Socio-Cultural Factors and Career Progression of Women in the County Government of Wajir, North Eastern - Kenya

Hussein Mohamed Olow and Prof. Kennedy K. Mutundu

Department of Social and Development Studies
Mount Kenya University, Thika - Kenya
Email: olowhussein@yahoo.com

Abstract

Traditionally, women have been viewed as child-bearers and keepers of the home. Undeniably, women are still discriminated against in terms of access to education, family decision making, employment and elective positions as well as property ownership in many countries. This has kept on being the situation in spite of the way that the current act gives the feeling that individuals are liberal disapproved about the issues relating to sex fairness. The purpose of this study is to analyse the influence of Social Cultural aspects, and organizational Structures on career progression of women in the county government of Wajir, North Eastern Kenya. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. With a sample of 72 women. The study employed data collection instruments including Questionnaires used among the women and interviews among the local administrators. Piloting was carried and realized a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.73. The investigation gathered both qualitative and quantitative information. The quantitative information was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences- Version 24. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The findings showed how a few of the respondents (4.5%) were very satisfied that Cultural beliefs had affected their career progression. The study showed that while their existed some correlation between the social cultural aspects of the community with the career progression of women, all were insignificant. The study recommends that the County government of Wajir to consider adapting legislative policies around Social and cultural aspects in career progression for women in Wajir. The study findings may help the county administration in establishing an exhaustive strategy change just as pragmatic endeavors towards expanding ladies' portrayal and interest in open segment.

Key words: *Socio-Cultural, Career Progression, Women, County Government, Wajir, Contextual Factors*

Introduction

In the past decades, women have progressively acquired increasing level of education in numerous areas of the world and their extent includes around 40% of laborers around the world (ILO, 2002). In numerous nations, ladies have higher paces of enrolment in schools and colleges and overwhelm certain monetary divisions, for example, training and nursing fields. This wonder in any case, has not been resembled by equal admittance to work openings at more significant levels of associations. There is a tenacious world pattern influencing female supervisors where their profession advancement levels at center administration positions (Wentling,2003).

Greig, Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi (2007) found that an examination to gauge the sexual orientation hole uncovered that regarding narrowing the sex hole, Finland, Sweden, Norway, Iceland and New Zealand ranked in the top ten. Recognizable unlucky deficiencies in the best ten were Australia, the UK and USA. As per the WEF report, no nation on the planet has yet arrived at correspondence among ladies and men (Greig et al., 2007), nor wiped out the sex hole where ladies and men share dynamic force. A similar report broke down the status of ladies in the executives and uncovered that in spite of the fact that ladies were accounted for to be utilized for compensation in comparable numbers to men around the world, the quantity of ladies holding administrative positions was discovered to be a lot of lower (Tlass & Kauser, 2010). Ladies were accounted for to make "moderate and lopsided advancement".

As indicated by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM, 2010), Kenya is among the nations where ladies have not gained noteworthy ground in ladies' portrayal not to mention support in all divisions of improvement since freedom. Albeit Kenyan ladies are step by step joining the common help and making critical steps to create vocations in the beforehand male-overwhelmed callings, they are still terribly underrepresented in senior administration and public choice situations in work bunch P or more contrasted with 24.3% of those in work bunch A-G (UNIFEM, 2010). Albeit some advancement has been made in tending to sexual orientation abbreviations in Kenya, through governmental policy regarding minorities in society and sex mainstreaming strategy, a ton of exertion actually should be done given that ladies assume a basic job in social–economy improvement of any country; there is an earnest need to eliminate all the obstructions that frustrate their commitment to public turn of events.

The new Kenyan constitution 2010 extraordinarily advances the strengthening of ladies, accommodates the advancement and portrayal of ladies and charges parliament to authorize enactment with that impact. Under the new law, the constitution makes uncommon seats for district gatherings, close to 66% of whose participation was of a similar sexual orientation. This will guarantee sexual orientation value. Article 197 of the constitution likewise accommodates sex equalization and variety (Government of Kenya, 2010).

Among the crucial qualities and standards of common help set down in the constitution is sexual orientation value in arrangement, preparation and headway at all levels. Article27(3) of the bill of right (chapter four) also upholds women rights and central opportunities. Ladies reserve the privilege to rise to treatment, remembering the option to rise to open doors for governmental issues, economy, societies and socially (GoK, 2010).

Article 27(6) digs in governmental policy regarding minorities in society. Despite the fact that its harshest pundits excuse it as a measure that winds up propagating similar self-shameful acts that made it fundamental in the main, the governmental policy regarding minorities in society standard is generally observed as a panacea to the dreary presence of ladies.

The common assistance is the arrangement of the Government. This is through the guidance by open strategy declaration and the specialist improvement plans and brochures. Common assistance is established by services. The justification of making services is to upgrade skills in parts of public turn of events. Services are answerable for arranging and executing their own projects. All the more explicitly they are liable for distinguishing proof of issues which require activity; ID of methods for tending to these issues (strategy definition); detailing of money related designs for depository; and co-appointment of clerical exercises (Manda, 2001).

The common assistance assumes a basic function in the social-monetary advancement of the country just as in the support and improvement of public administrations. Endeavors are constantly cultivated for improving the common service with the target of advancing it terms of expertise, receptive to public advancement challenges and effective in the conveyance of administrations. Common help works as per the common assistance rules and guidelines. In Kenya, the Public Service Commission (PSC) is the human asset the board organization as accommodated in law, and it is accused of the support of the common assistance framework. It works as per strategies for the direct of human asset exchanges, for example, enlistment &selection, advancement, execution evaluations, detachment and remuneration. These normalized strategies give objectivity in the selection of contestants to the common help and furthermore give equivalent treatment to those as of now in the administration.

Through the Public Service Commission Kenya is focused on the accomplishment of sex balance and tries to build ladies support in managerial posts (Manda, 2001). To accomplish this, the President on twentieth October 2006 passed an official pronouncement announcing the administration responsibility to usage of a governmental policy regarding minorities in society in enrollment and advancement of ladies in the public division. This was proposed to make value in work of men and ladies and advancements to senior situations in the public-sector.

In Wajir County, although data on women in leadership is scanty, there is no single woman in top leadership except the mandatory woman representative. There is no single elected woman MCA despite the fact that Wajir county assembly has thirty elected MCAs.

Even in non-elective posts in the county government, women are not well represented for example: out of the thirty ward administrators appointed by the county government only five are women. Wajir County has six sub-counties and there is no single woman sub-county administrator. Wajir County is more characterized with patriarchal and male dominated culture where men have more rights compared to women hence women have few chances in decision making process and this denies them equal participation in development and leadership matters.

It is evident from the previous studies; no study has been conducted on factors affecting upward career mobility of women to top leadership of women in various positions in the context of Wajir County in Kenya. Indeed, until now there are insufficient empirical findings on this issue in Wajir County. The proposed study, therefore, addresses the gap in this area by examining factors affecting upward career mobility of women to topmost leadership through multi-dimensional aspect of women in various positions with special reference to Wajir County in Kenya. The study thus, focused on establishing influence of Social Cultural aspects on the career progression of women in the county government of Wajir, North Eastern Kenya.

Literature Review

The socialization of the young lady kid in numerous social orders is at fault for apparent failures with respect to ladies. The existence of entry for ladies is recognized and considered significant posts meant for them, directly from the introduction of the young lady youngster, in contrast with the kid. An examination did on vocation improvement of Latina and African American females by De-Leon (1996), uncovered that young adult females need scholastic aptitudes and profession related encounters and subsequently see thin profession open doors for themselves, and these consolidate to present considerable deterrents to getting future positions and vocations. This is because of socialization rehearses that don't plan females to confront difficulties and create different abilities not within the important ones for the presentation of conventional exercises (De-Leon, 1996). Jamali and Sidani (2005) investigated social climate and reported that it relates to carrying out of ladies' profession movement. The authors suggested exploration on the part of social perspectives about female business that is a concern for the current study.

In the African setting, conventional convictions and social mentalities with respect to the job and status of ladies in the public arena are as yet common and numerous ladies are essential for this framework thinking that it's hard to disengage from the social custom in case they be excluded (Kiamba, 2008). despite the effective role played by female workers in administrative duties and responsibilities, cultural beliefs have centered women to kitchen. Sadie (2005) elaborates this through opining that the males being breadwinners, outrightly have public life that females should not enjoy. For Jamali et al. (2005), social climate and related aspects as far as conduct desires has a task to carry out in ladies career progress.

Despite the fact that sex difference may not be unmistakable, oppression ladies is still generally exemplified in both law and customs. Customs that overlook or disparage ladies' assessments are normal in many creating nations. According to Wood (2008), in certain nations it abuses normal practices for a lady who takes up any duty outside her home compound. Moreover, ladies who work outside the house are typically over-troubled by adding such job duty to homegrown duties. In this way ladies' professional success possibilities are still impressively not exactly those of men. Majanja and Kiplang'at (2003) further saw that regardless of the changing laws, the rejection of ladies' dependent on sex stays far reaching and settled in the public eye through socio-social qualities, discernment, desires and demeanor which downgrade ladies' characters and accomplishment.

In Kenya, the administration has set up approaches to give equivalent instructive chances to the two young men and young ladies that have prompted the accomplishment of sex equality in the enrolment at grade school level. Anyway, certain different components that are natural in the general public everywhere do not support young ladies. The framework appears to permit more noteworthy instructive wastage among young ladies so incongruities can be recognized at auxiliary and tertiary levels. An exploration did on training wastage among young ladies in Kenya set up that wastage is higher among young ladies because of social, social aberrations (Olweya, 1996). Despite social disposition a few ladies can rise above and ascend to places of initiative yet as a general rule, it

implies having to wilderness social desires with their positions of authority.

Certainly, the literature shows the gaps existing in bringing the women into careers guided by socio-cultural factors. There are traditional gender roles where the societal expectations and traditional gender roles often place women in caregiving and domestic roles, which can limit their career opportunities and progression. There are also family expectations that dictates how women may face pressure to prioritize family over their careers, especially in cultures where family is highly valued. This can lead to career interruptions or slower advancement. In a different dimension, gender bias and stereotypes can affect how women are perceived in the workplace, impacting their chances of career advancement. This includes biases related to leadership roles and technical positions. The concept of work-life balance is also attributed to socio-cultural factors which can influence women's decisions regarding work-life balance. Cultural norms may discourage long working hours or extensive business travel, which can affect career progression in certain fields.

Education and access for women are socio-cultural factors can impact women's access to education and training opportunities, which are critical for career advancement. In some cultures, women may have limited access to higher education or vocational training. Networking and Mentoring spells around cultural norms that may affect women's ability to network and access mentorship opportunities. In some cases, informal networking events or mentorship relationships may exclude women. Discrimination and harassment make the socio-cultural factors can contribute to workplace discrimination and harassment. Women who experience these issues may find it challenging to progress in their careers. What about the cultural norms around assertiveness? In some cultures, assertive behavior is discouraged in women. This can impact their ability to negotiate for promotions or pay raises. Marriage and motherhood have set the expectations and pressures related to marriage and motherhood can significantly affect women's career choices and progression. Some women may opt for less demanding roles or take career breaks during these life stages.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This investigation was in Wajir County with a target population of 235 respondents involving 205 Middle level management women, 5 chiefs from 5 areas within Wajir, 5 gender officers accountable for Gender Desk Wajir county, women representative leaders 10 staff individuals from county government and 10 Muslim leaders. Sample entailed 72 persons as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Sampling Frame

GROUPING	POPULATION	SAMPLE SIZE
Middle level management women	205	62
Local administrators	5	2
Officials in control Gender desk	5	2
Women representative leaders	10	3
Muslim leaders	10	3
TOTAL	**235**	**72**

The study employed data collection instruments including Questionnaires was utilized to collect data from the women and interviews for the local administrators. Piloting was carried out with a sample 10 women and 1 staff from the Wajir County thus (10% of the sample). Cronbach's statistical scale of alpha ranging from 0 to 1 was used to establish reliability of the research instruments. The investigation gathered both qualitative and quantitative information. The quantitative information was figured for clear insights for

example frequencies, means and rates, with the guide of Statistical Package for Social Sciences- Version 24 and Microsoft Excel 2010. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically.

Results and Discussions

The objective as studied through questionnaire items using a nested table with six statements to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging between 1- very dissatisfied and 5 – very satisfied. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis. The descriptive statistics were presented using Table 2.

Table 2 Influence of Social Cultural aspects on the career progression of women

		1	2	3	4	5	Total
Cultural beliefs have affected my career progression	F	6	20	24	14	3	67
	%	9	29.9	35.8	20.9	4.5	100
My career is determined by the people around me	F	12	16	24	11	4	67
	%	17.9	23.9	35.8	16.4	6	100
I develop need and like for career because of role models I know	F	17	19	23	3	5	67
	%	25.4	28.4	34.3	4.5	7.5	100
I chose my career as guided by family expectations	F	22	16	21	3	5	67
	%	32.8	23.9	31.3	4.5	7.5	100
My career is restricted by my cultural background	F	24	16	19	6	2	67
	%	35.8	23.9	28.4	9	3	100

Key: *1-Very Dissatisfied, 2- Somewhat Dissatisfied, 3-Neutral, 4-Somewhat Satisfied, 5- Very Satisfied*

Table 2 shows that the largest portion of the study respondents (35.8%) were neutral with the statement "Cultural beliefs have affected my career progression". This was closely refuted by a portion of the respondents (29.9%) who rated the statement as somewhat dissatisfied. Only a few of the respondents (4.5%) were very satisfied that Cultural beliefs had affected their career progression.

Similar trends are seen in the statement "My career is determined by the people around me" where the largest portion of the respondents (35.8%) were neutral with a close portion (23.9%) rating it as dissatisfied. Again, only a few of the respondents (6%) were very satisfied with the statement.

The table also shows that the largest portion of the respondents (34.3%) were neutral with "I develop need and like for career because of role models I know". The majority of the respondents (combined 25.4% and 28.4% for very dissatisfied and dissatisfied) were not okay with the statement. However, some portion of the respondents, 4.5% and 7.5% were satisfied and very satisfied with the statement respectively.

Relatively less than half of the respondents (32.5%) were very dissatisfied with the statement "I chose my career as guided by family expectations". Another 31.3% of the respondents indicated that they were neutral about their choice of career as guided by family expectations.

More than half of the respondents were very dissatisfied and dissatisfied by their career being restricted by their cultural background". Another portion slightly higher than quarter of the respondents (28.4%) were neutral with the statement. The table shows that less than 15% (9% and 3% satisfied and very satisfied respectively) were satisfied with the statement.

The results confirm the argument and findings of Bullough, Guelich, Manolova, et al. (2022) who focused on how women's entrepreneurship has been creating jobs and thus beefing up economic growth of various counties. The authors argued how the culture and entrepreneurship driven by women has been understudied. Their study provided a framework for gender roles in entrepreneurship as well as changing the household economy through career progression. The study ends with a conclusion of how

women have changed the dynamics in not only career but economy at large for diverse geographies around the globe.

In a different study around how, women have ventured into career in the modern days, Makarem and Wang (2020) review various online articles themed on STEM among women across the world. The study showed that women choices in STEM courses and careers was influenced by personal characters, their background, human resource and more soundly the role of their male counterparts. The study revealed how STEM is male dominated and thus causing some barriers for women to join. Women find it partially inappropriate for infiltrating the male dominant fields which is based on gender-stereotyping. This compared to the case of the individual characters that have been found to affect the career progression of women in county government of Wajir.

The study used the collected data on the social cultural aspects, and they affect the career progression of women in the county government of Wajir to conduct a correlation analysis. The analysis involved how the aspects are related to career progression. The results were presented using Table 3.

Table 3 Correlation between Social Cultural aspects and the career progression of women

		1	2	3	4	5	6
1. CareerPScore	Pearson Correlation	1					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	67					
2. Cultural beliefs have affected my career progression	Pearson Correlation	-.152	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.220					
	N	67	67				
3. My career is determined by the people around me	Pearson Correlation	.027	-.076	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.826	.540				
	N	67	67	67			
4. I develop need and like for career because of role models I know	Pearson Correlation	-.076	-.068	.146	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.542	.587	.238			
	N	67	67	67	67		
5. I chose my career as guided by family expectations	Pearson Correlation	.080	-.118	-.042	-.090	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.520	.342	.736	.471		
	N	67	67	67	67	67	
6. My career is restricted by my cultural background	Pearson Correlation	-.161	.031	-.035	.021	.194	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.192	.803	.778	.867	.115	
	N	67	67	67	67	67	67

Table 3 shows that the correlation between Cultural beliefs have affected my career progression and career progression among women score was weak negative (r=-.152). This was at a significant level of .220 which is greater than the critical p-value .05. This implies that while there is a relationship between cultural belief and career progression, the relationship is insignificant.

The table showed that the correlation between "My career is determined by the people around me" and career progression score was weak positive (r=.027). However, the correlation is insignificant (sig. = 826) as it is greater than the critical p-value of .05.

The table shows that the correlation between "I develop need and like for career because of role models I know" and career progression score was weak negative (-.076) at a significance level of .542. The correlation between "I chose my career as guided by family expectations" and career progression score was weak positive (r=.080) at significance level of .52. The correlation between "My career is restricted by my cultural background" and career progression among women in Wajir county was weak negative (r=-.161) at significance level of .192. All the correlations were insignificant as their significant levels exceeded the critical p-value of .05.

The quantitative findings were triangulated with the qualitative findings through interviews with the local administrators, officers responsible for the Gender Desks, and women representative leaders. The following findings were noted in the study.

One of the interviews noted;

> *It is important for us to keep our culture in all life spheres. Whether it is government employment or county management. Even our politics are run by clannism where we use approaches like negotiated democracy. The same applies to our employment here. I can thus categorically state that actually our Cultural beliefs have affected career progression of women in this county* [KII 02]

This implies that the culture in the county government of Wajir is evident and affects the ways in which women get employment opportunities.

In another different angle, another interviewee posted;

> *In the county government of Wajir, career is moderated at different levels. The family from which the women come from has a say in the undertaking of a given job. To be frank, sometimes, it is not about the woman herself chooses. The choice is determined by many other factors and mostly skewed around the family. It is also seen that changing lives has exposed women into the world of careers and they are now emulating role models. When the women representative political seat was introduced in Kenya following the promulgation of the 2010 constitution and devolution, women have been following up other women in leadership to emulate their career progress* [KII 01].

This implies that case of career progression among women in the county government of Wajir is influenced by the social and cultural practices. However, the globalization and changes that have been witnessed within the political arena in Kenya have changed and eroded the cultures that put women behind the career process.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings showed how a few of the respondents (4.5%) were very satisfied that Cultural beliefs had affected their career progression. The study concluded that while their existed some correlation between the social cultural aspects of the community with the career progression of women, all were insignificant.

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations were made.

i.   The County government of Wajir to consider adapting legislative policies around Social and cultural aspects in career progression for women in Wajir. This will intervene the socio-cultural effect and barriers for career progression for women in the county.
ii.   This study can be carried out in other counties and thus, compare the influence of contextual factors on career progression for women.

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