

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Causes of Gender Inequality among Non-Teaching Staff in Staff in Njoro Campus, Egerton University, Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract:

This study is about gender equality at the place of work among the non-teaching staff in Njoro Campus. The gender equality issue has been a contentious issue globally. It has been universally acknowledged that women are side-lined in different sector. The phenomenon of gender equality among employees in public institutions has been attributed to existing barriers and obstacles. However gender equality among the non-teaching staff of Egerton University has not been investigated. Despite the fact that some male and female employees have similar qualifications and occupy senior and influential positions, gender equality is still a concern. The objective of this study was to evaluate factors hindering gender equality at the place of work among the non-teaching staff in public universities in Kenya especially Egerton University. This study was guided by the following specific objectives namely; to establish positions that are held by men and women among the non-teaching staff members of Egerton University, to examine the causes of gender inequality among the non-teaching staff members of Egerton University and to determine the difference in the way men and women perceive gender issues. The study was also guided by the social feminist theory. A random sample of 100 persons, both male and female employees were selected and involved in this study. The study utilized cross sectional design where data was collected using questionnaires administered to the selected respondents and supplemented by secondary sources of information. The unit of analysis was the individual university non-teaching staff. The data was processed and analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of a statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study found that there was gender inequality in the university and also indication that empowering male and female employees in occupational related factors, including job performance, personality, and self-motivation was likely to enhance equality at the place of work. The study also found out that there were more men in the administration of the University than women and majority of women were secretaries and cleaners. The study concluded that there is gender inequality in Egerton University. The study recommended that affirmative action should be strictly implemented for both men and women to compete on the same level. Also women should be encouraged to venture into those fields which have been traditionally dominated by men.

Keywords: *Gender equality, Place of work, Non-teaching staff, Egerton University*

1. Introduction

This study focused on gender equality among the non-teaching staff of Egerton University. This section looks at how gender equality is dealt with in other parts of the world. Gender related issues is a global phenomenon which is being discussed and analyzed in every country. All over the world, a review of the progress achieved by women in the work place is of great concern. However, there is still an imbalance between women and their male counterparts in the work place in the world today. According to Wilson (1999), it is apparent that the progress towards equality has encountered obstacles at the institutional level in all the countries of the world. Among traditional societies of the world, men and women were assigned different roles (Start, 1998).

Due to the rise of industrialization and urbanization in Western Europe during the eighteenth century, there was a shift from the traditional mode of production to a modern mode of production. Accordingly, men moved to towns in search of jobs in industries and urban centres while women were left at home caring for the children, the sick and the elderly. At this point gender equality was felt, since men became the sole providers of the family while women became the homemakers. Later, some women moved to towns and were employed in specific occupations and positions that were considered to have less prestige, authority and earning. This segregation led to the Women Liberation Movement (WLM) in the 1960s. As a result of the movements, there was the realization that if men and women were given equal opportunities they could perform equally well (Nuwagaba, 2001). This realization was theoretical since it was not practically implemented.

Researchers have concluded that social institutions are gendered (Government of Kenya, 1999 and Seguno, 2000). In Africa, women lack independence and authority in decision making and have no control over their conditions of life (Nuwagaba, 2001). Despite the heavy work, women are seen by policy makers primarily as a source of voluntary labour for development activities and their invaluable socio-economic contribution goes unrecognized.

In the political arena, women have remained marginalized, according to Government of Kenya (1999). When Kenya gained its independence in 1963, more men than women were employed in the public civil service and occupied influential and decision making positions. In many occupations, the pervasive phenomenon of women going only so far and no further in their occupations and professions has come to be known as the “glass ceiling” (Gary, 1999). This concept assumes that women have the motivation, ambition, and capacity for positions of power and prestige, but invisible barriers keep them from reaching the top. They can see their goal but they bump their head on a ceiling that is both hidden and impenetrable. The glass ceiling refers to the artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upwards in their organization into management level positions (World Bank, 2001). The study explored whether there are actual barriers keeping women at Egerton University from reaching the top management.

2. Methodology

The study was carried out in Egerton University. The University is one of the public Universities in Kenya. Its main campus (Njoro) is located in Njoro sub county, Nakuru County (Nakuru District Development Plan, 2002 - 2008). The Njoro Campus is located 35kms from Nakuru town, 180 Km, North-west of Nairobi on the Njoro-Narok road. It has 42 departments and 8 faculties with about 2000 staff members (teaching, administrative and support staff) of whom 1400 are non-teaching staff, 8098 students as at September, 2006 Egerton University calendar. Egerton University is the oldest institution of higher learning in Kenya. It was founded as a Farm School in 1939 by Lord Maurice Egerton of Tatton, a British national. In 1950, the School was upgraded to an Agricultural College offering diploma programmes. The Egerton Agricultural College Ordinance was enacted in 1955. In 1979, the Government of Kenya and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) funded a major expansion of the institution. In 1986, Egerton Agricultural College was gazetted as a constituent college of the University of Nairobi. The following year, 1987, marked the establishment of Egerton University through an Act of Parliament. Egerton University used to be a multi-campus University. The main campus at Njoro houses the faculties of Agriculture, Arts and Social Sciences, Commerce, Education and Community Studies, Engineering and Technology, Environment and Resources Development, Health Sciences, and Science. There are also the Board of Undergraduate Studies and Field Attachment, and the Board of Postgraduate Studies as well as the institute of Women Gender and Development Studies. Laikipia Campus College has now changed to Laikipia University College, which is located near Nyahururu town, comprises the Faculty of Education and Community Studies for Arts-based programmes, and the Faculty of Humanities and Development Studies. Nakuru Town Campus caters for Self-Sponsored Programmes (SSPs). Kenyatta Campus is located five kilometres from the Main Campus. This is where, in 2002, the University established its College of Distance Education. The ten faculties of the University offer a wide range of programmes at diploma, undergraduate, and postgraduate levels. All of them are open to both Government-sponsored and self-sponsored students. The University also offers courses in computer literacy, computer repairs and maintenance, as well as secretarial and accounting courses and, gender and development studies. Throughout its history, Egerton University has been guided by the key principles of integrity, continuous improvement of services and products, accessibility to the society and gender equity. That’s why Egerton University was the best choice for this study. One of the survey designs used in social science research is causal comparative research also referred to as *ex facto* research. The study used *ex post facto* design that involves teasing out possible antecedents of events (observing dependent variable) that have already occurred and cannot therefore, be engineered or manipulated by the researcher, then studied the independent variable in retrospect (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). The sample population was 100 non-teaching staff members in different departments of Egerton University, Njoro Campus, which represents 5.0% of the target population. To ensure that a representative sample was obtained, random sampling method was used. Staff lists were obtained from the University Human Resource department. A sample of 100 was selected using simple random sampling as per their respective Faculties and Departments since 100 is the minimum according to Kathuri and Pals (1993). Sample for the study was randomly picked from non-teaching staff members of Egerton University, Njoro Campus, Nakuru County.

3. Gender Differences among Staffs in the University

Gender equality ensures that all people (men and women) are treated as equals in dignity and rights. Globally, there are deliberate attempts to reduce the gender gap in education, employment and all spheres of life, for instance there is an emphasis on millennium development goals which emphasizes on education, health care, education for all, among others. These millennium goals do not discriminate against either gender. It is in this context that Kenya has committed itself to achieving at least 30% representation for women in employment and has included gender equality in the economic, social and political pillars of Vision 2030. Government of

Kenya, 2006 Equality of opportunity in Kenya's education system is implied in various official documents. Republic of Kenya (1999) Development Plan clearly states in the introduction on education that, every Kenyan has the right to basic education. There is a need to address the gender equality at every level of employment. In Kenyan universities, gender equality is experienced in relation to staff recruitment, training, and promotion. The present study focused on gender equality among the Egerton University staff so as to determine how the university has been able to deal with gender equality of the non-teaching staff.

The present study evaluated whether inequalities at Egerton University among non-teaching staff, and if any could be attributed to its historical origin and the cultural context in which the society is premised. FAWE (2001) observed that there is little systematically documented gender inequality data, insufficient publications on the areas where women find problems on their levels of participation and performance. This has hampered the implementation of programmes to correct gender inequality in most African Universities. The United Decade for Women (1976 - 1985) will perhaps be remembered for the way it not only focused global attention on gender based inequalities, but also facilitated in depth investigation and analysis of the origins and manifestations of gender imbalances in development. However, the awareness created on the needs of women in development did not necessarily lead to innovative strategies for tackling the root causes of inequality and discrimination. Indeed many efforts aimed at developing women on specific projects and strengthening the capacitated women's organizations for selfish ends, and carrying out gender-blind research is still witnessed (Gachukia, 2002).

Most policy makers, planners, programmers and researchers continue to exclude women, treating them as mere consumers of services, rather than as crucial contributors and participants. They have been described as catalysts. The study benefited from both perspectives to link gender equality among the Egerton University non-teaching staff to the past and current direct forms of gender inequality in the world. International campaigns for gender equality have contributed to creating awareness of the injustices committed against women in society. There is legislation in the new constitution requiring universities to promote equality in their practices; it may not be easy to realize the good intentions spelt out in international conventions such as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1985. Again, emphasizing access as is the case now, without making efforts for including and promoting women to decision making positions may only reinforce the gender stereotypes. The study looked into factors that affect gender equality among the Egerton University non-teaching staff and enrich the proposition of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1985.

According to Anselmi and Law (1998) the factors responsible for the gender equality such as teaching qualification and work experiences in most cases translate into advantages for men more than for women. Others include socio-cultural factors, like preference for the same sex in a similar occupation and position. This preference is established during childhood and does not allow cross-sex interactions. This is not encouraged in the constitution, which has adequate provisions for protections against gender based discriminations.

Onsongo (2006) observed that the literacy rates of the world's women stands at 71.2% while that of men is 83.6%. Also, two thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women of whom the majority live in Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is noted that this imbalance contributes significantly to the gender inequality exhibited in various workplace settings. Thus gender equality is a function of educational accessibility in this case. In Britain, it was found that in the 1980s the number of women in higher level occupations, particularly professional and managerial occupations, increased significantly. They increased by 55%, whereas men increased by only 33%. This shifted the gender compositions of these occupations from 21% to 30% female. The major reason attributed to this was an increase in educational qualifications gained by women. Onsongo (2006) also states that in professional and managerial positions the number of women increased, but he does not spell out why male percentage went down.

In Kenya, statistics collected by Onsongo (2006) from the ministry of education on student enrolment for 1998/99 indicates that, of the 40,613 students admitted to the five public universities, 30.5% were female. In comparison, in private universities, female students constituted 46.6% in the same period. This difference was attributed to two major factors: first, the fact that the private universities are dominated by the arts based subjects which attract more female students than their male counterparts, and secondly, the conducive environment and flexible learning periods, in addition to adequate accommodation and security provided in private universities. In public universities it was found that female students encounter difficulties which negatively impact their learning in a different way from their male colleagues. These include sexual harassment, insecurity, inadequate funding and insufficient accommodation facilities. The Courses they enrolled for were further found to be gender segregated. Male students dominated in the Sciences, Engineering and Commerce whereas their female counterparts were concentrated in Arts and Education courses. Gender inequality in courses taken contributed greatly to the continued gender inequality at various settings.

Onsongo (2006) points out that in any organization there is a limited number of women in top positions, and an abundance of interested and qualified male candidates. He further asserts that affirmative action policies employed by Joint Admissions Board (JAB) have been limited to undergraduate female students and nothing has been done for those in need of post graduate and doctoral studies. The argument is that since the points required for female students for university admission at undergraduate level are lowered by one mark, it should be extended to female students enrolling for postgraduate studies. This will enable them to compete equally with men for top management positions. Despite the challenges encountered, a majority of women attain the minimum qualifications and experience yet they still predominate in the lower ranks. The university is an institution of higher learning and can train its staff, yet few women have received such training in comparison to the men. There seem to be barriers in gaining access to training and experience. The study explored this argument in relation to upward mobility of men and women in the university's occupational structure.

4. Results

The objective of this study was to establish gender differences among non-teaching staff members of Egerton University.

The study evaluated the positions held by men and women and the findings are as show on table 1 below.

Positions in the university are very important because they have fame, prestige and remunerations attached to them. A common finding across organisations is that the holder of the highest office in the organisation determines how things are done and can affect its operations. Also those who are in the highest offices enjoy some benefits which others do not.

Holder of the Office	Male Percentage	Female Percentage
VC	100.0	0.0
DVCA&F	100.0	0.0
Registrar Administration	100.0	0.0
DVC R&E	100.0	0.0
DVC AA	0.0	100.0
REGISTRAR AA	100.0	0.0
SAR	64.0	36.0
AR	93.0	7.0
SAA	54.0	46.0
Secretary	0.0	100.0
Clerk	65.0	35.0
Cleaners	43.0	57.0

Table 1: Holder of the Office:

Source: Field Data 2011

The respondents in the study revealed that the position of the vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration and finance, Registrar Academic Affairs and finance department is held by male. Table 4.7 revealed that post of deputy vice chancellor research and Extension is held by male. The respondents revealed that the post of Registrar Administration and Registrar academic affairs are held by male.

The post of Senior Assistant Registrar male lead by 64%, post of Assistant Registrar 93% are male the respondents further revealed that 54 % percent of the Senior Administrative Assistants were male, the research further revealed that 65% of the respondents working as clerks were male. However it was further revealed that post of Deputy Vice Chancellor Academic Affairs is held by female, the post of Senior Assistant Registrar female had minority of 36% percent, post of Assistant Registrar female were 7% this means that certain intervention measures should be taken to address the Gender equality issues between male and female employees in relation to this posts. It was indicated by the respondents that 46 % of Senior Administrative assistants were female, this proved that the difference at this level is low, men seem to be dominating at the top level not at lower levels. There were no males working as secretaries this proved that the traditional belief of male and female work is noticed at Egerton University. It was revealed that 35% of the respondents working as clerks were female. The research revealed that male dominated in this area of clerks, this proves that there is no gender equality at this level and intervention measures need to be taken to address the gender inequality issues. This proves that there is gender inequality at this level and intervention measures need to be taken to address the gender inequality issues.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	4	4.0
Disagree	3	3.0
Neutral	1	1.0
Agree	50	50.0
Strongly Agree	42	42.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 2: Evaluated since employment: Source: Field data (2011)

Table 4.8 shows that majority of the respondents (92%) are of the opinion that they have been evaluated since they were employed in the University. The respondents' opinions in relation to being evaluated were as follows; those who strongly disagreed were 4%, those who disagree were 3%, those who were neutral were 1%, those who agree were 50% and those who strongly agree were 42%. These variations are as a result of the reflection on how often the University evaluates its workers in order to promote them. This variation also portrays a true picture of the importance the university puts on employees evaluation.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	50	50.0
Disagree	14	14.0
Neutral	10	10.0
Agree	20	20.0
Strongly Agree	6	6.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 3: Evaluation is Gender biased: Source: Field data (2011)

The study as in the above table established that 50% percent of the respondents confirmed that evaluation was not gender biased, 14% disagreed, 10% were neutral, 20% agreed while 6% percent believed that the evaluation was gender biased. The study established that there is gender equality in terms of evaluation, since most men and women are aware of procedure for evaluation. Responses were very encouraging and promising for both male and female non-teaching staff. This was based on the equality on University career development policy, and equality policy which encourages efforts to improve their professional training, academic qualifications, and self-motivation at the place of work. Such workers were therefore more likely to be motivated to work harder and improve their performance knowing that they will always be rewarded equally.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	30	30.0
Disagree	10	10.0
Neutral	6	6.0
Agree	40	40.0
Strongly Agree	14	14.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 4: Evaluation based on performance: Source: Field data 2011

From the data analysis, table 4.10 shows that 30% of the respondents strongly disagreed that evaluation is based on performance in the University, 10% disagreed, 6% were neutral, 40% agreed, and 14% strongly agreed. These results are attributed to the fact that with the performance contract in Government institutions, the employees are expected to perform so as to be promoted to another job group. Also this can be attributed to the knowledge of the employees on how evaluation practices are usually conducted.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	18	18.0
Disagree	12	12.0
Neutral	7	7.0
Agree	51	51.0
Strongly Agree	12	12.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 5: Evaluation based on academic level:Source: Field data 2011

The respondents in the above table indicated that their evaluation was based on academic qualification and that was indicated by 63% percent of the respondents. However 30% percent of the respondents indicated that their evaluation was not based on academic qualification while 7% were neutral on the idea under study. This margin is very big and it can also be a pointer that if evaluation is done based on academic qualification, then inequality doesn't exist especially if it is meant for promotion.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Disagree	20	20.0
Disagree	16	16.0
Neutral	5	5.0
Agree	51	51.0
Strongly Agree	8	8.0
Total	100	100.0

Table 6: Evaluation is based on the Number of Years worked:Source: Field data (2011)

Table 4.12 indicates that 20% of the respondents strongly disagreed that evaluation is based on the number of years worked, 16% disagreed, those who had a neutral idea as far as this issue is concerned were 5%, those who agreed were 51% and those who strongly

agree were 8%. This is attributed to the practice of evaluation within the University and how it also value the experience one has achieved from the number of years he/she has worked.

5. Conclusions and Implications

The study found that men are the majority especially in holding non-teaching positions in the University. The office of the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor Administration & Finance, Deputy Vice Chancellor Research & Extension, Registrar Administration and Registrar Academic Affairs are all men. The findings of this study noted that both men and women have been evaluated since they were employed in the university and that evaluation was not gender biased and that it was based on academic qualifications, on your performance and on academic qualification which is a positive gesture and encouraging. This is as a result of what the University is doing in enhancing and addressing gender related issues.

The challenges of gender inequality in the place of work can be eliminated as many actors are involved and willing. Egerton University has been involved in the lives of its employees just like other organizations. That is why it has created Gender Institute to address gender related issues. The study affirms that there is gender difference in the place of work at Egerton University.

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