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WORKPLACE INEQUALITY AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

Workplace inequality remains an important organizational issue because unequal treatment, compensation, and career opportunities may shape employee attitudes and organizational productivity. This study examined the effects of workplace discrimination, wages and salary disparities, and promotion inequality on organizational productivity in COPACI Nigeria Limited, Lagos State. The study was anchored on Equity Theory and complemented by organizational justice theory. A quantitative cross-sectional survey design was adopted. A target sample of 135 employees drawn from a population of 150 through proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected with a structured five-point Likert questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression at the 5% level of significance. The regression showed that $R^2 = 0.070$*, adjusted* $R^2 = 0.048$*,* $F(3,131) = 3.275$*,* $p = .023$*. Discrimination was not significant (*$\beta = .115$*,* $p = .231$*), wage/salary disparity was not significant (*$\beta = .088$*,* $p = .365$*), whereas promotion inequality had a significant negative effect on productivity (*$\beta = -.269$*,* $p = .004$*). The findings revealed the existence of workplace inequalities within the organization. Regression results showed that workplace discrimination, and wage and salary disparities had no statistically significant effect on organizational productivity. However, promotion inequality had a significant negative effect, indicating that unfair promotion practices reduce employee motivation and productivity. The combined effect of workplace discrimination, wage and salary disparities, and promotion inequality on organizational productivity was not statistically significant, suggesting that other organizational factors also influence productivity. The study concluded that although workplace inequalities do not collectively determine organizational productivity, fair and merit-based promotion practices are essential for improving employee commitment and organizational performance. It was recommended that management should encourage transparent promotion policies, ensure fairness in compensation, and provide equal career development opportunities.*

Keywords: *Workplace Inequality; Discrimination; Wage Inequality; Promotion Inequality; Organizational Productivity.*

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INTRODUCTION

The workplace is a setting where people spend a large portion of their time, and sometimes, employment discrimination may set in. This is why it is essential to have an understanding of the effects of workplace inequality in an organization. The term workplace inequality is used to refer to inequities in access to opportunities, wages, recognition and working conditions among workers. Such differences are usually determined by gender, hierarchical position, income, and institutional policy, which are usually manifested in various ways, including wage gaps, unequal career progression opportunities, and discriminatory practices in the workplace (Adeleke & Yusuf, 2022; World Bank, 2023). The consequences of workplace inequalities can be even more severe in developing countries such as Nigeria, where structural issues like the lack of regulatory enforcement, favoritism and transparency in institutional procedures may affect employees' morale, and which in turn, can affect the organization as a whole. The factors influencing employees' treatment can lead to impact on job satisfaction, engagement, and productivity. Past research has revealed that inequalities in compensation and promotion opportunities have a significant effect on organizational productivity, which can result in lower productivity if employees feel unfairly treated (Okafor & Adebayo, 2023). As these concerns become increasingly apparent, many organisations are still having difficulty with the balance between equity and performance. Certain management related practices, which boost the performance of the organization, can also cause greater inequality within the organization, like performance-based payment and competitive reward systems. But it poses a complex balance between efficiency and fairness (Lazear & Shaw, 2020; OECD, 2022). Therefore, there is a need to carry out further specific studies to better understand the relationship between workplace inequality and productivity in specific organizational contexts.

A fair and equitable work environment can spur employees to be dedicated, creative, and productive. But, the inequality can destroy result to dissatisfaction, demoralization, and low trust in management. In this context, the study focused on Copaci Nigeria Limited, Lagos State which aimed at examining the impact of inequality in the workplace on employee productivity and the overall performance of the organization. The research helps to provide insights that can be incorporated into policies and management practices that foster fairness and productivity in an organizational setting.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to International Labour Organization, (ILO, 2016), workplace inequality is still a problem in the world despite laws being passed in many countries to protect workers from discrimination. These practices persist, and there is a need to conduct additional studies to show the detrimental effects of these practices in the workplace, hence the employees. The issue of inequality in the workplace remains as a major problem to the performance of the organizations (both at national and international level) in Nigeria. In many workplaces, there are inequities in pay, promotion, recognition and advancement opportunities. Such inequities may lead to dissatisfaction, loss of motivation, and decreased organizational commitment, which can impact overall productivity (Adeleke & Yusuf, 2022; OECD, 2022).

One of the significant aspects of the issue is wages and salary inequality and its impact on productivity of employees. Some amount of variation in pay for different skills, experience, and performance levels may be appropriate, but too large a difference can lead to employees having a strong sense of inequity. These perceptions have been associated with a decline in morale, effort and cooperation in the work place. Empirical research has proven that a large pay gap can negatively impact productivity, especially if workers feel undervalued or left out of the benefits offered to the organization (Breza, Kaur, & Shamdasani, 2021; Cohn et al., 2022). Inequality also relates to non-financial dimensions of work such as recognition, allocation of workload, and prospects for career progression. If employees feel that there are signs of bias in these areas, it can cause tension at work, less cooperation and less effective teamwork. In addition, gender inequality and differential reward structures persist and affect differential productivity results among groups of workers (Goldin, 2021; Card, Cardoso, & Kline, 2022).

Workplace inequality is further exacerbated in the Nigerian context by structural and institutional problems like favouritism, lack of transparency in management processes and poor enforcement of labour laws. All these factors lead to an unequal treatment of workers and restrict the utilisation of a company's human resources. This may result in a drop in productivity and growth of the organization (Okafor & Adebayo, 2023; World Bank, 2023). Although there is an increasing awareness of workplace inequality as a major problem, there remains very little empirical evidence on how workplace inequality affects productivity in the private sector organizations in Nigeria, especially in organizations like Copaci Nigeria Limited. The absence of data specific to the country context makes it challenging for management to create and enact effective policies to tackle inequality and enhance outcomes. Hence, the need for this study.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How does discrimination influence organizational productivity?
2. What is the effect of wages and salaries disparity on organizational productivity?
3. To what extent does inequality in promotion affect organizational productivity?

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to examine workplace inequalities on organizational productivity. However, the specific objectives are as follows:

1. examine how discrimination influence organizational productivity.
2. assess the effect of inequality in wages and salaries on organizational productivity?
3. evaluate the extent at which inequality in promotion affects organizational productivity?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Ho_1: There is no significant influence on the relationship between discrimination and organizational productivity.

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Ho$_2$: Wage and Salaries disparities does not have a significant effect on organizational productivity.

Ho$_3$: Inequality in promotion does not have a significant relationship with organizational productivity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Organizational productivity refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which organizations utilize their resources, particularly human resources, to achieve desired outputs and objectives. It remains a critical concern for both private and public institutions in the contemporary business environment. Employee-related factors such as motivation, job satisfaction, perceived fairness, engagement, and organizational culture significantly influence productivity (Armstrong, 2021).

Contemporary perspectives view organizational productivity as a multidimensional concept that extends beyond the quantity of output produced. It encompasses employee performance, operational efficiency, financial outcomes, service quality, innovation, customer satisfaction, and sustainable organizational performance. These dimensions provide a comprehensive basis for assessing organizational effectiveness and enable managers to evaluate performance from different perspectives (Abane et al., 2022).

Organizational productivity is also shaped by the conditions under which employees perform their duties. Effective leadership, a supportive organizational culture, employee engagement, job satisfaction, and fair recognition of employees' efforts can promote positive work attitudes and enhance productivity. Conversely, perceptions of unfair treatment may lead to employee dissatisfaction, reduced cooperation, withdrawal, and lower discretionary effort. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence employee attitudes and organizational conditions is essential for improving productivity and achieving sustainable organizational performance.

WORKPLACE INEQUALITY

Inequality in the workplace is defined as an unequal treatment, lack of access to opportunities and rewards among workers in an organization. Such inequalities can exist in formal structures, as well as in informal practices or due to systemic inequalities. Contrary to the notion that an organization functions on a meritocratic basis, it is actually empirical evidence that inequality is very much found in organizational systems. The unequal outcomes are also influenced by social networks, managerial bias and institutional practices (Bernardi & Tridico, 2020). Past studies have distinguished between a variety of inequality types, where the most prominent ones have been economic inequality and inequality of opportunity, as mentioned in recent literature (Wallskog et al. 2024; Monteiro & Straume 2024). Inequality is often framed in terms of unequal outcomes and inequality of opportunity, which sometimes may refer to factors, circumstances and conditions not under the control of the individual such as gender, ethnicity, educational background and social status (Li & Xiang, 2024). According to Wallskog et al. (2024), inequalities in the economy are about inequalities in income, wages or rewards as well as inequities of access to things in society and organizations. Likewise, Nyshadham and Adhvaryu (2024) theorize that inequality of opportunities is related to people's capacity to join in well economic and organizational activities, their access to employment opportunities and their opportunity for fair treatment within the context of their employment. It is relevant to this study as Joshi et al. (2023) have focused on differences among people or groups in an organization regarding opportunities, treatment, resources and experiences in the workplace.

Forms of Workplace Inequality

There are different types of workplace inequalities and their effects on productivity. These include:

Wages and salaries disparity

One of the most obvious disparities is found when comparing wages and salaries among workers, known as wage and salaries disparity. Some disparities may be due to the skills and experience of the contracting parties but more substantial differences in wages can create perceptions of inequality. It has been found that a significant difference between a leader's wages and those of team members could make teams less morale, more productive, and less happy if those differences do not seem necessary, justifiable, or equitable (Osiichuk, 2022).

Discrimination

This workplace discrimination has been an issue for a number of years. Discrimination, is defined as treating a person unfairly because of who they are or because they possess any of the characteristics (age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, marriage/civil partnership, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation), it can be done on purpose or by accident. Biases have been found in the hiring process in general, and more specifically with respect to race and gender (Correll, Benard, & Paik 2007). Discrimination is fundamentally unfair, it means people are not equal—it is also bad for employees' health, job satisfaction, and productivity. Negative affectivity was probably found as a confounding by researchers (Shen & Dhanani, 2018).

Favoritism

Favoritism is a showing partiality or preference to an individual who does not merit it. It is especially common in informal organizational environments, and can frequently result in resentment, diminished trust and diminished productivity.

Inequality in opportunities

It is something to do with unequal access to training, advancement and leadership positions. This builds an advantage over time for some employees, restricting their potential and decreasing overall organizational effectiveness. People in organisations face inequality while working due to various reasons.

PAST EMPIRICAL REVIEW

There have been several empirical studies on the impact of inequality at work on organizational productivity in various countries, sectors and industries. Those studies focus on various aspects such as wage disparities, favoritism, discrimination, promotion inequality etc. as well as their impact on employee morale, commitment and productivity. High levels of inequality are consistently found to be associated with "social division" in organisations and diminished level of cooperation and team working. This, in turn, has a negative impact on productivity (Tanjitpiyanond et al. 2022). Likewise, a correlation has been made between wage disparity and drop in performance at work and an

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increase in employee turnover, especially if it is concluded as unfair by workers (Osiichuk, 2022). In addition to that, inequality may cause emotional exhaustion and psychological stress on employees, also being a drawback of their productivity. A recent study shows that feeling excluded in the labour market markedly reduced productivity due to a decrease in motivation and increase in burnout (Tessema et al. 2022).

Evidences in recent years has found that various forms of inequality in the workplace have both direct and indirect consequences for organizational productivity. For example, differences in pay that are high enough suggest that there should also be differences in ability and/or performance; however, excessive wage inequality has been found to negatively impact employee cooperation and productivity (Breza, Kaur, & Shamdasani, 2021). A study on the issue of inequality and productivity of employees in selected manufacturing companies in Lagos State Nigeria, was conducted (Adeleke and Yusuf (2022). The study was aimed at finding out the significance of wage disparity, favoritism and unequal access to promotion opportunities on employees' performance and productivity of the organization. The study also found that lack of fairness in management behaviors compromised team spirit and stimulated the dissatisfaction of the employees. The study highlighted that individual organisations should put in place clear reward and promotion systems to enhance employees' morale and productivity.

In the U.S., compensation inequality and employee performance in corporate organizations were studied by Cohn et al. (2022). The objective of this study was to examine if differences in remuneration can affect the behaviour of workers and the performance of the organization. The scientists employed quantitative information from companies in various sectors, and applied econometric methods to the data. It was discovered that organizations with high compensation inequity had lower satisfaction, collaboration and organizational commitment in their employees. Those who felt pay inequities were lower in engagement and were less likely to back the management. The results also showed that unequal compensation led to greater conflict between others at the workplace and lower productivity overall. The study found that fairness on reward systems and positive organizational performance along with maintaining the employees motivation were very essential. The researchers suggested that organisations can improve how they pay individuals, so that it can foster trust and cooperation between workers. The study however focused on developed countries and large organizations, which are very different from the structure and operations of private organisations in Nigeria.

Goldin (2021) examined gender disparities and performance at the workplace in contemporary organizations. The focus of the study is the implications of differential treatment of male and female workers on career progression and performance of the organization. A descriptive and an analytical research method was adopted by the researcher in the employment and organizational data applied in different industry to support his research. The study revealed that workplace practices can be disadvantageous for women who work longer hours and are required to be on call (i.e. workable practices) even when they have the same qualifications and level of performance as their male counterparts. Additionally, the study indicated that women did not have equal opportunity with male employees, to be promoted or attain into leadership positions due to structural organizational biases. The results indicated that gender inequality had impact on the efficiency of the workforce when organization could not make the maximum utilization of the full potentials of all the workers. It was found that companies with gender equality and flexibility will have greater productivity and employee satisfaction. The study suggested enhancing the wage promotion framework and implementing equal opportunity policies to curb inequality in the workplace. The research only paid particular regard to gender inequality and did not investigate other aspects of workplace inequality like favoritism and wage discrimination.

However, findings from the above empirical studies showed that inequality in the workplace has a significant negative impact on organizational productivity with respect to wage productivity, favoritism, discrimination and unequal promotion opportunities. Most of the studies found that those who are treated unfairly had decreased employee morale, lack of work cooperation, job dissatisfaction, and organisational commitment which results in decrease in the level of productivity. Most of the studies reviewed however, were qualitative and generally examined foreign countries and more broadly in organizational environment. yet of no specific consideration of Copaci Nigeria Limited in Lagos State. This study thus aims at examining the linkage between this semi-causal nature of inequalities existing at the workplace and organizational productivity in Copaci Nigeria Limited, Lagos State.

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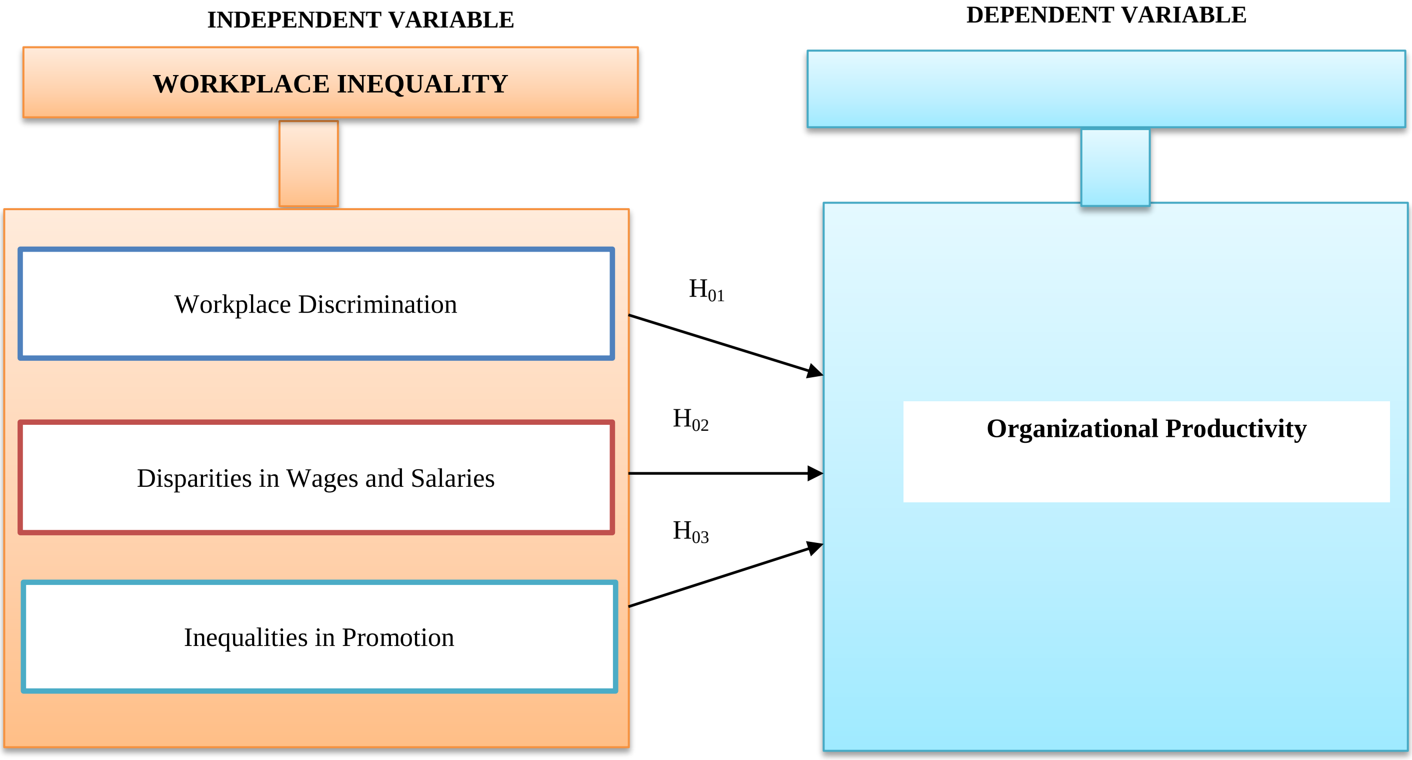
Fig. 2.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK



Source: Researcher's Conceptual Framework, 2026

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised 150 employees of COPACI Nigeria Limited. This was also used as the sample size for the study, based on census sampling technique. The rationale behind this was to allow all members of staff to participate in the study irrespective of the cadre and number of years they had been working in the organization. The employees include management team, supervisors, senior staff and junior staff. Therefore, 150 questionnaire were administered to all workers in the organization. 135 were retrieved, and considered useful for the study, giving a response rate of 90%. The structured questionnaire was designed in a 5-Rate Likert Scale Format, (that is, Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree), in order to capture the respondents' perception about workplace inequalities productivity.

Table 1. Measurement Structure

Construct	Indicators	Measurement
Discrimination (X_1)	Unfair treatment; preferential treatment; discriminatory practices	5-point Likert composite
Wage/salary disparity (X_2)	Pay differences; compensation fairness; pay transparency	5-point Likert composite
Promotion inequality (X_3)	Promotion opportunity; training access; merit-based advancement	5-point Likert composite
Organizational productivity (Y)	Motivation; efficiency; teamwork; satisfaction; commitment; growth	5-point Likert composite

The questionnaire was carefully designed with reference to the research objectives and reviewed by experts and professionals in the field for relevance and appropriateness, to ascertain content and face validity. Internal consistency of the research instrument was conducted through Cronbach's alpha, with 0.86 coefficients. The data collected were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. In order to summarize the opinions of the respondents relating to inequality in the workplace and the productivity of the organization, descriptive statistics including frequency distribution, percentages and mean scores were used. Inferential statistics were also employed to test the relationship between the independent variable (wage inequality, discrimination, promotion inequality) and the dependent variable (organizational productivity). All data analysis was carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), and hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Model Specification

The principal inferential technique is multiple linear regression:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$$

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Where Y = organizational productivity; X_1 = workplace discrimination; X_2 = wage and salary disparity; X_3 = promotion inequality; β_0 = intercept; β_1–β_3 = regression coefficients; ε = error term. Furthermore, the final analysis was conducted to assess linearity, normality of residuals, homoscedasticity, independence of errors and multicollinearity. VIF tolerance should be reported; VIF below 5 is a conservative indication that multicollinearity is unlikely to threaten interpretation. Durbin–Watson and residual plots should also be inspected. Multiple regression was used to test H_01 to H_03 simultaneously at $\alpha = .05$. The findings provided B, SE, standardized β, t, p, confidence intervals, R^2, adjusted R^2 and the overall F statistic.

Demographic Presentation of Respondents

Table 2: Gender distribution

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	68	50.4%
Female	67	49.6%
Total	**135**	**100%**

From the table above, 50.4% of the respondents are male while 49.6% are female. This indicates gender equality in the sample.

Table 3: Age Distribution

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18 – 25	39	29%
26 – 35	27	20%
36 – 45	34	25%
46 – 55	22	16%
56 and above	13	10%
Total	**135**	**100%**

Table 4: Marital Status

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Single	48	36%
Married	64	47%
Divorced	14	10%
Widowed	9	7%
Total	**135**	**100%**

Table 5: Educational Qualifications

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
SSCE	25	19%
OND/NCE	28	21%
HND/B.Sc.	49	36%
Postgraduate	33	24%
Total	**135**	**100%**

Table 6: Length of Service in the Organization

Category	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Less than1 year	31	23%
1–5 years	56	41%
6–10 years	35	26%
Above 10 years	13	10%
Total	**135**	**100%**

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Table 7: Multiple-Regression Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F	p
0.264	0.070	0.048	3.275	0.023

Table 8: ANOVA

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	p
Regression	10.842	3	3.614	3.275	0.023
Residual	144.551	131	1.103		
Total	155.393	134			

Table 9: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	SE	Β	T	p
Discrimination	0.115	0.096	0.115	1.204	0.231
Wage/salary disparity	0.088	0.096	0.088	0.909	0.365
Promotion inequality	-0.269	0.091	-0.269	-2.941	0.004

The model is statistically significant, $F(3,131) = 3.275$, $p = 0.023$, and explains 7.0% of the variance in productivity (adjusted $R^2 = 0.048$). Discrimination is not significant ($p = 0.231$); wage/salary disparity is not significant ($p = 0.365$); promotion inequality is negative and significant ($\beta = -0.269$, $p = 0.004$).

Table 10: Hypotheses Decisions

Hypotheses	Decision rule	Result	Decision
H_{o1}	$p \geq .05$	$p = .231$	Accepted
H_o2	$p \geq .05$	$p = .365$	Accepted
H_o3	$p < .05$	$p = .004$	Rejected

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The purpose of the diagnostic was to determine whether the independent variables were excessively correlated, which could make individual regression coefficients unstable and difficult to interpret.

Table 11: Multicollinearity Diagnostics

Independent Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Decision
Workplace discrimination	0.888	1.126	No multicollinearity
Wage/salary disparity	0.857	1.167	No multicollinearity
Promotion inequality	0.923	1.083	No multicollinearity

The tolerance values are all above .10 and the VIF values are substantially below 10. The results therefore indicate that there is no evidence of problematic multicollinearity among workplace discrimination, wage/salary disparity and promotion inequality. The coefficients can consequently be interpreted as the unique contribution of each predictor while the other predictors are statistically controlled.

ANOVA for the Regression Model

Table12: ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.831	3	3.277	3.275	.023
Residual	131.000	131	1.000		
Total	140.831	134			

The ANOVA result indicates that the overall regression model is statistically significant, $F(3, 131) = 3.275$, $p = .023$. Since $p < .05$, the null proposition that the three regression coefficients are simultaneously equal to zero is rejected. Thus, workplace discrimination, wage/salary disparity and promotion inequality jointly provide statistically significant explanatory power for organizational productivity in the model.

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Regression Coefficients

Table13: Multiple Regression Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	T	Sig.
Constant	4.000	0.087	—	46.00	<.001
Workplace discrimination	0.116	0.096	0.116	1.20	.231
Wage/salary disparity	0.088	0.097	0.088	0.91	.365
Promotion inequality	-0.269	0.092	-0.269	-2.93	.004

Dependent variable: Organizational productivity.

The regression equation is: Organizational Productivity = 4.000 + 0.116(Discrimination) + 0.088(Wage/Salary Disparity) − 0.269(Promotion Inequality).

4. Interpretation of Individual Coefficients

4.1. Workplace Discrimination

Workplace discrimination has a positive but statistically insignificant coefficient ($\beta = .116$, $p = .231$). Because $p > .05$, the effect does not reach statistical significance. Therefore, H_o1 was accepted. This does not imply that discrimination is harmless; rather, its unique statistical contribution to productivity is not significant after the other inequality dimensions are controlled.

4.2 Wage and Salary Disparity

Wage and salary disparity has a positive but statistically insignificant coefficient ($\beta = .088$, $p = .365$). Since $p > .05$, H_o2 was accepted. Differences in remuneration may be accepted where employees regard them as legitimate and based on responsibilities, qualifications, experience or performance. The more relevant managerial issue is therefore perceived fairness and transparency rather than salary differences alone.

4.3 Promotion Inequality

Promotion inequality has a negative and statistically significant coefficient ($\beta = -.269$, $p = .004$). Since $p < .05$, H_o3 was rejected. The finding indicates that higher perceived inequality in promotion opportunities is associated with lower organizational productivity, holding the other predictors constant.

Model Summary

Table 10: Model Summary

R	R²	Adjusted R²	Std. Error of Estimate
.265	.070	.048	1.000

The model produces $R^2 = .070$, indicating that approximately 7.0% of the variance in organizational productivity is explained jointly by workplace discrimination, wage/salary disparity and promotion inequality. The adjusted R^2 is .048, indicating that approximately 4.8% of the variance remains explained after adjustment for the number of predictors. The modest R^2 suggests that productivity is influenced by many additional factors, including leadership, employee engagement, organizational culture, training, motivation, job design and organizational resources.

5. Final Hypothesis Decision

Table 11. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	B	p-value	Decision
H_o1: Workplace discrimination does not significantly affect organizational productivity	.116	.231	Accepted
H_o2: Wage/salary disparity does not significantly affect organizational productivity	.088	.365	Accepted
H_o3: Promotion inequality does not significantly affect organizational productivity	−.269	.004	Rejected

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DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Workplace Discrimination and Organizational Productivity

The findings indicated that workplace discrimination does not have a statistically significant independent effect on organizational productivity of COPACI Nigeria Limited. Although the coefficient is positive, the relationship does not reach the conventional 5% significance level. This should not be interpreted as evidence that discrimination is unimportant. Its effects may be indirect or mediated by employee engagement, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, leadership or organizational culture. Employees may also maintain their output because of professional obligations, economic considerations, supervision or organizational norms.

Wage and Salary Disparity and Organizational Productivity

The findings revealed that wage and salary disparity does not have a statistically significant independent effect on organizational productivity ($\beta = .088$, $p = .365$). This finding is plausible because remuneration differences are not necessarily perceived as unfair when they reflect responsibility, qualifications, experience, seniority or performance. The key managerial concern is therefore whether employees perceive compensation arrangements as fair, transparent and explainable.

Promotion Inequality and Organizational Productivity

Promotion inequality produced the strongest individual result in the analysis. The coefficient was negative and statistically significant ($\beta = -.269$, $p = .004$). Promotion communicates recognition, status, career prospects and perceived organizational value. When employees believe advancement depends on favoritism, personal connections or non-merit factors, they may conclude that additional effort will not necessarily produce career advancement. Such perceptions can reduce motivation, commitment and discretionary effort. The finding therefore supports the need for transparent, merit-based and objectively measurable promotion procedures.

Joint Effect of Workplace Inequality

The overall ANOVA indicated that the three dimensions jointly provided statistically significant effect on organizational productivity, $F(3,131) = 3.275$, $p = .023$. This is important because workplace inequality should be understood as a multidimensional organizational phenomenon. Although discrimination and wage/salary disparity are not individually significant in the model, they form part of the broader workplace environment in which perceptions of fairness may influence employee attitudes and outcomes. The R^2 of 7.0% also indicates that workplace inequality is only one component of organizational productivity.

The multiple regression analysis revealed that workplace inequality, operationalized through workplace discrimination, wage and salary disparity, and promotion inequality, jointly predicted organizational productivity. The overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3,131) = 3.275$, $p < .05$, explaining 7.0% of the variance in organizational productivity. At the individual predictor level, workplace discrimination and wage/salary disparity did not exert statistically significant effects on organizational productivity, whereas promotion inequality had a significant negative effect. The findings suggest that employees' perceptions of unequal access to promotion opportunities may constitute a particularly important pathway through which workplace inequality affects organizational productivity.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that workplace inequalities do not uniformly influence organizational productivity in COPACI Nigeria Limited. While workplace discrimination and wage and salary disparities were not found to significantly affect organizational productivity, promotion inequality was found to have a significant negative effect on employees' productivity when examined independently. This suggested that employees were particularly sensitive to the fairness and transparency of promotion decisions, as perceived inequality in promotion opportunities can reduce motivation, commitment, and job performance. Although the combined dimensions of workplace inequalities did not significantly predict organizational productivity, the findings indicate that organizations should continue to promote fairness, transparency, and equal treatment in their human resource practices. Organizational productivity is influenced by several factors beyond workplace inequalities; therefore, management should adopt comprehensive strategies that address employee welfare, leadership effectiveness, motivation, career development, communication, and organizational culture alongside workplace equity.

However, the following recommendations were made: Management of COPACI Nigeria Limited should establish and maintain transparent, objective, and merit-based promotion policies to ensure that all employees have equal opportunities for career advancement. This will enhance employee confidence, motivation, and productivity. Although workplace discrimination was not found to have a statistically significant effect on organizational productivity, management should continue to promote fairness, equal treatment, and non-discriminatory workplace practices to maintain a positive and inclusive working environment. The organization should periodically review its wage and salary structure to ensure transparency and fairness in compensation, thereby reducing employees' perceptions of inequality and promoting trust in management. Management should provide equal access to training, career development programmes, and professional growth opportunities for all employees to strengthen competence and improve organizational performance. Effective grievance-handling and complaint resolution mechanisms should be established to enable employees to report perceived workplace inequalities promptly and confidentially, thereby fostering harmonious employer–employee relationships. Management should encourage employee participation in decision-making processes and maintain open communication channels to strengthen employees' sense of belonging, commitment, and productivity.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study recommended that future researchers should conduct similar studies using larger sample sizes and multiple organizations to improve the generalizability of the findings. Examine other organizational factors such as leadership style, employee motivation, organizational culture, job satisfaction, and employee engagement that may influence organizational productivity should be examined. Longitudinal or mixed-method research designs to provide deeper insights into the long-term effects of workplace

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inequalities on employee behaviour and organizational performance should be employed. Workplace inequalities in other sectors of the Nigerian economy to determine whether similar findings can be obtained across different industries should be investigated.

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