

Four ways companies can create greater gender equity

PwC's Global Hopes and Fears Survey 2023, one of the world's largest global workforce surveys, draws insights from the views and experiences of close to 54,000 workers across 46 countries. Of the total number of workers surveyed, 251 were from Nigeria (35% of which were women). In celebration of Women's History Month, we delve deeper into this research to explore a gender perspective and how companies can foster a more inclusive work environment.

The data from this survey is clear – women do not feel included in the workplace. Only 52% of women surveyed in Nigeria (vs 60% men) think their manager considers their viewpoint when making decisions. Additionally, 34% of women (vs 24% of men) think they can't be their true selves at work. The good news, though, is that the survey established that inclusion at work is a catalyst for women's development and advancement, and better positions them to respond to key workforce trends such as developing new skills and AI reinvention.

Employers can accelerate inclusion efforts by prioritising the needs identified by women. To achieve this effectively, they should combine this focus with a strategic approach to Inclusion and Diversity that emphasises the 'inclusion' aspect. To help achieve this, here are four ways companies can create greater gender equity:

1. Listen, measure, and establish accountability.
2. Build inclusive leadership skills.
3. Focus on inclusion from day one, and for everyone.
4. Make pay schemes fair.

Listen, measure, and establish accountability

To remove the obstacles to women's representation, inclusion and advancement, employers need to take a data-driven approach. This starts with measuring the gender proportionality of hires, performance ratings, promotions, key talent populations and leavers, and then using predictive analytics to understand which measures will have the biggest impact in addressing any potential gaps.

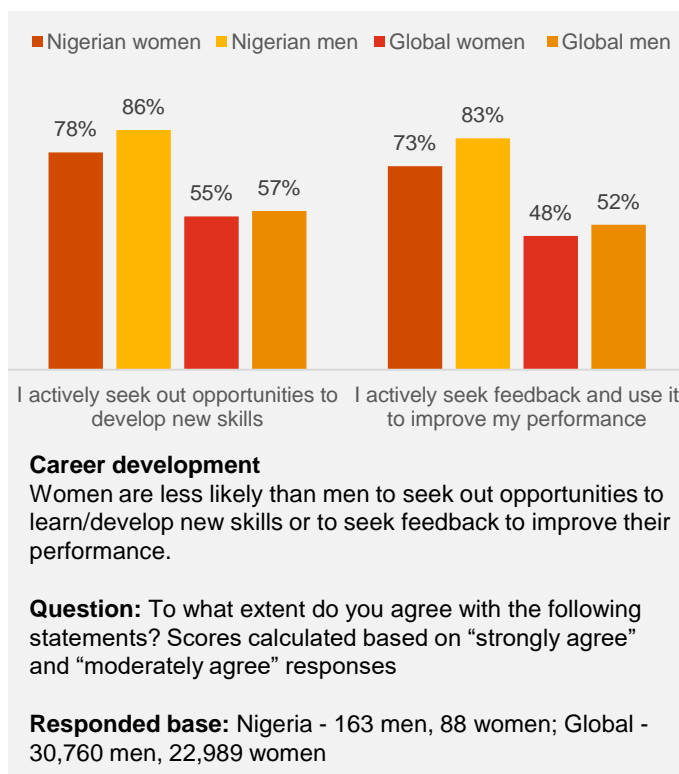
Beyond collecting and analysing workforce data, employers can take a proactive approach. By deploying surveys and other listening tools, they can identify the most pressing employee concerns, unmet needs, and areas offering greatest potential improvements for employees.

Build inclusive leadership skills

A consistent top-line finding that shines through in our research is that inclusion at work is empowering and beneficial for all employees, but critically so for women. From our survey data, women in Nigeria with the highest inclusion scores are 2.7x more likely to be satisfied with their jobs (16% vs 6%). A workplace where women feel that they belong, are included in decision-making, and are treated fairly is a workplace where women can thrive.

The world is continuing to shift rapidly and the impact of technological disruption, shifting demographics and polarisation, along with other global business megatrends are affecting how people work every single day. Collectively, these forces mean that workers are now contending with higher levels of difference than ever before. Building the human skills and culture that will enable workers to thrive while leading, managing or working through this era of increasing difference is critical. Equally, upskilling strategies must extend beyond digital, to include the human skills that leaders need for a shifting world.

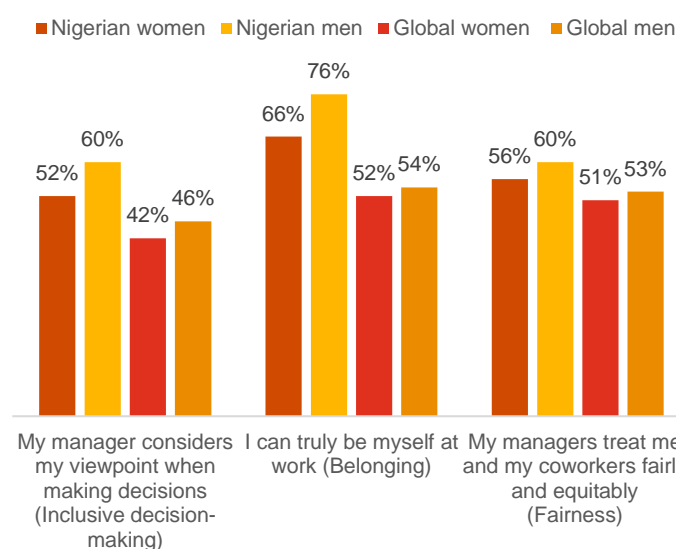
Our survey findings this year show that women are significantly less likely than men to be focused on building their own career (86% of women have a career path vs 88% of men). Companies seeking to close this gap should combine a strong focus on career development with a real-time understanding of who is being promoted or identified as key talent. This is just one of the ways in which employers can blend data, process and real-time interventions to drive progress on gender diversity.



Unconscious biases can distort leaders' decision-making about people and business issues, particularly around gender stereotypes and rooted perceptions that often hold women back. The right training can help leaders learn to recognise and overcome these biases. Beyond understanding and addressing potential biases, inclusive leadership also requires the capacity to show empathy, appreciation, and respect for every individual's unique lived experience, while fostering an environment of psychological safety in which everyone feels empowered to speak up.

Focus on inclusion from day one, and for everyone

This research highlights that women are experiencing statistically significant lower levels of workplace inclusion than men. Across the board, we found that men are more likely to be experiencing these dimensions than women. This leads to a gender gap, with men feeling higher levels of workplace inclusion compared to women.



Commitment to diversity has become increasingly important for employers to attract talent – and today's talents want to see both commitment to diversity and visible progress being made. Leadership commitment and the dedicated engagement of key stakeholders will take the organisation a long way on its inclusion journey, but will not be enough to achieve true success.

An Inclusion and Diversity strategy needs to be inclusive of everyone. So employers should engage every one of their people in their diversity journey, empower all of them to be agents for change, and share progress with them at every step along the way.

Make pay schemes fair

Only 41% of women surveyed feel they are being fairly rewarded financially for their work. When compared to the global statistics of 39% women, it looks slightly optimistic for Nigeria but there is still room for improvement.

In any discussion of financial compensation, the key words are 'objective' and 'fair'. It follows that creating reward and pay schemes that are fair, based on merit and prevent the potential impacts of unconscious bias will be critical in achieving stronger gender equality in the workplace.

So, alongside the gender proportionality of things like hires and promotions, reward is a further table-stakes data point on diversity that should be measured rigorously and consistently. And monitoring reward is not a one-off exercise: there's a need for ongoing measurement and correction, paying particular attention at events and inflection points that might influence pay fairness across the workforce – including major initiatives such as acquisitions, headcount reductions, or efforts to attract talent with in-demand skills.

Note: This article is an adaptation of a PwC Global publication of the same title accessible via our website: www.pwc.com/gx/en/about/diversity/gender-equity/four-ways-companies-can-create-greater-gender-equity.html

Contact Us



Olusola Adewole

Partner and Workforce Transformation Leader, West Market Area, PwC
olusola.adewole@pwc.com

For more information visit:

- www.linkedin.com/company/pwc_nigeria
- www.instagram.com/PwC_ng
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