent in the wider society (Okon & Effiong, 2023). This mirroring can either reinforce or contend with enshrined philosophy, depending on the organization's approach to inclusivity and equity.

Kreitner and Kinicki (2020) offer a practical viewpoint by defining organizational culture as the set of shared attitudes, mores, and behaviors that define how employees work together to achieve organizational goals. This definition emphasizes the role of culture in fostering collaboration and aligning individual efforts with the organization's mission. A supportive corporate culture can boost creativity and productivity in industrial companies, where collaboration and coordination are essential. However, cultural prejudices might impede the development of inclusive practices in male-dominated organizations, restricting the possibility for varied viewpoints to contribute to the success of the business (Akpan & Etim, 2022).

### **Overview of Social Networking**

Social networking has been defined as the process of creating, nurturing, and utilizing personal and professional relationships for the exchange of information and resources (Ellison et al., 2020). It is characterized by the interactions and connections that individuals establish within and outside organizational settings to foster collaboration and achieve common goals (Boyd & Ellison, 2021). Networking is a vital tool for professional development, enabling individuals to leverage their connections for career advancement and organizational success. In the context of female professionals, networking serves as a basis for addressing gender-specific challenges and fostering inclusion in workplaces (Smith et al., 2023).

From a broader perspective, social networking encompasses both official and unofficial interactions within various social and organizational contexts. According to Lin (2021), social networking is a mechanism through which individuals gain social capital—the intangible benefits derived from relationships and interactions. These benefits often include access to resources, knowledge sharing, and support systems that contribute to individual and collective success. However, in gendered organizational cultures, the efficacy of networking for women is frequently constrained by structural and cultural barriers (Ekanem & Akpan, 2022). As such, social networking in these settings requires intentional efforts to create equitable opportunities for all members.

Incorporating technology and innovation, contemporary social networking has expanded into digital platforms, allowing for broader reach and accessibility (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2023). Digital tools facilitate the creation of professional networks that transcend geographical and organizational boundaries, providing new avenues for female professionals to engage and collaborate. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of these platforms is contingent on organizational cultures that support inclusive practices and actively mitigate gender disparities (Onuoha & Udoh, 2023). Understanding the dynamics of social networking, therefore, is essential for fostering equitable and productive organizational environments.

### **Organisation culture and Women Social Networking Platforms**

Social networks refer to activities where individuals attempt to develop and maintain relationships with those who have the potential to support them in their career (Singh et al., 2016). These networks can have various benefits for people in organizational life such as access to important information and help getting a promotion in one's career. However, networks are not available or accessible in an equal manner to everyone. Classical studies have suggested that particularly women

may face challenges in accessing the social networks. They may also have lower returns from these networks. The starting point of this discourse is that even though social networks are profoundly beneficial for career opportunities in organizational life (Klerk & Verreynne, 2017), there is an insufficient understanding about gender perspective in the corresponding research (Lutter, 2015). More specifically, the understanding concerning how women's careers benefit from social networks remain limited in many ways (Klerk & Verreynne, 2017), and little attention has been paid to the evolution of the social networks although they have been argued of being dynamic and progressing over time (Brass et al., 2014). This poses an interesting challenge for researchers to produce more knowledge concerning the role and challenges of social networks that women face during their careers. This review contributes to this line of studies by portraying the evolution of previous studies concerning social networks of women and what effects social networks have for their careers.

Research on social networks and gender has historically focused on the interdependence of gender and social networks (Brands et al., 2022) and how people use and practice gender to assign people to various social roles, organize relationships, and assign tasks wherever social networks are found or developed (Gneezy et al., 2019). It is best to see gender and social networks as mutually constitutive and interdependent, which means that gender and social networks are both causes and effects of one another (Brands et al., 2022). Gender is thus conceptualized and expressed in the sociocultural context as well as in social relations. Gender imbalance in social networks may be caused by organizational and societal systems, according to previous study on social networks and gender (Brands et al., 2022). A more contemporary method seeks to comprehend the gender and social network dynamics within and within organizations, as well as the ways in which individuals' interactions with one another and their thoughts impact social networks (Brands et al., 2022). One peculiarity of both methods is that research on gender in social networks has typically concentrated on how disparity is produced; for instance, studies on gender and social networks have reflected and been embedded within gendered preconceptions.

An excellent illustration of this is the fact that social networks dominated by women reflect unfavorable opinions about femininity (Brands et al., 2022) and even have a lower perceived value and believability (Belliveau, 2015). Thus, a more nuanced understanding of how gender might either support or undermine social networking behavior is required (Brands et al., 2022). Moreover, Davis et al.'s (2020) study affirmed the advantages of social media platforms and proposed that women may improve their knowing-whom skills and locate networks more effectively by using platforms like LinkedIn. Social networking sites could be included in the organizations' encouragement of networking. These websites give women the chance to find out about their contacts and coworkers, so they know who to call if they need help (Davis, Wolff, Forret & Sullivan, 2020).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The Social Dominance Theory (SDT) is a useful paradigm for comprehending the dynamics of female networking systems and organizational culture. According to SDT, social hierarchies sustain group-based inequalities through institutional practices and cultural narratives (Sidanius & Pratto, 2020). Women are frequently marginalized by these hierarchies in South-South industrial companies, which uphold male dominance and restrict the ability of female professionals to build powerful networks. Women's leadership and decision-making roles are undermined by gender preconceptions, which are a clear example of this dynamic (Akpan & Etim, 2022).

Understanding how women develop professional networks and support systems to further their careers in the workplace requires an understanding of female networking systems. In male-centric corporate cultures, gendered barriers frequently restrict the efficacy of women's networks, despite the fact that networking allows people to access resources, mentorship, and opportunities (Ekanem & Akpan, 2022). According to SDT, organizational cultures in manufacturing companies impede the growth and influence of female networks by institutionalizing practices that benefit dominant groups (Otu & Bassey, 2023). Social conventions that place a higher priority on male leadership and diminish the contributions of women in the workplace exacerbate these hurdles in the South-South. As a result, female networking networks frequently function informally and find it difficult to attain the same level of influence as their male counterparts.

Previous research emphasizes how company culture affects networking opportunities' inclusion. Research shows that companies with a patriarchal and hierarchical culture often exclude women workers, preventing them from moving up the corporate ladder and into leadership roles (Adebayo, 2020). Businesses that value diversity and inclusivity, on the other hand, build stronger networks of women, which enhances productivity and employee happiness (Iyangbe & Omoruyi, 2021). By showing how dominant groups oppose structural reforms that jeopardize their privileged positions, social dominance theory explains these dynamics and sustains gender inequality (Sidanius & Pratto, 2020).

Equally, the South-South region of Nigeria offers a distinct setting where organizational structures are influenced by economic activities like oil extraction and cultural customs. Other obstacles that women in this area frequently face include lack of mentorship, discriminatory behaviors, and restricted access to professional development opportunities (Usoro et al., 2022). In order to overcome these obstacles, a thorough grasp of the ways in which organizational dynamics and regional sociocultural elements interact to influence female networking systems is necessary. According to SDT, breaking down these barriers entails putting policies that support equity into place and disputing the myths that legitimize gender inequalities (Akpan & Etim, 2022).

Social dominance theory is one theoretical viewpoint that offers important insights into the dynamics of female networking systems. SDT looks at the systemic injustices that prevent people from using these resources. However, women's networks frequently lack the relational and structural resources needed to make a big impact in settings where men predominate (Onuoha & Udoh, 2023). In addition to tackling the systemic biases mentioned by SDT, an organizational culture that promotes gender inclusion can help women build their social capital and facilitate more successful networking and collaboration.

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## Research Method

The study adopted a cross-sectional research design, which was deemed most appropriate for examining the frequency of a phenomenon (organizational culture and female career growth) across a population with diverse demographic characteristics over time. The study population consisted of 1,570 manufacturing firms located in states within South-South Nigeria, as shown in the table below. The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula, resulting in 306 manufacturing firms. A multi-stage sampling method was employed to select the participating firms. In this process, the states were grouped into three clusters based on their administrative divisions prior to their current structure. Three states—Delta, Edo, and Rivers—were purposively selected based on proximity and convenience for data collection. Subsequently, one manufacturing firm was chosen from each senatorial district within the selected states to ensure equitable and proportionate representation. This constituted the target population for the survey. A structured questionnaire titled "Organizational Culture and Female Networking in Manufacturing Firms in South-South Nigeria" was used for data collection. The instrument's validity was assessed through face and content validation, while its reliability was determined using the Kuder-Richardson method. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed to test the hypotheses, determining whether the independent and dependent variables were linearly correlated.

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## Results and Discussion

This chapter focused on the presentation and analysis of data collected in the field using structured questionnaires. Respondents were given 306 copies of the questionnaire in total. Only 289 of the 306 questionnaires distributed to respondents were returned entirely and precisely filled, while the remaining 17 survey were returned but not accurately filled. This indicated that 94.0% of the questionnaires were returned, while 6% were improperly filled. The researcher presented the data and analyzed the research findings using the 289 questionnaire as the basis for data analysis.

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## Presentation and Analysis of Data

### Distribution of socio-demographic characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the distribution of respondents' socio demographic characteristics.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic of the Respondents

		Frequency	Percentage
Sex	Male	204	70.6
	Female	85	29,4
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age (years)	18-28	96	33
	29-39	156	54
	40 years and above	37	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Religion	Christianity	188	65.1
	Islam	55	19.0
	African Traditional Religion	46	15.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Marital status	Single	143	49.5
	Married	123	42.6
	Divorced	23	7.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Educational Qualifications	Primary	25	8.7
	Secondary	42	14.5
	Higher education	222	76.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
Type of manufacturing firm	Small scale	198	68.5
	Large scale	91	31.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2024

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the survey participants. Regarding gender distribution, 70.6% of the respondents were male, while 29.4% were female. The age distribution indicates that 33.0% of the participants were aged 18–28 years, 54.0% were aged 29–39 years, and 13.0% were 40 years or older. In terms of marital status, 65.1% of the respondents identified as Christians, 19.0% as Muslims, and 15.9% as African Traditional Worshipers. Educational qualification data show that 8.7% held a primary school certificate, 14.5% had a secondary school certificate, and 76.8% possessed a higher education certificate. Finally, the distribution based on the type of manufacturing firm reveals that 68.5% of the respondents were owners of small-scale firms, while 31.5% were owners of large-scale firms.

### Test of Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between organizational culture and female networking system in manufacturing firms in the South-South of Nigeria.

Table 2: Pearson test for the relationship between organizational culture and female networking system in manufacturing firms in the South-South of Nigeria

		Organizational culture	Female networking system in manufacturing firms
Organizational culture	Pearson Correlation	1	.102**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	289	289
Female networking system in manufacturing firms	Pearson Correlation	.102**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	289	289

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

In table 2, it can be observed that the Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r$ , is 0.102 and that it is significant at ( $p = 0.000$ ). This means that the null hypothesis is rejected indicating a significant relationship between organizational culture and female networking systems in manufacturing firms in the South-South Nigeria.

### Discussion of Finding

The hypothesis tested demonstrated a significant relationship between organizational culture and female networking systems in manufacturing firms in South-South Nigeria. This conclusion is supported by the Pearson correlation results ( $r = 0.102$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating a statistically significant relationship. This finding aligns with prior research, such as the study by Brands et al. (2022), which posited that gender and social networks are mutually constitutive and interdependent. According to this perspective, social networks and gender simultaneously influence and shape each other. Gender is both conceptualized and enacted within social relationships and sociocultural contexts. Historically, studies on social networks and gender have focused on organizational and societal structures that contribute to gender inequality in social networks (Brands et al., 2022). Also, investigation by Davis et al. (2020) highlighted the advantages of social networking sites for women, suggesting that platforms like LinkedIn can enhance women's "knowing-whom" competency, allowing them to establish and leverage networks more effectively. The study also emphasized the potential for organizations to encourage

networking through such platforms, which provide women with opportunities to gather information about their connections and colleagues. This enables them to identify the right contacts to approach for support (Davis et al., 2020).

## Conclusion

The study on organizational culture and female career growth within manufacturing firms in Nigeria's South-South Geopolitical Zone provides valuable insights into how organizational structures, cultural practices, and gender-specific initiatives influence women's career paths. The findings pointed out the critical role of networking in career advancement, especially in the manufacturing sector, where informal networks influences access to opportunities. Nevertheless, the investigation also spotlighted noteworthy drawback faced by women in accessing these networks due to the industry's male-dominated nature. This lack of networking opportunities in the region poses a substantial barrier to the professional growth of many women.

## Recommendation

Firms should foster female networking systems to improve women's access to career opportunities and peer support. This can include internal women's networks or partnerships with external professional organizations that advocate for women in industries like manufacturing. By providing networking opportunities, firms help women build valuable relationships, access mentoring, and find leadership role models.

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