

The Nexus between Cultural Practises and Women Leadership Positions

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Abstract - Current studies have indicated that great inequality exists in Kenya in the positions of leadership in regard to women in most organizations. The situation of inequality is the same in Kuria West. Most organizations, especially schools and Non-Governmental Organisations have more men than women at senior managerial positions. The study sought to determine the role of cultural practices in influencing the women to take positions of leadership in Kuria West, Migori County. The study was based on descriptive survey design. The study used systematic random sampling to select a sample of women who took part. The study findings may be used to create awareness on the importance of gender equality and hence improve gender balance in high leadership positions. The findings revealed that the main hindrance to women in power was women themselves and culture was the main reason for main obstructors to women in power. In conclusion, most respondents were of the view that culture did not allow women to take leadership roles. Furthermore, there was a negative effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership. In addition, the main reason for the effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership was stereotype and the main challenge was discrimination as women quest for leadership positions. Firstly, it is recommended that there should be also initiatives that will be geared towards ensuring that women are empowered. Secondly, it was realized from the study that the education level of respondents was inadequate.

Keywords - Culture; Cultural Practices; Leadership; Position.

I. INTRODUCTION

On a global arena, the UN CEO, Paul Polman has become an impact champion for diversity and equality in place of work (Bullough, 2008). However, even with the increased media attention and the fact that in the last few decades have shown significant efforts in employment and equality of gender, the advancement of women in the places of work has surprisingly stagnated (Dewalt, 2017). Women participation in the leadership positions has declined globally, and if this trend continues, women might be left out of leadership positions completely. Moreover, significant number of women needs to be motivated to go for higher leadership positions because studies have indicated that it leads to higher productivity for organizations. Currently,

many organisations are now focusing on equal pay opportunities and elevating women to higher leadership positions (Bullough, 2008).

Most studies indicate that women encounter numerous cultural problems when they seek achievement. For instance, studies by Ouko (2014) and Wekesa (2015) specify that the Bukusu, Kisii, Kuria, and Maasai community are some of the traditionalists that fail to appreciate the efficacy of equality among people. The environment workplace is subjugated by a restrictive female prototype, which restricts women. Few numbers of women can navigate organizational life in such scenarios. For instance, in Kuria West, women are imperilled to the concentrated inspection that exceeds performance. The

women are usually judged according to their looks and speech. This cultural perception often side-lines and ignores extremely gifted women from holding positions of leadership on a basis of cultural attitude. Given clear multicultural phenomena observed in Kuria-West, and the presence of these communities in this region, gender disparity, remains rife, thus, the inability of women to adequately exercise power in leadership positions.

In Kuria West, the rank of employed women has become better in the decades that followed. Nevertheless, the development of career women into positions of leadership has dwindled. Women experience difficulty in rising to leadership positions in work environments that has been dominated by the male counterparts. The growing social prospects for equivalent opportunities globally cannot be overlooked There needs to be a significant change that demands dedicated headship emphasis to the economy that could only attained by the attraction and retention of qualified women in management and making optimization of women managers.

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the descriptive survey design where the primary data collected was structured and subjected to a formal statistical and numerical analysis and used to describe and understand behavior (Matthews & Ross, 2010; Stangor, 2011; Bryman, 2012; Passer, 2014). The study employed descriptive survey research design which describes the state of affairs as it exists and the researchers use to administer a survey questionnaire to a smaller group of people in order to identify trends, in attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of a larger group of people (Kombo & Tromp, 2006; Clark & Creswell, 2015; Gliner, Morgan, & Leech, 2017). This method was chosen after consideration of previous research undertaken in similar areas (Huang and Law, 2003).

The target population was women residing within Kuria West Sub-County. Specifically, the researcher interviewed Kenyan women living in Kuria West and its sub-regions.

This target was chosen because they possessed information that assisted in the finishing of this study. The study utilized systematic sampling method due to its nature. It is a type of chance sampling method that relies on arrangement of target population according to some identified rule, ordering or random start (Bryman, 2012; Clark & Creswell, 2015). The sampling technique was used in the study because the women in the study were in different, firms, institutions and organizations within Kuria West. The researcher also selected the respondents according to their rank in their places of work. Systematic sampling helped the researcher know the composition of the target population within organizations and institutions in Kuria West with a sample size of 208 respondents.

Importantly, questionnaire is the key instrument that was used in the study to obtain evidence from the respondents that were selected. In this study, the procedure for collecting data depended on the tools for data collection. Data analysis refers to the way toward bringing request, structure, and importance of the mass of gathered information. Some of the time, analysis of data can be an untidy, tedious, and captivating strategy. Data analysis is a persistent movement which does offer responses to the examination inquiries as well as gives the analyst the headings for future strategies of gathering information. Data analysis helps the analyst to land at the information examination (Creswell & Clark, 2018). The analyzed data was presented in the form of tables and frequencies. The tables helped the researcher to have a visual representation of the data analysed. Test-retest reliability was utilized to quantify unwavering quality gotten by managing a similar test twice over some stretch of time to a gathering of people.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3.1 shows the responses concerning the respondents' age bracket, 18-25 years had 15.9%, 26-35 years had 40.9%, 36-45 years had 31.7%, 46-55 years had 6.2 and above 55 years had 5.3%. This means that a majority of the respondents were of age bracket 26-35 years.

Table 3.1 : Age bracket

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18-25 years	33	15.9	15.9	15.9
26-35 years	85	40.9	40.9	56.7

36-45 years	66	31.7	31.7	88.5
46-55 years	13	6.2	6.2	94.7
Above 55 years	11	5.3	5.3	100.0
Total	208	100.0	100.0	

As depicted by Table 3.2 concerning position, senior had 19.2%, middle level had 35.6% and junior had 45.2%. This

is to insinuate that a majority of the respondents study were of the junior position.

Table 3.2 : Position

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Senior	40	19.2	19.2	19.2
	Middle level	74	35.6	35.6	54.8
	Junior	94	45.2	45.2	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

On marital status as shown in Table 3.3, single had 33.7%, married had 44.2% and divorced had 22.1%. This meant that most respondents were married.

Table 3.3 : Marital status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	70	33.7	33.7	33.7
	Married	92	44.2	44.2	77.9
	Divorced	46	22.1	22.1	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

On the level of education as depicted on Table 3.4, primary had 25.5%, secondary had 45.2%, middle level

college had 22.6% and university had 6.7%. This meant that most respondents' educational level was secondary.

Table 3.4: Level of education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary	53	25.5	25.5	25.5
	Secondary	94	45.2	45.2	70.7
	Middle level college	47	22.6	22.6	93.3
	University	14	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

On the monthly income of respondents as depicted in Table 3.5, less than Kshs. 5000 had 28.8%, Kshs.5000 - Kshs.10,000 had 26.0%, Kshs.10,001 - Kshs.20,000 had 19.2%, Kshs.20,001 - Kshs.30,000 had 15.4% and finally above Kshs. 30,000 had 10.6%. This is to insinuate that most respondents earned less than Kshs. 5000.

Table 3.5: Monthly income

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Less than Kshs. 5000	60	28.8	28.8	28.8
	Kshs.5000 - Kshs.10,000	54	26.0	26.0	54.8
	Kshs.10,001 - Kshs.20,000	40	19.2	19.2	74.0
	Kshs.20,001 - Kshs.30,000	32	15.4	15.4	89.4
	Above Kshs. 30,000	22	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

On family size as revealed (Table 3.6), 0-2 members had 22.1%, 3-5 members had 34.6%, 6-10 years had 34.6% and above 10 members had 8.7%. This meant that most respondents had family size of 3-5 and 6-10 members.

Table 3.6: Family size

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-2 members	46	22.1	22.1	22.1
	3-5 members	72	34.6	34.6	56.7
	6-10 members	72	34.6	34.6	91.3

Above 10 members	18	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	208	100.0	100.0	

On duration of work as depicted in Table 3.7, 0-3 months had 11.5%, 4-6 months had 18.3%, 7-11 months had 26.0%, 1-2 years had 19.2%, 3-5 years had 17.3% and above 5 years had 7.7%.

Table 3.7 : Duration of work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	0-3 months	24	11.5	11.5	11.5
	4-6 months	38	18.3	18.3	29.8
	7-11 months	54	26.0	26.0	55.8
	1-2 years	40	19.2	19.2	75.0
	3-5 years	36	17.3	17.3	92.3
	Above 5 years	16	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

Moreover, the respondents were queried on if culture allowed women to take leadership roles. 23.1% of them agreed, 56.7% of them disagreed, 10.6% of them admitted maybe and 9.6% admitted that they did not know (Table 3.8). The study realized that culture did not allow women to take leadership roles. Generally, culture is regarded as an influencing variable regarding matter of leadership and management. This has been supported by researchers who conducted research in similar field of study. Culture is regularly referred to as either the key hindrance to work-life approaches, as social standards supersede formal arrangement expectations (Jamali, 2015). Cultural practices can influence leadership positions in a great manner.

Cultural practices can likewise introduce limitations to headway of women to abnormal state initiative and administrative positions where occupation adverts for administrative positions require years of experience (Wando, 2008). Wando (2017) observed that culture does not mirror the qualities that grasp and praise decent variety in working environment. He attests that there is have to effectively challenge secret and obvious practices that support gender inclination subsequently obstructing the advancement of women in the executives (Wood, 2008). The findings totally agree and corroborate with the findings of the study that indicated that culture does not allow women to assume positions of leadership.

Table 3.8 : Culture allowing women to take leadership roles

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	48	23.1	23.1	23.1
	No	118	56.7	56.7	79.8
	Maybe	22	10.6	10.6	90.4
	I don't know	20	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

In the study, respondents were inquired on the effects of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership (Table 3.9). Positive had 39.9% and negative had 60.1%. The findings clearly showed a negative effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership. Roles of gender of

women and men are dissimilar and this can negatively affect the gender roles. The findings agree with an investigation did by Jamali, Safieddine and Daouk (2006) in Lebanon uncovered that women have less open doors for expert improvement in associations contrasted with men.

Table 3.9 : Effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive	83	39.9	39.9	39.9
	Negative	125	60.1	60.1	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 3.10, the respondents were inquired on the reason for the effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership. Stereotype had 42.3%, culture had 36.5% and knowledge had 21.2%. A study indicated that the main reason for the effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership was stereotype and the main challenge was discrimination as women quest for leadership positions. The findings agree with Toh and Leonardelli (2012), who emphasized that women, who have generally been less spoken to than men in authority positions, rise as

pioneers in certain social orders more than others. In contrast to past social clarifications for this impact (established in contrasts in esteems, practices, or gender based jobs), it is contended that once a culture's fixes its quality of standards and social authorizations can incite a protection from change rehearses that verifiably put men in administration positions. More tightly societies will yield less women spoke to among top initiative positions (Toh & Leonardelli, 2012).

Table 3.10: Reason for the effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Stereotype	88	42.3	42.3	42.3
	Culture	76	36.5	36.5	78.8
	Knowledge	44	21.2	21.2	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

The respondents were inquired on the main obstructers to women in power according to Table 3.11. From the findings, men had 27.9%, female had 44.7%, government had 16.8% and other had 10.6%. The findings revealed that the chief obstructer to women in power were the women themselves. The study findings revealed that the main impediment to women in power were the women themselves. From the findings, incentives were the main issues to addressing the challenges of obstructers to women

in power. According to Choge (2015), the difficulties confronting female educators in initiative were distinguished as; absence of advancement since a large portion of them had never been advanced, inconsistent headway openings, parenthood duties, and profession idleness because of land fixed status inferable from family obligations, absence of good examples, predominance of guys in the authority system and absence of confidence to look for the regulatory posts forcefully.

Table 3.11 : Main obstructers to women in power

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Men	58	27.9	27.9	27.9
	Women	93	44.7	44.7	72.6
	Government	35	16.8	16.8	89.4
	Others	22	10.6	10.6	100.0
	Total	208	100.0	100.0	

The study sought to find out the reasons for main obstructers to women in power. Culture had 42.3%, ignorance had 24.5% and illiteracy had 33.2% (Table 3.12).

Culture stood out as the reason for main obstructers to women in power.

Table 3.12 : Reasons for main obstructers to women in power

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Culture	88	42.3	42.3	42.3
	Ignorance	51	24.5	24.5	66.8

Illiteracy	69	33.2	33.2	100.0
Total	208	100.0	100.0	

A correlation was done between culture permitting women to partake roles of leadership and the preferred leadership position (Table 3.13). The study findings showed

that the two variables had a correlation positive of 0.243 that was positive and significance of 0.000.

Table 3.13 : Correlation between Preferred leadership position and culture allowing women to take leadership roles

		Preferred leadership position	Culture allowing women to take leadership roles
Preferred leadership position	Pearson Correlation	1	0.243**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	208	208
Culture allowing women to take leadership roles	Pearson Correlation	0.243**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	208	208

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In conclusion, most respondents were of the view that culture did not allow women to take leadership roles. Furthermore, there was a negative effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership. In addition, the main reason for the effect of gender roles as defined by the culture on leadership was stereotype and the main challenge was discrimination as women quest for leadership positions. Furthermore, the study showed that obstructer to women in power was the women themselves and culture stood out as the reason for main obstructers to women in power. Furthermore, incentives were main issues to address the challenges of obstructers to women colleagues in power.

Firstly, it is recommended that there should be also initiatives that will be geared towards ensuring that women are empowered. This empowerment will certify that the means of support of women are sustainable. Secondly, it was realized from the study that the education level of respondents was inadequate. Therefore, the study

recommends that the need of education should be emphasized so that the women can acquire the appropriate skills and competencies in their areas of expertise.

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