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Socio-Economic Background and Career Choice among Women in Leadership Position in Universities in Kenya

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Abstract:

Women's participation in all sectors of development in Kenya has been lagging behind and this has been attributed to factors which are socio-cultural, economic, political, educational and legal in nature. The study sought to establish the socio-economic background of women in university leadership and women representation in leadership participation in public and private universities. Descriptive research design was used. Women in various leadership positions in both private and public universities. Purposive sampling was used to sample eighty (80) women in positions of leadership. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect the data. Qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages and means were used to analyze the data. The study established that most of the women holding leadership positions in both private and public universities were over 40 years of age. Further, those women over 40 years of age and above formed a total of 59%. The women who were in leadership position at university are those who had managed to swim against the stereotypes that surround the female gender. The study recommended that University Council and the Ministry of Higher Education need to ensure that the participation of women in universities is enhanced through increased admission, retention and completion rates of women into graduate programs.

1. Introduction

Globally, the process of mass education is underway. Most countries have made efforts to ensure access of primary education while providing opportunity for secondary education, as well as, participation in higher education has increased significantly. Sawyer (1999) observed that spectacular increase in the adult literacy and combined primary and secondary enrolment rates were recorded throughout the continent of Africa, with about one hundred and eighty (180) Universities.

Ajayi, Ade, Lameck and Ampah (1996) summarized the situation as follows:

Currently, the percentage of women in tertiary level institutions in sub-Saharan Africa is only thirty five percent (35%) of the total enrolment and this is much lower than at the secondary level, and the latter is, in turn, lower than at the primary level (Ajayi et al, 1996 P. 186)

UNESCO (1998.a) is a report to the World Conference on Education pointed out that one of the greatest achievements of African universities since the 1980's is the high rate of students' enrolment in almost all the universities. The report further indicated that students' enrolment in the Universities in Africa increased by sixty one percent (61%) between 1980 and 1990 and that the number of students enrolled increased from 337,000 to 547,000 within that period. Unfortunately, the increase in students' numbers was not distributed equitably according to Gender. These findings are highlighted by Ardayfio-Schandorf (1995) who states that girls are not reaching the universities and tertiary institutions in Africa, which are crucial for effective participation in development at the highest levels.

The plight of women in sectors, such as, health has witnessed marked improvements globally with greater investments in the reproductive health services that have led to significant reductions in infant and maternal mortalities, reduced fertility rates easing the burden associated with childbirth and child rearing which women bear. However, there are still gaps seen in the opportunities for employment and earnings, with women enjoying far less social protection and employments rights as the men. For instance, it is noted that more than fifty percent (50%) of women in majority of the countries of Latin America, Asia and Africa in non-agricultural sector are engaged in the informal sector whose earnings are far from secure (United Nations, 2003).

Further, it was observed that in many developing countries women and girls are still the poorest, least educated, most unhealthy and most marginalized of the population. According to UNESCO (1999) report, it estimates that more than 586 million of women, which constitute two third of the world's population, aged 15 years and over are illiterate. Although there has been increased effort to bridge the gender gap in primary and secondary school enrolments rates, girls continue to lag behind (United Nation 2003). The benefits of reducing gender inequality can never be over emphasized studies have proven its benefits, for

example in Kenya it was noted that when women farmers are given the same agricultural inputs and education as men, their production went up by twenty percent (20%) (King and Hill, 1993).

Gender equitable access to higher education must be an integral part of any strategy to promote long-term development in Africa. Aina (2004) discussed the quality and relevance of African Universities in the 21st Century and suggested that access to higher education be given to all those who qualify for it. Therefore, as Kenya stands in the 21st Century, in the international arena, its universities must be seen take gender equality seriously. One such effort towards addressing gender balance in admission to public universities is through the affirmative action admission policy by the Joint Admission Board (JAB), which admits girls at a point less than boys (Boit, 2006).

The quest for gender equality has gained global prominence through the concerted efforts of international campaigns and conferences that have been held over the years. The issue of gender equality in higher education came to the international arena after the international conference organized by UNESCO in 1998 in Paris. The objective of the Conference was, among others, to take stock of the gains that have been made in higher education since the Beijing UN conference of 1995. The conference noted that there were few women enrolled in higher education, and therefore, underscored the need to increase access of women in higher education. Secondly, the conference noted that the curriculum of higher education was devoid of aspects of gender that were critical in shaping persons who were gender sensitive. The conference declared a commitment to ensuring that gender stereotyping was eliminated at all levels in the education system, as well as, stimulating participation in disciplines where women were underrepresented (UNESCO, 1998a).

2. Statement of the Problem

Research on women and leadership at universities has indicated that there exists gender inequality in the decision making organs of institutions (Kobia, 2007; Onsongo, 2006). Despite many years of academic analysis, practical feminist advocacy, international resolutions and declaration of intent, progress towards Gender equality in higher education in African is still painfully slow (World Bank, 2006).

Globally, there is a marked pyramid effect, with fewer women compared to men occupying senior academic and management posts in the university. The percentage of women increases, as one climbs down the university leadership hierarchy. Ruto, Mbote and Strachan (2009) agrees with assertion. They pointed out that the number of women professionals in Kenyatta University (KU) is skewed at 30:70 ratio. For example, women at professorial level constitute only five point six percent (5.6%) with, Tutorial fellows, the lowest cadre in the teaching division, constituting forty one percent (41%). At the time of undertaking this research at Moi University (MU) all the five top management university positions were held by men. Even lower in the leadership hierarchy, at the academic and administrative departments, women comprise less than twenty percent (20%) of all heads of department/units (IGRED; 2008). The fact that women make about fifty-two (52%) of the Kenyan population, a fair representation in the top decision making arena is demanded (Bunyi, 2003).

3. Objectives of the Study

- To explore the socio-economic background of women in university leadership.
- To establish the factors those have contributed to the progression of these women to leadership.

4. Research Questions

- What is the socio-economic background of women in university leadership positions?
- What are the factors that have contributed to career choice at the university?

5. Research Design

Ex-post-facto research design was employed. The research design reports what has happened or what is happening, because this design does not give the researchers control over variables. In this case, the study sought to report on socio-economic background of women; decisive career choice factors and the participation of women in public and private universities. The phenomenon under study had already occurred or manifested itself.

6. Methodology

The study embraced a mixed method approach qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data. Quantitative approach refers to the study of populations and samples using numeric data and statistical analysis, whereas qualitative research makes little use of statistics, but relies heavily on verbal data and subjective analysis (Gall, Gall & Borg, 1996). The study, sought to draw the benefits of each of these approaches; this was achieved by combining two research tools, as well as combination of data analysis techniques.

6.1. Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure ideal for this study was purposive sampling, because the target population was specific, and small, more specifically sought a homogenous group of women leaders in universities. Mortens (1998) maintains that a homogenous sample is strategic in which the researcher seeks to describe the experiences of a subgroup of a people who share similar characteristics. Yuko and Onen (2005) state that purposive sampling is used when the researcher seeks focused information.

A total of 145 women leaders were identified in both private and public universities after which convenience sampling was employed on the purposively sampled respondents to participate in the interviews, Gall et-al (1996) and Mortens (1998) point out

that convenience sampling means that respondents are chosen based on their availability. Women leaders who were willing and ready to discuss their personnel experiences participated in the interviews and answer questionnaires.

6.2. Data Collection Instruments

Primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedule for key informants. Questionnaires and interview schedules were developed for gathering information on the respondents' profile, factors that contributed to choice of university career, and organizational related factors that have facilitated to leadership by women at the universities. Secondary data was collected by analysis of the university documents such as staff list and university calendars.

7. Data Analysis

Data analysis employed both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data referred to data obtained from the "voices" of respondents through interviews. The data in audio tape and interview notes were transcribed and processed into word documents. Nvivo7 Software was used to process the data obtained in the interviews. Using the software, the "processed" data was then grouped according to the emerging themes and categories, which were used in describing, discussing and explaining the topic under investigation.

The data from questionnaires was entered into the EPI data software, before being transferred to the SPSS 12 software which tabulated the data and gave meaning to it by use of descriptive statistics, such as, percentages and mean which were used to compare the representation of women in leadership in private and public universities as well as to describe the socio-economic background of women in leadership position.

8. Findings

8.1. The Socio Economic Background of Women in Leadership

The study sought to establish the socio economic background of women in leadership. These data were obtained from questionnaires distributed to women in leadership positions in the selected private and public universities.

8.2. Age of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Below 25	2	2.5	2.6	2.6
25-30	10	12.5	12.8	15.4
31-35	11	13.8	14.1	29.5
36-40	9	11.3	11.5	41.0
41-45	12	15.0	15.4	56.4
46-50	13	16.3	16.7	73.1
Over 50	21	26.3	26.9	100.0
Total	78	97.5	100.0	
No Answered	2	2.5		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 1: Age of Women in leadership position in Universities

Table 1, shows the age distribution of women in leadership. It was found noted that the majority of the WL stated that there were over 40 years of age. Those who stated that their age was between 41-45 years were 15%, those who pointed out that they were between 46.50 years were 17% whereas, and those above 50 years were 27%. The combined percentage of those above 40 years stands at 59%. Forty one (41%) of the WL stated that they were 40 years and below. It is observed that those above 50 years were the majority where as those below 25 were the least at 3%.

8.3. Marital Status

The study also wanted to establish the marital status of the WL. Marital status is considered one of the key variables in establishing the socio-economic background of an individual. The respondents were asked to state their marital status and the findings are as presented in Table 2.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Single	23	28.8	29.5	29.5
Married	49	61.3	62.8	92.3
Divorced	3	3.8	3.8	96.2
Separated	1	1.3	1.3	97.4
Widowed	2	2.5	2.6	100.0
Total	78	97.5	100.0	
No Answered	2	2.5		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 2: Marital Status of Women leaders in Universities

The findings pointed out that 63% of the women who hold leadership positions were married, while 29% stated that they were single. Those that stated that they were divorced, separated and widowed were at 4%, 1% and 3% respectively. These findings are a big departure from the views that have been presented by feminist scholars, who have pointed out that family life and career do not mix, and that women who want to advance in their career have had to make sacrificed by not having families or getting married.

8.4. Education of Parents

The educational background of the parents is said to have an influence on the socio economic background of an individual. It was, therefore, important to ask the WL the highest educational attained by their mothers and fathers. Table 3 presents the findings with respect to the education of the mothers and Table 4 present the education of the fathers.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Primary	29	36.3	42.6	42.6
Secondary	6	7.5	8.8	51.5
College	20	25.0	29.4	80.9
University	13	16.3	19.1	100.
Total	68	85.0	100.0	
Missing System	12	15.0		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 3: Mother's Highest Education Level

A majority of 43% of the WL who answered the question stated that their mothers had received primary education as the highest level of schooling. Twenty nine percent (29%) pointed that their mothers had received some college education, whereas 19% stated that their mothers attained some university education, only 8% stated that their mothers had been to secondary school as the highest level of schooling. The research noted that 15% of all the WL chose not to answer the question.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Primary	24	30.0	39.3	39.3
Secondary	6	7.5	9.8	49.2
College	17	21.3	27.9	77.0
University	14	17.5	23.0	100.0
Total	61	76.3	100.0	
No answer	19	23.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 4: Father's Highest Education Level

When asked the highest education attained by their fathers the findings are as presented in Table 2 above. The majority of the WL who answered the question pointed that 39% of their fathers had attained some primary education. College and university education was cited by 28% and 23% respectively. Ten percent (10%) pointed that their fathers had received secondary education level. It is also noted that 24% of the WL who received the questionnaires did not answer the question on their father's highest education level.

In comparing the mother's highest education and the father's highest education, it is observed that more WL stated that their mothers had attained primary schooling as the highest; whereas there were, more fathers who had attained university schooling. The influence of the education of the parents was noted during the interview carried out when it was pointed out by the majority of the women that their parents had an appreciation of education. Special reference was made to mothers who were instrumental

in ensuring that the woman received support and opportunity to attend schools, as cited in this interview. An interviewee reported:

“My father who died in 1994 was an Agricultural Officer; my mother who passed in 2007 had little education. She was barely literate she had gone up to standard 3. She was the only literate woman in my village when I went to school. She made sure I stayed on till the end....” (Alice, 2010)

8.5. Religious Affiliation

The women were asked to mention the religious faith they ascribe to. Religion is a critical in that it was noted that there were religious faiths that have suffocated the career mobility of women in society. It was therefore, important to establish the religious faiths that the women in university leadership ascribe to. The findings are presented in Table 5.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Christian	75	93.8	98.7	98.7
Other	1	1.3	1.3	100.0
Total	76	95.0	100.0	
No answer	4	5.0		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 5: Religion practiced by the women leaders in universities

A majority of 94% of the WL who responded to the question of the religion stated that they were of the Christian faith. Four women declined to indicate their faith, and one (1) WL mentioned to practicing other faiths other than Muslim, Coptic and Christian. The findings are justifiable taking into account that Kenya, the area where the study was carried is a predominately-Christian country, and secondly one of the universities under study was under the management of the Seventh Day Adventist a Christian faith.

8.6. Province of Birth of Participants

The geographical regions from where a person comes from in Kenya may have an influence on the educational opportunities that were available. It is noted that there are regions in Kenya, such as, the Arid and Semi Arid regions that have historically been disadvantaged in educational development and as a result is currently accorded the affirmative action policy with respect to admission in the university and budget allocation for educational infrastructure development

The WL were asked to indicate the province of birth, in line with the provincial administrative units that Kenya was divided into. When the WL were asked to indicate the province of birth, Rift Valley Province was cited by 20% of the WL taking the lead, followed by Eastern Province with 18% and in the third place was Central Province. Western and Nyanza Province followed with 15% each. Nairobi Province was cited by 12% of the WL whereas Coast Province was cited by 3% of the women as the province of birth. It was noted that not one province was predominantly cited as the province of birth, but there was an equal distribution across the provinces except in one, North Eastern. North Eastern province was not cited at all by any of the WL in the four universities as their place of birth. It was also established that there were WL who were foreign nationals and were working in the universities. This category of women constituted 3% of the WL who participated in the study.

8.7. Socio-Economic Status as a Child

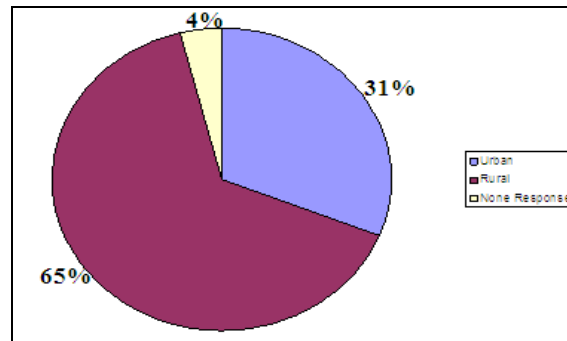
In seeking to establish the socio-economic background, the WL were asked that they perceived their family socio-economic status were when they were children. A majority of 69% stated that their families were average, whereas another 23% stated that their families were of a low socio-economic status when they were children. However, only 8% stated that they perceived that their families were of high socio-economic background. The fact that majority of the WL perceived that their families were of an average socio-economic status, could be explained by the fact that majority of the WL had cited that their parents had received some education, which may have accorded them an average socio-economic status. Table 6 below presents the findings.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid High	6	7.5	7.8	7.8
Average	53	66.3	68.8	76.6
Low	18	22.5	23.4	100.0
Total	77	96.3	100.0	
Missing system	3	3.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 6: Family Socio-Economic Status as a Child

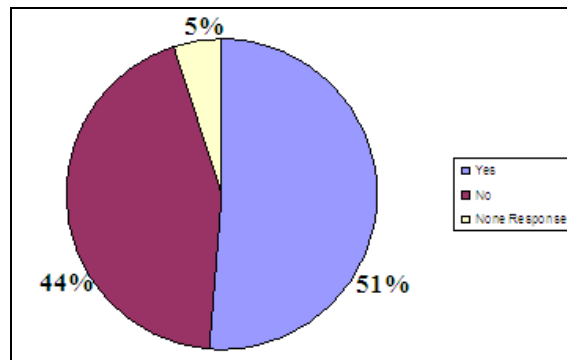
The perceived socio-economic background of the WL as children is closely related to the environment in which they were brought up. When the WL was asked to indicate the type of environment in which they grow up. A majority of 67% stated that they were brought up in a rural environment while 32% stated that they grew up in an urban setting. It is established that the majority of the

WL grew up in rural environments in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s, the decades when the education of the girl and advancement of the woman was still an alien concept and yet majority managed to get an education that have enabled them hold leadership positions.



Pie chart 2: Type of Environment Women Leader Grew up

Having established the type of environment the WL grew up in, the study wanted to know how they perceived the background in which they grew up. The WL was asked if they come from backgrounds that had a high negative cultural influence on gender issues. Fifty four percent (54%) of the WL who answered the questions responded in the affirmative, whereas 46% disagreed with the statement. Pie chart 3 presents the findings.



Pie Chart 3: Background with High Cultural Influence on Gender Issues

The question on whether the WL grew up in backgrounds that had high negative cultural influence on gender issues was followed with a question asking whether the WL come from communities that had reservations on women participating in leadership. Fifty one percent (51%) of the women stated that the communities they come from had reservations on the participation of women in leadership. Forty nine percent (49%) of the WL perceived that their communities had no reservations with the participation of women in leadership as presented in Table 7. It was noted that there were similarities in percentages of WL who perceived their background to have had high negative cultural influence on gender issues and those who stated that they come from communities that had reservations with women participation in leadership.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	38	47.5	51.4	51.4
No	36	45.0	48.6	100.0
Total	74	92.5	100.0	
Missing System	6	7.5		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 7: Community Reservation on Women Participation in Leadership

8.8. Academic Qualification

One of the factors that the study considered significant was the highest level of academic qualification that the WL held. It was important to establish this since it is a critical requirement for appointment in universities. A majority of 38% the WL held masters degree. Twenty six percent (26%) of the women had attained PhD/Doctorial degrees, whereas. Table 8 presents the findings.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid M.A	15	18.8	19.5	19.5
M.Ed	5	6.3	6.5	26.0
M.Sc	9	11.3	11.7	37.7
PhD	20	25.0	26.0	63.6
Bachelors	11	13.8	14.3	77.9
Other	17	21.3	22.1	100.0
Total	77	96.3	100.00	
No Answer	3	3.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 8: Academic Qualification of Women Leaders in the University

The findings indicate that the majority of the WL had attained the basic minimum academic qualification to gain employment in the university. For instance, the minimum qualification for joining the teaching section of the university is a Master's degree.

8.9. Length of Highest Qualification

When the WL were asked how long it took them to attain their highest academic qualification, a majority of fifty three (53%) pointed to having taken between three to five years to complete their studies. These findings seem to tally with the duration of time given for most masters degrees is two years which is the highest academic qualification cited by most WL. Table 9 presents these findings.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 1-2	18	22.5	23.7	23.7
3-5	41	51.3	53.9	77.6
6-10	8	10.0	10.5	88.2
11-15	2	2.5	2.6	90.8
16-20	5	6.3	6.6	97.4
Others	2	2.5	2.6	100.0
Total	76	95.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	5.0		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 9: Duration to attain the Highest Qualification

The study also wanted to establish where the WL undertook their studies, particularly the highest academic qualification they hold. A majority of 73% stated that they undertook their studies locally, whereas 27% stated that they studied abroad as presented by Table 10. The findings seem to confirm the sentiments of one WL who was interviewed and stated as follows. She specifically said;

"Many women are not willing to go outside the country to acquire skills because they feel they will be compromising their family responsibilities." (Mary, 2010)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Locally	56	70.0	72.7	72.7
Abroad	21	26.3	27.3	100.0
Total	77	96.3	100.0	
Missing System	3	3.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 10: Place where highest academic qualification was obtained

8.10. Leadership outside the University

The study also noted that the WL was also involved in leadership activities, outside the university. Sixty-six (66%) of the women indicated that they held leadership positions outside the university, whereas thirty-four (34%) stated that they did not have other responsibilities of leadership, outside the university. When asked to state the leadership the women were involved, their responses varied, some were church leaders; others were in school and college boards and leaders in professional boards. The availability of these women to serve in leadership positions in outside the university is a pointer to their ability to muster their time and multitask efficiently across their many roles. Table 11 indicates the percentage of women holding leadership positions outside the university.

- Do you hold a leadership position outside the University?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	50	62.5	65.8	65.8
No	26	32.5	34.2	100.0
Total	76	95.0	100.0	
Missing System	4	5.0		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 11: Leadership position outside the University

8.11. Length of time in Leadership

The study wanted to establish what the WL perceived to be the personal factors that contributed to their progression into leadership in the universities. It was also important to establish the length of time that the women had held their current leadership position; Table 12 presents findings that 55% of the WL had held the leadership position for between 0.5 years while 23% of the women stated that they had been in leadership for between 6-10 years. This implies that the majority of the WL had received their appointment in the last five years.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 0-5	40	50.0	54.8	54.8
6-10	16	20.0	21.9	76.7
11-15	7	8.8	9.6	86.3
16-20	3	3.8	4.1	90.4
21-25	7	8.8	9.6	100.0
Total	73	91.3	100.0	
Missing System	7	8.8		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 12: Length of time in Leadership

8.12. Factors that were decisive in career choice at the University

The WL were asked to state the factors that considered decisive in determining their career choice, by selection from salary, opportunities within the university, family consideration and proximity to one’s home.

Opportunities within the university scored the highest mean of 4.38 indicating that WL considered the opportunities that the universities offered as a decisive factor in choosing a career in the university. Salary was second with a mean of 4.07, while family consideration was third with a mean of 3.86. Proximity to one’s home was last with a mean of 2.88. It can, therefore, be noted that the proximity to the one’s home was not a major decisive factor to career choice of WL Table 13 and 14 present the summary of the findings.

	SD	D	N	A	SA	NA	NR	Total
Salary	4(5.1)	4(5)	3(3.8)	25(32.1)	23(29.5)	2(2.6)	17(21.8)	78(100)
Opportunities within the University	2(2.6)	3(3.8)	3(3.8)	22(28.2)	40(51.3)	1(1.3)	7(9.0)	78(100)
Proximity to my home	20(25.6)	18(23.1)	3(3.8)	8(10.3)	12(15.4)	6(7.7)	11(14.1)	78(100)
Possibility of consideration of family	10(12.8)	7(9)	6(7.7)	13(16.7)	26(33.3)	7(9)	9(11.5)	78(100)

Table 13: Factors that were decisive in career choice at the University

Key: SD-Strongly agree, D – disagree, N-Neutral, A-Agree, SA-Strongly Agree, NA-Not Applicable, NR-Non Return.

*Figures in brackets are in percentages

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Salary	61	4.07	1.195	.153
Opportunities within the University	71	4.38	.976	.116
Proximity to my home	67	2.88	1.771	.216
Possibility of consideration of family	69	3.86	1.611	.194

Table 14: Means of Factors that were decisive in career choice at the University

8.13. Satisfaction at the Work Place

The WL was asked to indicate the extent in which they were satisfied with the current position they were holding. They were asked to indicate the level of satisfaction they felt with regard to the following eight elements.

- Salary
- Job security
- Flexible working hours
- Job description
- Colleagues
- Promotion opportunities
- Physical working condition
- The work

	VD	D	RD	RS	S	VS	NA	Total
Salary	6(7.7)	10(12.8)	12(15.4)	16(20.5)	25(32.1)	5(6.4)	1(1.3)	78(100)
Job security	6(7.7)	5(6.4)	7(9)	15(19.2)	30(38.5)	12(15.4)	1(1.3)	78(100)
Flexible working hours	5(6.4)	10(12.8)	7(9)	7(9)	26(33.3)	11(14.1)	8(10.3)	78(100)
Job description	5(6.4)	8(10.3)	6(7.7)	11(14.1)	32(41)	13(16.7)	1(1.3)	78(100)
Colleagues	2(2.6)	8(10.3)	14(17.9)	35(44.9)	11(14.1)	4(5.1)	8(10.3)	78(100)
Promotion opportunities	15(19.2)	4(5.1)	14(17.9)	12(15.4)	20(25.6)	6(7.7)	1(1.3)	78(100)
Physical working conditions	10(12.8)	8(10.3)	6(7.7)	15(19.2)	24(30.8)	12(15.4)	3(3.8)	78(100)
The work	5(6.4)	5(6.4)	1(1.3)	14(17.9)	35(44.9)	13(16.7)	1(1.3)	78(100)

Table 15: Level of Satisfaction at the Work Place

Key: VD-Very dissatisfied, D-Dissatisfied, RD-Rather dissatisfied, RS-Rather dissatisfied, S-Satisfied, VS-Very Satisfied, NA-Not Applicable

*Figures in brackets are in percentages.

The responds received from the WL, regarding the level of satisfaction with the listed elements at their work place indicated that colleagues were ranked first with a mean of 4.89. The nature of work was second with a mean of 4.51. Flexible working hours was ranked third with a mean of 4.41. Job description given to their current position was ranked fourth with a mean of 4.32. Job security was ranked fifth with a 4.29. The physical working condition was ranked sixth with a mean 3.95. Salary was ranked seventh with a mean 3.84 and promotion opportunities ranked last with a mean of 3.47, as presented in Table 15.

The study noted that when the WL were asked what they considered as decisive factors in making a career choice in the University, opportunities within the University had ranked highest with a mean of 4.38 and salary had ranked second with a mean of 4.07 as presented in Table 14. Yet the same factors did not score high in terms of satisfaction by the WL.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Salary	75	3.84	1.462	.169
Job security	76	4.29	1.468	.168
Flexible working hours	74	4.41	1.743	.203
Job description	76	4.32	1.499	.172
Colleagues	70	4.84	1.125	.134
Promotion opportunities	76	3.47	1.685	.193
Physical working conditions	75	3.95	1.643	.190
The work	74	4.51	1.397	.162

Table 16: Means indicating level of satisfaction at the Work place

When the WL were asked if they agree that there were equal opportunities for women in the universities to participate in leadership, 60% of the WL indicated some level of agreement, that there were equal opportunities for women to participate in leadership at the university. Thirty two percent (32%) of them stated some level of disagreement, whereas 8% choose to be neutral on the statement. Table 16 indicates these findings which seem to tally with the findings from the interview. Some WL during the interview pointed out the following:

Angela was of the view that their VC had almost achieved gender balance;

In this university is 50-50%. Our Vice Chancellor is almost achieving that goal (Angela, 2010)

Whereas Miriam saw equal opportunities in terms of scholarship available for women;

The university is very good in assisting women to realize their dreams, they encourage you to go on with further studies, they give you opportunities and when you perform you are given more responsibilities (Miriam, 2010).

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	14	17.5	18.7	18.7
Disagree	10	12.5	13.3	32.0
Neutral	6	7.5	8.0	40.0
Agree	33	41.3	44.0	84.0
Strongly agree	12	15.0	16.0	100.0
Total	75	93.8	100.0	
No Answer	5	6.3		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 17: Equal Opportunities for women

When WL were asked if they agreed whether gender had influenced their appointment into position of leadership, 44% of them stated some level of disagreement, whereas 41% of them agreed that gender had an influence on the appointment to leadership. The study however, noted that 15% of the WL remained neutral on the issue as shown in table 17.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly disagree	19	23.8	25.3	25.3
Disagree	14	17.5	18.7	44.0
Neutral	11	13.8	14.7	58.7
Agree	22	27.5	29.3	88.0
Strongly agree	9	11.3	12.0	100.0
Total	75	93.8	100.0	
No Answer	5	6.3		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 18: Gender influences the appointment

Some WL alluded to the role that gender may influence appointment into leadership, particularly in the application of affirmative action in favour of the gender that is disadvantaged as reported by Josephine, one of the interviewees;

So, there has been what I would call an affirmative action where two people are being interviewed for a leadership position and they realize both of them are at par then they use the affirmative action where they say if in the university there are less than 40% of women then they can opt to give the woman the chance because they are trying to built up the base for women (Josephine, 2010).

When the WL were asked if the university to which they belonged had a policy regarding the women participation, fifty two percent (52%) answered in the affirmative while 48% of them stated in the negative. The study noted that while collecting official university documentation, it was established that public universities that participated in the study had official university gender policies that were used to address the increase of women in university leadership. The following excerpt from interviewee points to this;

In that gender policy we have looked at gender in very many spheres, in research, in governance, in HIV& AIDS, in marginalized groups. We have looked at gender issues in all these fields. For example, in governance, we are the ones who demonstrated the fact that there was under representation of women in the leadership and as a result the management came up with a policy that 40% of leadership positions in this university have to be women (Grace, 2010).

The private universities did not have official policies in place, this could explain the closeness in the responses given by the WL in Table 18.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	37	46.3	52.1	52.1
No	34	42.5	47.9	100.0
Total	71	88.8	100.0	
No answer	9	11.3		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 19: Presences of University Policy on the participation of women in leadership

When asked if the gender policy had been effective, 70% of the WL indicated in the affirmative while 30% of them answered in the negative, as shown in Table 17. The study also noted that more than half (40%) of the WL who responded choose not to respond to the effectiveness of the gender policy in their university.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Yes	28	35.0	70.0	70.0
No	12	15.0	30.0	100.0
Total	40	50.0	100.0	
No answer	40	50.0		
Total	80	100.0		

Table 20: Has the Gender Policy in your university been effective?

9. Conclusion

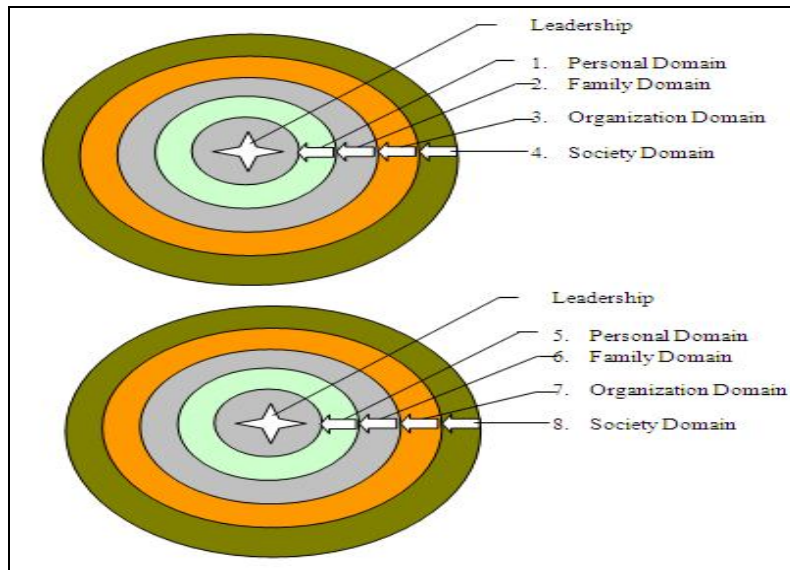
The study further established that the WL in university leadership are women of over 40 years who started off at the lowest ranks within the university and have been able to climb up to leadership, despite their other social commitments. It was also established that women in leadership have been able to engage in various strategies in their quest for leadership, such as acquiring the relevant professional and academic qualification that enabled them to merit leadership. It was also noted that WL have been able to position themselves for leadership by ensuring that they were visible in the university circles. The universities, as organizations have made great strides in ensuring that they engaged women in the leadership. It was noted that opportunities were availed to women by both private and public universities in terms of scholarships and affirmative action in appointment of WL. It was noted that public universities had official gender policies that provided legal framework for implementation of gender friendly working environment.

- Women participation in university leadership is below the recommended thirty percent (30%). That the under-representation of women in leadership in university was attributed to the triple roles: production, reproduction and community activities that women play in society, as well as, the socialization and perceptions of who/what the roles of a woman are in society. The women who participated in this study are those who had managed to swim against the stereotypes that surround the female gender. These conclusions, first, confirm the assumptions of the theory SLT, which point out that the leadership is the interaction of various factors. The attitudes, beliefs and values that the WL hold have enabled them to progress to leadership. The WL did not allow the expectations/socialization of women by society shape their lives. Secondly, the women display behaviour that is associated with leadership by being focused and task oriented. Finally, the WL has been able to maximize on the opportunities that their organizations provided to their advantage for career mobility.
- The perceptions of the society on the female gender did not negatively affect the WL. They seemed not to have allowed the stereotyping affect their resolve in advancing their careers. The WL did not allow society define for them their norms, values and practice, they asserted their own values and priorities.

This study agrees with Eagly and Carli (2007), who pointed out that, opposed to the 'glass ceiling' metaphor that seems to depict a single barrier/obstacle at one point into leadership that the woman have to navigate into the leadership. The truth is that women face a various challenges along their career path.

In truth, women are not turned away only as they reach the penultimate stage of a distinguished career. They disappear in various numbers at many points leading up to stage (Eagly & Carli, 2007, P.4)

Model I is a depiction of the findings of the study which illustrates a labyrinth which conveys the journey that the women make towards the ultimate goal of leadership. The labyrinth is chosen for this purpose because passage through the labyrinth is not a direct and simple, but requires movement through turns and twists, which convey the barriers and obstacle that stand on the career path of women towards their goal of leadership, whereas, the glass ceiling metaphor which seems to imply that there is a single set of barriers at a particular point in a women career, which is usually at the top. The findings of this study imply that women, right from birth are faced with obstacles because of their gender that determines the chances of their success in their career. The study found that there are various domains that women have to control in order to go through the leadership ladder.



Model I: The Women Labyrinth of Leadership (Researcher)

10. Recommendations

The following recommendations and strategies that will improve the women participation in university leadership in Kenya are made;

- University Council and the Ministry of Higher Education need to ensure that the participation of women in universities is enhanced through increased admission, retention and completion rates of women into graduate programs.
- Gender units in universities should be facilitated and empowered by university management to develop the capacity of women who have the potential for university leadership through the participation in conferences and seminars that are tailor-made to address the needs of women in leadership.

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