EFFECT OF MARGINALIZATION ON WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to to establish the effect of marginalization on women participation in political leadership in Kakamega County, Kenya. The study adopted correlation design with target population of 48 women who contested for positions in the 2017 general election in Kakamega County. Questionnaires were used for collecting data from the participants. Data analysis was through descriptive and inferential techniques. The findings established that marginalization of women had a positive and significant influence on participation of women in political leadership. This implied that marginalization is a common feature in the endevour for women participation in elective positions in Kakamega County. The study concluded that marginalization is a common feature in diminishing the prospects of women participation in elective positions in Kakamega County. The study recommended that there is need for positive social change to educate the public, inform policy makers, and create legislative initiatives to eliminate discrimination in order to support equity for women to participate fully in the political process.

Keywords: *marginalization, participation, women in politics*

1.1   Introduction

As stated by United Nations (UN) Women (2019), women and men perceive the political world differently. These differences are reflected in policies and government decisions depending on the personality and gender of the person. Wallace (2008) provides that women have grown up navigating through social and cultural norms that are by their very nature marginalizing and disadvantageous to them. The women's experiences of marginalization in politics ought to be captured in policies development processes. When women are involved in governance, there is a noted improvement in quality of services, enhanced cooperation and a level of sensitivity on some issues that elude men such as parental leave for child care or gender based violence (Al Ansar & Bezanson, 2018).

As suggested by Ekpe, Eja and John (2014) in a study of critical analysis of women and gender equality in Nigeria, marginalization of women is one of the critical psychosocial challenge facing women in political participation. Marginalization of women against participation in electoral politics is witnessed through negation and mainstreaming of women as only good as homemakers thus restricting them to those roles. These stereotypes create a disabling environment for women participation in political processes across Africa (Omotosho, 2015). Patriarchal culture defines roles women should play which exclude them from political involvement (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015). As suggested by Inter-parliamentary Research (2013), gender stereotyping is highly marginalizing against women in policies and political institutions.

Many of these psychosocial practices create barriers to women empowerment and gender equality, thereby placing a clearly greater burden on women participation in leadership. The shrouding different exclusions and deprivations faced by women through marginalization in cultural and traditional beliefs often deprive them access to information, education and wealth-creating assets, such as land, capital (including credit facilities), labour, and entrepreneurial skills (Aina, 2012). These restrictions created by psychosocial practices can be blamed for the poor participation of women in politics and leadership positions.

Many African cultures negate the role of women to household chores and restrict them to that. Psychosocial factors have been linked to these stereotypes regarding women capabilities (Omotosho, 2015). Patriarchal ideologies provide more contexts that explain women's subordinate roles. Sex stereotypes are credited for being the most entrenched psychosocial obstacles to elimination of gender inequality (Okafor & Akokuwebe, 2015).

The psychosocial perception discourages women from participating in politics. Religious power and authority is severally apportioned to men (Aina, 2012). Women are hence left to play subsidiary roles away from major decision making circles. Women are disallowed to address men in public places. In many other cultures, a woman is only valuable in marriage when they give birth to male children (Ekpe, Eja & John, 2014).

In pastoral communities life is organized in lines of clans where authority lies with council of elders. This council selects who runs for political positions. They are often unwilling to give women opportunities to run. Women, regardless of their suitability for political offices are hence locked out (Kivoi, 2014). Voters are also psychologically biased against women holding the perception that women can only make poor political leaders. In some Kenyan communities unmarried women are not allowed to run for political offices. The amount of ridicule and intimidation they face in public is enough deterrent. Societal norms are

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extremely unfriendly to women. It is ironical that single or divorced men are not treated the same way (Ngele & Begisen, 2017).

According to Chafetz and Dworkin (2006) have had to contend with psychosocial belief that politics is a male domain. The psychosocial stereotypes can affect women's level of representation in politics leading to marginalization. Starting from individual women's decision to engage in politics, going to political parties' facilitation of women inclusion to the actual voting patterns biased against women (Ekpe, Eja & John, 2014). Religion is another tool used to discriminate and marginalize against women in leadership. All dominant religions present women as inferior to men. Religion has been used to marginalize and exclude women at combined psychological, social, political and religious levels all over the world (Omotosho, 2015).

Women tend not to support other women in politics. Women have internalized the long held psychosocial and anachronistic perception that politics is an aggressive dirty game preserved for men. Psychosocial and communal stereotypes that have run for generations tend to negate women involvement in politics and their general empowerment (Mulgi, 2018). Politically active women are seen as irresponsible and not capable of being good wives. In other cases they are equated to morally bankrupt women. Men in virtually all cultures in Africa are socialized to be aggressive, dominant and autocratic especially towards women while women are socialized to be emotive, submissive, and fragile (Ngele & Begisen, 2017).

In Kenya, the 2010 constitution dictates a two thirds gender rule that means at least a third of political positions must be filled by women. Attempts have been made to increase women involvement in politics by creating special seats for women in county and national assemblies (Kivoi, 2014). However, the constitutional threshold of at least third women has yet to be met. Male dominated political leadership has been opposed to initiatives that would have the threshold achieved. Consequently there is pressure to reduce women representation in both county and national assemblies (Kauria, 2018).

1.2   Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, Article 27, section 8 of the Kenyan constitution dictates that at least one third of all political positions should be of alternative gender, geared towards enhancing women representation (Rift Valley Institute, 2016). However, even with the constitutional guarantees, women are continuously marginalized from full participation in political processes in Kenya. For example, less than a third of women in National assembly, Senate or County Assemblies are women. As witnessed in 2013 and 2017 general elections women continued to face hurdles that are social, economic, psychological or political in nature (Women Deliver, 2018). In Kakamega County just like the rest of Kenya, there is a perception that women are inferior to men. They are thus marginalized from assumptions of political positions. Ekpe, Eja and John (2014) hold that women marginalization is a major psychosocial challenge curtailing participation of women in politics. It is from this background that this study aimed at establishing relating marginalization of women and political participation of women in Kakamega County.

1.3   Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study was to establish the effect of marginalization on women participation in political leadership in Kakamega County, Kenya.

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1.4   Research Questions

What is the effect of marginalization on women participation in political leadership in Kakamega County?

2.0. Literature Review

2.1.   Theoretical Review

2.2.1.   Feminist Theory

This theory was proposed by Wilhelmina Drucker in 1901. It observed gender in relations to power. Feminism attempts to remove all psychological or social and legal obstacles to women behaving independently. Women should be able to compete in the economic landscape if the society is to be close to perfection (Evans, 1995). The movement entails rethinking and reshaping of the entrenched psychosocially entrenched myths in which women are seen as passive agents of change. The theory thus recognizes avenues such as organizations that enable women to take an active role in the process of change in the society.

Feminism advocates for women rights and equality in the political and economic spheres. It identifies fundamental relationships in politics that affects gender and power relations so that women are given equal opportunities and privileges as men (Benhabib, 1987). Feminists and feminists started emerging in the 19th century through social movements aimed at ensuring women had equal treatment as men in all aspects of life. The movement fought for basic civil rights of women such as voting rights (Seth, 2011).

Feminism identify that women needed equal representation as men in society and politics (Cott, 1987). This movement started in New York and brought together hundreds of people who focused on civil rights and economic equality of women (Evans, 1995). There are three waves that define the history of feminism. The first wave started in the nineteenth century in North America and Europe. This wave was focused on advocating for equal rights between men and women. These included voting rights, rights to employment, property and inheritance rights and equal political opportunities (Brookes, 2008). This first wave was successful. Women rights were introduced in European countries seeing women allowed to vote. China, Japan and other countries soon followed suit (Yuan, 2005).

Feminist movement however was passionately resisted in some parts of the world. In India for example, male dominance was positioned as a religious issue. This led to a second wave of feminism. This was more focused on changing behavioral patterns in social and political perspectives that inhibited women liberation (Tong, 1989). Simone de Beauvoir investigated how women were socially constructed as the 'other' in a disempowering way. This second wave looked at social constructs around sexual discrimination, unequal employment and payment of women (Seth, 2011). This is a wave that is arguably still active in many countries around the world to date

Feminist are still fighting against women sexual discrimination, inability to access equal opportunities in employment and equal pay as compared to men. In USA for example, black women have aggressively continued to fight for equal representation in political offices. This has spread in Europe which has resulted to more women in political leadership, some emerging as heads of state and governments (Brookes, 2008).

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This gain in women leadership in Europe has built momentum for similar changes across the world. Countries like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri-lanka have seen women leadership in political spaces rise. According to Thornham (2006), it makes sense to draw a conclusion that when women globally are willing to stand up for their rights they can very well achieve equal political and economic rights. Comparing movement for equal rights that resulted in enhanced rights for black people in USA resulting to election of a black president in America in 2008; it is an indication that equal rights of women across the world are achievable (Seth, 2011).

A third wave of feminism was closely associated with politics that started in 1980s and has continued to date. This resulted from criticism on second wave that though fighting for such rights as sexual rights of women was little concerned with some other rights that touched women on sexuality such as lesbians, gay's bisexuals and transgender. It was also perceived not so concerned with poverty of neither women nor women of color (Tong, 2013).

Therefore this third wave started interrogating deeper issues around racism, homophobia, and Eurocentric behaviors (Mackinnon, 1982). One can hence reason that feminism theory focuses on equality of women through responsible choices and actions (Brookes, 2008). Achievement s of these rights is clearly far from being achieved. The reality is that women are still judged from male dominated lenses and with prejudices that are masculine. In recently concluded American elections democratic candidate Hillary Clinton to a documented misogynist despite being a more qualified and politically experienced candidate (Scaramucci, 2017).

There is a forth wave of feminism that is theoretically taking shape. This is claiming for women rights around career, education, business and politics (Rampton, 2015). The expanded lists of rights in this wave include abortion rights, rights for contraception, acceptance of female sexuality and general women rights (Rampton, 2015). There is greater effort to protect women from gender based violence providing supportive infrastructure for organizations offering women protection from oppression. This fourth wave is giving attention to issues about women that were ignored in previous waves. Issues such as sexual abuse, rape, gender based violence, transgender, lesbianism and others have been receiving a lot of press coverage in recent years. Like all the other feminism waves, this fourth one is calling for overarching gender equality (Rampton, 2015).

This theory is appropriate in informing this study because it helps expound why women lag behind in political participation as opposed to their male counterparts. Secondly, it helps analyze the existence and operation of the women's organizations in public sphere by contextualizing their activities as a function of certain psycho-sociological occurrences and hence proposes corrective mechanisms. In order to understand how the psycho-sociological marginalization is being redressed the study looks at women's organizations as a mechanism of restoring justice to rectify historical injustices that have resulted to the marginalization of women.

2.3. Empirical Review

Mutabai (2017) investigated political challenges women in Kenya face. The research was qualitative with information gathered from literature such as journals, interviews reports and books. The study found that despite women being more than half of Kenyan population they are still marginalized in political positions by a wide margin. Though Kenyan constitution provides for at least a third of all political seats be reserved for women, this law has not yet

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been implemented. However the research also established that that attention given to Kenyan women in politics has improved with more women being able to join active politics. However the overall conclusion of this study was that women are still marginalized and under-represented in Kenyan politics.

Godia (2017) examined the challenges facing women in legislation processes in the Kenya National Assembly of the 11th Parliament 2013-2017. The study was guided by Liberal Feminist approach which focuses on achieving equality between men and women and emphasizes power of an individual person to alter discriminatory practices against women. The study reveals that although most of the women in the National Assembly have post-secondary education they are still not strong in performing their role as Members of National Assembly which include representing the people and legislation. The study findings indicate that many women who go to Parliament are still notable to raise bills and motions as indicated by the small numbers compared to men. The study concludes that women need to have their capacity built in raising important issues through bills and motions and to move away from soft topics that hardly get support in the male dominated parliament.

On the other hand, Okafor and Akokuwebe (2015) investigated women leadership in Nigeria. The study focused on factors that have resulted to marginalization of women in politics and socio economic status as compared to men. Historical and descriptive approaches were used. Patriarchal and liberal feminism theories were employed. The study found that certain political, economic social and systemic practices resulted to women's marginalization from participation politics, governance and decision making in Nigeria. The study concluded that if women participation in political activities was to improve in Nigeria there needs to be concerted effort with government involvement that changes policies and introduces programs aimed at holistic women empowerment.

Aura (2015) studied attitude towards political representation by women parliamentarians in Nairobi County. Registered women voters in Nairobi Central Business district were targeted for this study. The study was descriptive and cross-sectional. Key informant interviews were used for data collection. The study makes a general conclusion that presence of women is substantively influenced by attitude of women towards past and current representation. The study revealed that women have clarity of their interests and have an expectation that women representatives would articulate them. Thus, the degree to which this occurs influences the number of women elected to parliament. However, this is also influenced by the entrenched socio-cultural traditions and practices that have historically favoured men's interests vis-a-vis women's interests. The conceptual gap is that the focus was on women attitude towards representation in Kenya. The current study focuses on psychosocial challenges facing women in political leadership in Kenya.

Kassa (2015) examined the challenges and opportunities for women to participate in Ethiopian politics. The study was qualitative a d data was collected through secondary sources such as journals, books and reports. The study found that there are a variety of causal factors like economic, social, religious and cultural factors that result to women's dismal participation in local politics. The study demonstrated value for women participation in politics such as avoidance of rent seeking, enhanced accountability, responsiveness to women needs at a political level and general political commitment to women issues. The contextual gap is that this study was based in Ethiopia while the current study is based in Kenya.

Anigwe (2014) researched the perceptions of women in political leadership of Nigeria. This qualitative study had an objective of exploring and describing the experiences and

perceptions of Nigerian women on gender equality and other issues influencing leadership in the political sphere. The theoretical framework used was Eagly's social role theory and Ayman and Korabik's leadership categorization theory. The research questions were centered on how women perceived and described their political participation and the challenges they faced. The study purposively selected ten women. Data was coded, categorized and analyzed through themes. The study found that women are still marginalized in government and political positions even as they strive harder for equality in politics.

Kivoi (2014) investigated factors that frustrated participation of women in political processes in Kenya. It was a desktop based research that involved investigation of socially constructed characteristics as well as cultural and psychological traits linked to socialization defining feminist and masculinity. The study established that traditional beliefs perceptions and stereotypes showing women as less capable than men resulted to their marginalization. Considering the data of elected women in political offices in Kenya showed that gender equality in political participation is far from achieved.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework is based on the relationship between marginalization on women participation in political leadership in Kakamega County, Kenya. The relationship is indicated in the conceptual framework.
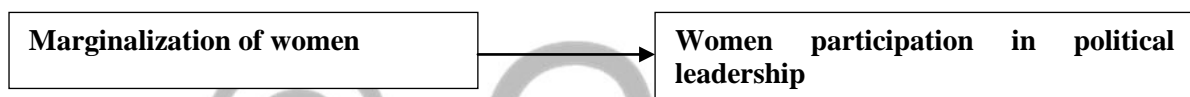
Marginalization of women	→	**Women participation in political leadership**

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.0.   Research Methodology

This study adopted correlation design where both quantitative and qualitative data was collected. This design enabled the researcher to fully establish the political barriers facing women in political leadership in Kakamega County, Kenya. The target population for this study was 48 women who contested for positions in the 2017 general election in Kakamega County. The study utilized a census method of all the 48 women political leaders. The researcher used a questionnaire to collect data from the participants. To test validity, the instruments were forwarded to the supervisor at Management University of Africa for validation. The appropriate modification based on the experts' advice was made on the pre-tested instruments in order capture the relevant information related to the study objectives. Reliability test was carried out through a pilot test and computation of Cronbach's Alpha at 0.7. Data analysis was through descriptive and inferential techniques. Analysis of data was obtained effectively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) programme version 23.

4.0. Results and Discussion

4.1.1. Reliability Analysis
Scale reliability for study variables was determined by computing the overall Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the items of marginalization and participation of women in political leadership. The reliability was demonstrated since the overall Cronbach's alpha statistic for marginalization of women was 0.844, which were greater than the threshold value of 0.7 as indicated in table 1.

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Table 1: Reliability of study variables

Variables	No of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Marginalization of women	10	0.844

4.1.2. Normality test

The normality of data distribution was assessed by examining its skewness and kurtosis (Kline, 2005). A variable with an absolute skew-index value greater than 3.0 is extremely skewed while a kurtosis index greater than 8.0 is an extreme kurtosis (Kline, 2005). The results of the normality test of the study variables indicated skewness and kurtosis in the range of -1 and +1 as shown in table 2. This implies that the assumption of normality was satisfied.

Table 2: Normality test

	N	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Marginalization of women	268	.392	.149	-.572	.297

4.1.3. Correlation Analysis

Marginalization of women was found to be positive and significantly related to participation of women in political leadership (r = 0.498, p-value=0.000<0.05) as indicted in table 3.

Table 3: Correlation analysis

Variables		Marginalization of women
Participation of women in political leadership	Pearson Correlation	.498[**]
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	44
Marginalization	Pearson Correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	44

4.1.4. Regression Analysis

The R square value in this case is 0.512 which clearly suggests that there is a strong relationship between marginalization of women and participation of women in political leadership as indicated in table 4. This indicates that marginalization of women share a variation of 51.2 % of participation of women in political leadership.

Table 4: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.716[a]	.512	.507	.33947

4.1.5. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The Analysis of Variance on the association between independent and dependent variables was conducted. The ANOVA table 5 indicates that the overall model was a good fit since (F-value=92.392 and p-value=0.000<0.05).

Table 5: Analysis of variance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	31.942	3	10.647	92.392	.000[b]
	Residual	30.424	264	.115		

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Total		62.366	267			

4.1.6. Coefficients analysis

Coefficients analysis on the strength of the predictor variables on the dependent variable was undertaken. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Coefficients analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.741	.157		4.726	.000
	Marginalization of women	.197	.025	.378	8.007	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Participation of women in political leadership						

Marginalization was found to have a positive linearly significant influence on participation of women in political leadership (β=0.197, p=0.000<0.05). Here one unit change in marginalization results in 0.197 unit increase in participation of women in political leadership. The findings support Anigwe (2014) that due to marginalization, women are still underrepresented in the political sector and lacked full political power as they strived for equality to become political leaders. The implication is that marginalization is a common feature in the endevour for women participation in elective positions in Kakamega County.

5.0 Conclusions

Marginalization was found to have a positive linearly significant influence on participation of women in political leadership. The study concluded that marginalization is a common feature in diminishing the prospects of women participation in elective positions in Kakamega County.

6.0 Recommendations

The study recommendation is that since marginalization is a common challenge in the endevour for women participation in elective positions in Kakamega County, there is need for positive social change to educate the public, inform policy makers, and create legislative initiatives to eliminate discrimination in order to support equity for women to participate fully in the political process.

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