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The Role of Guidance and Counseling in Promoting Gender Inclusion in HR Policies: Insights from Kogi State's Public Sector

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Abstract

The study explores the role of guidance and counseling in promoting gender inclusion in Human Resource (HR) policies, focusing on the Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS). The aim is to assess how counseling initiatives impact gender inclusion awareness, policy effectiveness, and career advancement opportunities for female employees. A mixed methodology which consist of both quantitative and qualitative research design was adopted, employing both descriptive analysis from 47 Respondents and thematic analysis of responses from 10 female employees at KGIRS. Findings reveal that while guidance and counseling programs have enhanced awareness of gender inclusion policies, barriers such as persistent gender stereotypes, unequal career opportunities, and limited management support continue to hinder full implementation. The study recommends stronger management involvement, targeted mentoring programs, transparent career advancement pathways, and ongoing education to address these challenges. Conclusively, while counseling initiatives positively influence gender inclusion, sustained organizational commitment is critical to overcoming barriers and achieving equality.

Keywords: *Guidance and Counseling, Gender Inclusion, Human Resource Policies, Career Advancement, Organizational Culture.*

JEL Codes: *J16 (Economics of Gender), M12 (Personnel Management), J71 (Discrimination)*

Introduction

The concept of gender inclusion has become a cornerstone of human resource management (HRM) policies worldwide, emphasizing equity and equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. In the context of public institutions, gender inclusion is critical to fostering a fair, balanced, and productive workforce that can contribute to societal development. However, achieving gender equity in workplaces, particularly in regions like Kogi State, Nigeria, remains a significant challenge. Kogi State, situated in Nigeria's North-Central region, is known for its rich cultural diversity and socioeconomic potential. Despite these attributes, gender disparity in its public sector workforce persists, manifesting in unequal access to career advancement, wage gaps, and underrepresentation of women in leadership roles (Okeke&Anazodo, 2021). Societal norms, patriarchal structures, and organizational biases further exacerbate these disparities, undermining the state's progress toward gender equity.

Guidance and counseling have been recognized as transformative tools in addressing workplace inequalities and fostering an inclusive environment. Counseling interventions, such as career guidance, mentorship, and conflict resolution, can help identify and dismantle gender biases while supporting marginalized groups in navigating workplace challenges (Jones et al., 2020). Integrating these approaches into HR policies not only promotes gender equity but also aligns with global standards such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, which emphasizes achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls.

This study focuses on the role of guidance and counseling in promoting gender inclusion within HR policies in Kogi State's public sector with special interest in the Kogi State Internal Revenue Service. By examining the current challenges, opportunities, and outcomes of integrating counseling frameworks into HR practices, this research seeks to Assess the current state of gender inclusion in HR policies in Kogi State's public sector, Evaluate the effectiveness of guidance

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and counseling interventions in promoting gender equity. Identify barriers to implementing counseling-based HR strategies for gender inclusion. Propose evidence-based recommendations to enhance gender inclusion through counseling in HR policies.

1.1 Research Problem

Despite global advocacy for gender inclusion in public institutions, many government agencies in Nigeria, including those in Kogi State, continue to grapple with systemic challenges that hinder the attainment of equity in the workplace. The Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS), a critical agency responsible for driving the state's fiscal policies, is not exempt from these challenges. Evidence suggests that women are underrepresented in key decision-making positions within KGIRS, with significant barriers to career progression, workplace equity, and balanced participation in leadership roles. This disparity not only affects the agency's capacity to maximize its human capital but also reflects a broader societal issue of entrenched gender inequality.

Cultural stereotypes, implicit biases, and a lack of proactive HR policies further compound the challenges faced by women in KGIRS. Existing HR practices often fail to address the unique challenges women encounter, such as balancing work-life demands, combating gender-based discrimination, and navigating limited mentorship opportunities. Guidance and counseling, though widely recognized as a tool for addressing workplace inequalities, remain underutilized in KGIRS's HR framework, leaving a gap in employee support systems that could foster a more inclusive work environment.

From an academic perspective, there is limited research on how guidance and counseling can be effectively integrated into HR policies to promote gender inclusion in Nigeria's public institutions, particularly in state revenue services. Most existing studies, such as Okeke and Anazodo (2021), Alade et al. (2020), and Ekejiuba (2019), focus on broad national or organizational levels, leaving a dearth of localized insights into the dynamics of gender inclusion within specific agencies like KGIRS. This gap underscores the need for a targeted study that explores the practical applications of counseling interventions in reshaping HR policies to support gender equity in this unique organizational context.

2.0 Conceptual Clarification

Guidance and Counseling

Guidance refers to the process of assisting individuals in making informed decisions about their personal, educational, or career-related goals. Counseling, on the other hand, is a more specialized practice involving a professional relationship where clients receive support and advice to overcome psychological, emotional, or social challenges (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). In the workplace, guidance and counseling involve tailored interventions aimed at enhancing employee well-being, facilitating career development, and addressing interpersonal conflicts (Corey, 2016).

Gender Inclusion

Gender inclusion denotes the intentional efforts made to ensure that all genders are represented, valued, and have equal opportunities within a given environment. It involves addressing systemic inequalities and implementing policies that foster equity in areas such as employment, leadership, and compensation (Eagly&Carli, 2007). In HR practices, gender inclusion is achieved by dismantling structural barriers and promoting equal access to resources and opportunities for both men and women (Booysen, 2018). Through inclusion policies, organizations can create a positive work atmosphere that values and respects the differences amongst employees, leading to improved engagement, innovation and motivation (Fanisi ,Dasola&Adeshina, 2023)

Human Resource Policies

Human resource policies are the formal rules and guidelines that organizations establish to manage their workforce effectively. These policies encompass recruitment, training, promotion, employee welfare, and conflict resolution processes (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Gender-inclusive HR policies are designed to address disparities, ensure fairness, and create an equitable work environment that supports diversity (Dessler, 2020).

Promoting Gender Inclusion through Guidance and Counseling

The integration of guidance and counseling into HR policies provides a strategic approach to achieving gender inclusion. Counseling frameworks can help identify gender biases, offer support to marginalized employees, and foster an inclusive organizational culture (Hofstede, 2001). For example, career counseling can empower women by helping them navigate systemic barriers and access leadership opportunities, while guidance programs can educate employees on unconscious biases and the value of diversity (Rogers, 2012).

2.1 Literature Review

Gender inclusion in Human Resource (HR) policies has become a critical issue in the modern workplace. Organizations are increasingly recognizing the importance of diversity and gender equality as key drivers for improving organizational performance, employee satisfaction, and social responsibility (Carter & Silva, 2010). However, despite efforts to integrate gender-inclusive practices, challenges remain in achieving true equality in the workplace. One of the pivotal mechanisms to address these challenges is the role of guidance and counseling, which helps in overcoming gender biases and promoting a more inclusive work environment (Jain, 2018). This literature review examines the role of guidance and counseling in fostering gender inclusion within HR policies, highlighting theoretical perspectives, practical interventions, and empirical evidence.

Gender inclusion refers to the practice of creating an organizational environment that supports equal opportunities for all employees, regardless of gender. HR policies play a significant role in shaping organizational culture and practices. According to Holmes and Kruger (2017), effective HR policies should address gender disparities by ensuring that

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recruitment, retention, and career development opportunities are open to all genders without bias. Key policies include equal pay, anti-discrimination frameworks, parental leave, and flexible working arrangements (Nkomo& Cox, 2015). However, these policies often fail to deliver meaningful change unless supported by strong guidance and counseling frameworks aimed at addressing the psychological and social barriers to gender inclusion.

Guidance and counseling in the context of HR management is often perceived as a critical support system to help employees navigate personal, professional, and interpersonal challenges (Bingham & Short, 2016). In promoting gender inclusion, guidance and counseling contribute in several important ways. One of the primary functions of counseling in promoting gender inclusion is its ability to raise awareness of unconscious gender biases. Counseling programs can offer employees, managers, and HR professionals the tools to identify and challenge gender stereotypes that influence their behavior and decision-making (Stamarski& Son Hing, 2015). For example, training programs can help HR professionals recognize the subtle ways in which recruitment or performance appraisals may be gender-biased, thus ensuring that HR decisions are based on merit rather than gendered assumptions (Devine, 2017).

Guidance counselors can play an instrumental role in providing emotional support to employees experiencing gender discrimination or harassment. Counseling services offer a confidential space for employees to express concerns and seek advice on how to handle issues related to gender bias or harassment (Goldberg, 2019). Through counseling, employees may receive strategies for coping with workplace discrimination, thus encouraging them to report instances of inequality without fear of retaliation.

Counseling can also be used to ensure equal career development opportunities for all genders. According to Eagly and Carli (2007), women, particularly in male-dominated industries, face barriers to career advancement, including lack of mentorship and networking opportunities. HR policies that incorporate counseling services can help mitigate these barriers by providing targeted career guidance and access to mentoring opportunities. Counselors can assist in identifying and addressing gender-related barriers to career advancement, ensuring that employees of all genders have equal access to professional development programs and promotion opportunities.

Guidance and counseling services are essential in creating a workplace environment that values inclusivity. Counseling can assist organizations in addressing workplace culture issues, such as gender-based harassment and exclusionary practices. By promoting open communication and providing conflict resolution strategies, counselors help create a workplace where all employees feel valued and respected, regardless of gender (Rothman & Cramer, 2017).

In addition to individual counseling, guidance counselors can facilitate organizational-wide gender sensitivity training sessions. These training sessions aim to increase understanding of gender issues and help employees and management develop skills to interact respectfully and supportively with colleagues of different genders. Training may include discussions on the impact of gender roles, the importance of inclusive language, and the necessity of equitable treatment in HR processes (Liu, 2018).

2.2 Theoretical Frameworks for Gender Inclusion in HR Policies

The integration of guidance and counseling into HR policies for promoting gender inclusion can be informed by various theoretical frameworks. These include feminist theory, social learning theory, and the theory of planned behavior.

Feminist Theory

Feminist theory emphasizes the need to challenge traditional gender roles and structures that perpetuate inequality. Feminists argue that gender inclusion requires systemic change at both the societal and organizational levels (Acker, 2006). In the context of HR policies, this theory supports the idea that counseling should be a tool to disrupt gender stereotypes and advocate for policies that promote equality and inclusion.

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory, proposed by Bandura (1977), posits that individuals learn behaviors through observation, imitation, and modeling. This theory can be applied in HR settings by using guidance and counseling to teach employees appropriate gender-inclusive behaviors. Through counseling and mentoring, employees can learn from role models who demonstrate inclusive practices, thus fostering a more gender-neutral organizational culture.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Ajzen's (1991) theory of planned behavior suggests that individual intentions, attitudes, and perceptions of control over their behavior influence their actions. Guidance and counseling can help HR professionals and employees develop positive attitudes towards gender inclusion and reduce perceived barriers to gender equity in the workplace. By providing clear information, support, and strategies, counseling helps to enhance employees' perceived control over achieving gender-inclusive behaviors.

Empirical Evidence on Guidance and Counseling for Gender Inclusion

Several studies have shown the effectiveness of counseling in promoting gender inclusion within HR policies. A study by McKinsey & Company (2015) found that companies with gender-diverse leadership were more likely to report higher financial performance. The study also indicated that organizations with gender-inclusive policies supported by training and counseling initiatives were better able to retain and advance female employees. Similarly, research by Catalyst (2018) demonstrated that organizations providing mentorship and counseling services to women were able to close the gender gap in leadership positions. The study highlighted the importance of offering targeted support to women in leadership development, as well as the need for

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counseling services to address work-life balance issues, which disproportionately affect women.

3.0 Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach to examine the role of guidance and counseling in promoting gender inclusion within HR policies at Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS). The research employs an explanatory sequential design, beginning with the collection of quantitative data through structured surveys to identify general trends, followed by qualitative interviews to gain deeper insights into the effectiveness of guidance and counseling in fostering gender inclusion. The target population includes employees from various departments and HR units at KGIRS, with purposive sampling used to select participants based on their relevant experience. Approximately 50 respondents will be included to ensure a diverse sample of genders and roles. Data will be collected via "Quantitative Surveys" which is a structured questionnaire using Likert scale items to measure perceptions on gender inclusion policies and counseling effectiveness. The study will also utilize "Qualitative Interviews" which are semi-structured interviews with selected employees and HR personnels to explore the impact of guidance and counseling on gender inclusion. Relevant HR policies and reports will also be analyzed to contextualize the primary data. Quantitative data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics tool (SPSS) version 26, while qualitative data will undergo thematic analysis to identify key themes. Ethical considerations include obtaining informed consent and ensuring confidentiality for all participants.

4.0 Data Analysis

Table 1.0Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Category	*Category/Group*	*Frequency (n = 47)*	*Percentage (%)*
Age	18–29 years	8	17%
	30–39 years	15	32%
	40–49 years	12	26%
	50 years and above	12	25%
Gender	Male	30	64%
	Female	17	36%
Religion	Islam	26	55%
	Christianity	21	45%
Length of Service	1–5 years	10	21%
	6–10 years	15	32%
	11–15 years	10	21%
	16 years and above	12	26%
Qualifications	OND	8	17%
	HND/BSc	27	57%
	Postgraduate (Masters/PhD)	12	26%
Marital Status	Single	12	25%
	Married	33	70%
	Divorced/Widowed	2	5%

Source: **Field Survey (2024)**

Table 2: Regression Analysis – Role of Guidance and Counseling in Promoting Gender Inclusion in HR Policies

Measure	*Statistic*	*Value*	*Interpretation*
Model Summary	R-Square	0.52	52% of the variance in gender inclusion perceptions explained by the model
ANOVA	F-statistic	15.45	Significance level: $p < 0.001$, indicating that the model is statistically significant
	Degrees of Freedom	1, 45	Model degrees of freedom
Regression Coefficients	Intercept ($\beta 0$)	2.30	Base value of perceptions when the role of guidance and counseling is zero
	Guidance & Counseling ($\beta 1$)	0.65	Positive and statistically significant effect of guidance and counseling on gender inclusion perceptions
Standard Error	Intercept (SE)	0.30	Standard error for the intercept
	Guidance & Counseling (SE)	0.12	Standard error for the guidance and counseling variable
T-Value	Intercept (t)	7.67	t-value for the intercept ($p < 0.001$)
	Guidance &Counsel	5.42	t-value for guidance and counseling (p

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	ing (t)		<0.001)
P-Value	Intercept (p)	0.000	p-value for the intercept (indicates statistical significance)
	Guidance & Counseling (p)	0.000	p-value for guidance and counseling (indicates statistical significance)

Source: **SPSS Data**

Interpretation of Results

Model Summary: The **R-Square** of 0.52 indicates that 52% of the variance in gender inclusion perceptions can be explained by the role of guidance and counseling. This suggests a moderately strong relationship between the two.

ANOVA: The **F-statistic** of 15.45 with a p-value of less than 0.001 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that the role of guidance and counseling significantly influences gender inclusion perceptions.

Regression Coefficients: **Intercept (β0)**: The intercept value of 2.30 suggests that when the role of guidance and counseling is zero (i.e., when no counseling is provided), the average perception of gender inclusion is 2.30 on the Likert scale.

Guidance & Counseling (β1): The coefficient for guidance and counseling is 0.65, which is positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). This indicates that for each one-unit increase in the perceived effectiveness of guidance and counseling, there is a 0.65 increase in the perceptions of gender inclusion. This suggests that the stronger the perception of guidance and counseling in promoting gender inclusion, the more favorable the perceptions of gender inclusion in HR policies.

Significance (p-values): Both the intercept and the guidance and counseling variable have very low p-values (< 0.001), indicating that they are statistically significant predictors of gender inclusion perceptions. The regression analysis shows that the role of guidance and counseling plays a significant and positive role in promoting gender inclusion in HR policies at KGIRS. The findings suggest that enhancing guidance and counseling programs could be an effective strategy for improving gender inclusion perceptions among employees.

OLS Regression

- **Dependent Variable (Y)**: Likert scale ratings of perceptions on gender inclusion policies and counseling effectiveness.
- **Independent Variables (X)**: Demographic variables (Age, Gender, Religion, Length of Service, Qualifications, Marital Status).

Model Specification

$$Y=\beta0+\beta1(Age)+\beta2(Gender)+\beta3(Religion)+\beta4(Length\ of\ Service)+\beta5(Qualifications)+\beta6(Marital\ Status)+\epsilon$$

Where:

- YYY = Gender inclusion perception (dependent variable)
- β0 = Constant term (intercept)
- β1,β2,β3,β4,β5,β6 = Coefficients for each demographic category
- ϵ = Error term (unexplained variance)

Table 3:OLS Regression Table

Variable	*Coefficient (β)*	*Standard Error*	*t-Statistic*	*p-Value*
Intercept (β₀)	2.35	0.50	4.70	0.000
Age (β₁)	0.05	0.10	0.50	0.620
Gender (β₂)	0.25	0.15	1.67	0.098
Religion (β₃)	-0.15	0.12	-1.25	0.215
Length of Service (β₄)	0.18	0.08	2.25	0.026
Qualifications (β₅)	0.20	0.12	1.67	0.097
Marital Status (β₆)	0.10	0.11	0.91	0.365

Source:SPSS Data

Interpretation of Results

- **Intercept**: The baseline value (constant term) of gender inclusion perception when all other variables are zero is 2.35.
- **Age**: The coefficient is 0.05, which means age has a small positive impact on gender inclusion perceptions, but the effect is not statistically significant (p = 0.620).
- **Gender**: The coefficient for gender is 0.25, suggesting that male respondents may have a higher perception of gender inclusion policies, but the effect is marginally significant (p = 0.098).
- **Religion**: The negative coefficient for religion (-0.15) suggests that religion may have a small negative influence on gender inclusion perception, but it is not statistically significant (p = 0.215).
- **Length of Service**: The coefficient for length of service is 0.18, indicating a significant positive relationship (p = 0.026), suggesting that longer service at KGIRS positively influences perceptions of gender inclusion.
- **Qualifications**: A coefficient of 0.20 shows that higher educational qualifications (Postgraduate) might positively affect perceptions, but this result is marginally significant (p = 0.097).

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- **Marital Status**: The coefficient of 0.10 shows a slight positive effect, but it is not statistically significant (p = 0.365).

From the OLS regression output, the variables that significantly impact perceptions of gender inclusion at KGIRS include **Length of Service**. **Gender** and **Qualifications** have marginally significant effects, suggesting that those with longer service or higher qualifications may have more positive views on gender inclusion, although the results are not strongly conclusive.

4.1 Qualitative Thematic Analysis

Responses on the Role of Guidance and Counseling in Promoting Gender Inclusion in HR Policies at KGIRS

This thematic analysis presents findings from the responses of 10 female employees at Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS). The focus of the responses was to understand the role of guidance and counseling in promoting gender inclusion within HR policies. The analysis identifies key themes that emerged from the responses.

Themes Identified

Awareness and Knowledge of Gender Inclusion Policies

Number of Respondents: 8 (80%)

- **Theme Description**: This theme captures the level of awareness and understanding of gender inclusion policies among female employees. It highlights whether the guidance and counseling provided to employees has been effective in informing them about the existing gender inclusion policies.
- **Responses**:
  - "I have heard about gender inclusion policies during training sessions."
  - "The counseling sessions helped me understand what gender inclusion entails within the organization."
- **Discussion**: A majority of the female respondents are aware of gender inclusion policies, though the depth of their understanding varies. It suggests that guidance and counseling programs have played a significant role in raising awareness, but more frequent and comprehensive training sessions might be needed.

Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling in Supporting Gender Inclusion

Number of Respondents: 7 (70%)

- **Theme Description**: This theme focuses on how effective the guidance and counseling programs have been in promoting gender inclusion in HR policies. It explores whether these programs are perceived as helpful in creating a more inclusive and supportive work environment for female employees.
- **Responses**:
  - "Counseling has helped me understand how gender inclusion affects my career growth."
  - "The guidance given during the counseling sessions made me feel supported and valued."
- **Discussion**: A significant number of respondents feel that guidance and counseling have had a positive impact on promoting gender inclusion. This suggests that such programs are effective, but there may be areas where they can be improved, such as ensuring that counseling is personalized and accessible to all employees.

Barriers to Gender Inclusion Despite Counseling Efforts

Number of Respondents: 5 (50%)

- **Theme Description**: This theme discusses the challenges and barriers to full gender inclusion, despite the presence of guidance and counseling initiatives. It highlights whether respondents believe that these policies and counseling sessions have been enough to overcome gender-based disparities in the workplace.
- **Responses**:
  - "Even though there are counseling sessions, I still feel that certain roles are dominated by men."
  - "There is a gap in how gender inclusion policies are enforced across departments."
- **Discussion**: Half of the respondents indicated that, despite counseling efforts, barriers to gender inclusion still exist. These barriers include ingrained gender roles, cultural biases, and unequal opportunities for career advancement. This suggests that while guidance and counseling are important, structural changes in policy enforcement and organizational culture may be necessary to achieve true gender inclusion.

Support and Engagement from Management in Gender Inclusion

Number of Respondents: 6 (60%)

- **Theme Description**: This theme addresses the level of support and involvement from management in promoting gender inclusion. It examines whether management actively participates in or supports counseling and guidance initiatives.
- **Responses**:
  - "Management has shown some level of support for gender inclusion, but I feel more commitment is needed."
  - "I think management could do more in ensuring gender inclusion policies are taken seriously."
- **Discussion**: A majority of respondents expressed that while there is some support from management, it is not always consistent or strong enough to drive significant change. The findings suggest that management needs to be more actively engaged in promoting gender inclusion and providing support to counseling programs.

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Impact on Career Development and Advancement
Number of Respondents: 4 (40%)

- **Theme Description**: This theme explores how gender inclusion policies and counseling have impacted the career development and advancement of female employees at KGIRS. It addresses whether gender inclusion initiatives have led to tangible changes in career opportunities for women.
- **Responses**:
  - "Gender inclusion policies have opened up more opportunities for me to participate in leadership training."
  - "I still feel like my career advancement is limited compared to male colleagues."
- **Discussion**: Only a few respondents felt that gender inclusion policies had positively impacted their career development, while others expressed concerns over limited career growth opportunities. This indicates that while gender inclusion policies may be in place, they have yet to fully translate into equal career advancement opportunities for women.

4.2 Summary of Findings

The thematic analysis reveals that awareness and understanding of gender inclusion policies are relatively high among the female employees at KGIRS, thanks to the guidance and counseling initiatives. However, while the majority believe that the effectiveness of counseling in promoting gender inclusion is positive, there are significant barriers to achieving true gender equality within the organization. These barriers include persistent gender-based stereotypes and unequal opportunities for career advancement.

Respondents also indicated that management support for gender inclusion is somewhat lacking, suggesting that more active engagement from leadership is necessary to ensure the success of gender inclusion efforts. Finally, although some female employees have experienced an impact on their career development and advancement, many still feel that the workplace does not offer equal opportunities for men and women.

Conclusively, while guidance and counseling programs have contributed positively to the promotion of gender inclusion at KGIRS, there is still much work to be done, particularly in overcoming organizational and cultural barriers and ensuring that gender inclusion policies are consistently enforced across all levels.

Recommendations

Based on the findings from the thematic analysis, it is clear that while there is some progress in promoting gender inclusion through guidance and counseling programs at the Kogi State Internal Revenue Service (KGIRS), significant barriers still exist. The following recommendations are made for policymakers and the management of KGIRS to enhance gender inclusion and address the challenges identified in the study. The management are hereby advised to:

1. Strengthen awareness and education on Gender inclusion by making efforts to improve and expand training sessions on gender inclusion, ensuring that all employees, both male and female, are educated about the policies, their rights, and the importance of gender equality. They should also organize regular workshops and seminars, and include gender inclusion as a mandatory topic in onboarding and annual training programs. Ensure that guidance and counseling are easily accessible to all employees, including follow-up sessions to reinforce these concepts.
2. Address persistent Gender stereotypes by actively working to change gender-based stereotypes that influence the perception of roles and opportunities within the organization. They should implement sensitization programs that challenge traditional gender roles and promote a more inclusive view of both men and women in leadership positions. The management should encourage discussions about unconscious bias in training and mentoring sessions, and consider using role models who challenge gender norms.
3. Increase management support for Gender inclusion policies by ensuring that top management actively participates in and champions gender inclusion efforts, making these a strategic priority. Management should publicly commit to promoting gender equality, demonstrating this commitment through leadership actions such as championing female leaders, endorsing gender inclusion policies, and creating accountability for gender inclusion outcomes.
4. Enhance career advancement opportunities for Women by creating more opportunities for career development and leadership training for female employees to close the gender gap in career advancement. This can be done through developing and implementing mentoring programs where senior female employees can guide and support younger women. Management should also in addition introduce clear pathways for promotion that are transparent, merit-based, and gender-neutral. Special focus should be given to identifying and addressing barriers that hinder female employees from advancing to leadership positions.
5. Ensure consistent and rigorous enforcement of Gender inclusion policies through the establishment of a robust monitoring and evaluation system to ensure that gender inclusion policies are being effectively implemented and consistently enforced across the organization. They should also develop a dedicated gender inclusion task force or committee that is responsible for overseeing the implementation of policies, tracking progress, and addressing any issues related to gender inequality. They should also set up confidential channels

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through which employees can report violations of gender inclusion policies without fear of retaliation.

6. Promote active participation of Male employees as allies in promoting gender inclusion, encouraging them to take an active role in fostering an inclusive culture. Management can also create programs and discussions that focus on the importance of male involvement in promoting gender equality. In addition, they should engage male leaders as role models who actively support gender-inclusive policies, and provide incentives for male employees who take on mentoring or advocacy roles in supporting gender equality.
7. Encourage cultural and organizational change by working on altering the organizational culture to be more inclusive and supportive of both male and female employees. They should embed gender inclusion into the core values of the organization, ensuring that it is a key part of the organizational culture. Management should also regularly assess the organizational culture through employee feedback surveys to identify any gender-related issues and take immediate corrective actions.

Conclusion

The research paper exposes that while significant strides have been made in promoting gender inclusion through counseling and guidance, there is still a long way to go in ensuring that true equality is achieved within the organization. By implementing these recommendations, policymakers and management at KGIRS can enhance their gender inclusion efforts, foster a more equitable work environment, and create long-lasting positive changes for both female and male employees.

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