



**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT
HUB**



**WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP IN THE NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT PUBLIC SERVICE, KENYA**

RESEARCHERS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Dr, Sheila Ncheri Mutuma, PI - | Department of Sociology, Gender & Development Studies, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Sarah Fedha Barasa Co. PI - | Department of Gender & Development Studies, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Regina Gathoni Mwatha | Department of Sociology, Gender & Development Studies, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Justus Wafula Otiato | Department of Sociology Gender and Development Studies, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Francis Omondi | Department of Applied Economics, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Salome Mwongeli Musau | Department of Accounting and Finance, Kenyatta University |
| Dr. Isabella Musyoka-Kamere, | Educational Foundations Department Kenyatta University |
| Mr. Osman Mohammed, Master's student | Department of Sociology, Gender & Development Studies, Kenyatta University |
| Ms. Wangui Kamaru, Master's student | Department of Applied Economics Kenyatta University |

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OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Empowerment: The process of "conscientization" which builds critical analytical skills for an individual to gain self-confidence in order to take control of her or his life.

Women's Empowerment: This is the process of raising women consciousness as a group, and how this group identity affects women's share of resources in society particularly their participation in management and leadership positions in the public sector in Kenya.

Women's Economic Empowerment This is the translation of women's consciousness as a group into economic power and agency.

Leadership position This is the status of power with its attendant role to make decisions, set direction, and control outcomes in the public sector in Kenya

Decision-making power This is the capacity to make decisions even in the face of opposition.

Gender Mainstreaming The assessment of the implications for both men and women of any planned action, among them legislations, policies or programs in the public sector in Kenya

Gender Responsive A planning mechanism designed to counteract problems which arise out of socially constructed differences between women and men.

Gender Responsive Budget This is a budget designed to accommodate gender differences between men and women.

Management This study adopts Robert Kreithners' definition of Management as "*a problem-solving process aimed at effectively achieving organizational objectives through the efficient use of the scarce resources in a changing environment.*"

Management Position This is a status of power at all levels including entry level management, middle-level management, and senior level management in the public sector in Kenya.

Under-representation inadequate representation of women in leadership or decision-making management levels in the public sector in Kenya.

Participation This refers to women taking part in leadership and managerial decision-making processes in the public sector in Kenya.

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Globally, the gender wage gap stands at approximately 23 percent (United Nations 2020; ILO, 2017). In Kenya, the government has demonstrated its commitment to addressing gender disparities by ratifying various international agreements promoting gender equality and enacting local policies to align with these agreements. Furthermore, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 incorporates a legislative framework for gender equality, supplemented by additional legislative and policy documents. These measures aim to prioritize and integrate the needs of women and girls across Kenya. Despite these initiatives, women remain significantly underrepresented in management and leadership roles within formal labor markets and the public service.

The significance of women in Kenya's economy is widely recognized; however, despite the increasing presence of women in paid employment, they remain underrepresented. According to the 2019 Census, women make up 51.2% of the total population and form half of Kenya's labor force. Their involvement in public service is vital due to its direct influence on incomes and, consequently, livelihoods. Gender disparities in the workplace, as noted in the MGI report (2015) and Nigam (2014), mirror the prevailing social structure of a society.

The Women's Economic Empowerment Hub at Kenyatta University, along with the women in management and leadership team supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Initiative, conducted a gender audit spanning from 2010 to 2020. The audit aimed to assess the adherence of women in the National Government's public service to legislative and policy frameworks, including the National Policy on Gender and Development (NPGD) of 2000 and 2011, as well as Sessional Paper No. 02 of 2019. These documents emphasize gender equality and development, particularly in ensuring the implementation of the principle of two-thirds gender representation in employment and promotion within the public service. Considering the above, this study sought to establish the representation and participation of women in the laid out decision making positions within the National government. The study looked at the representation of women within job groups J-T (Entry level management positions to senior level management positions)

The results of the audit trail indicated a decrease in the proportion of women employed in the public service from 2010 to 2020, accompanied by a notable increase in the proportion of men, thus widening the gender disparity during the period under review. In the entry job group J-L, women constituted 41.69% of the workforce in 2010, the highest recorded during the study period,

while men accounted for 58.31%. This percentage steadily declined to 29.52% for women by 2014, with a corresponding increase in men to 70.48%. In 2020, men comprised 68.66%, and women remained at 31.34%. A similar trend was observed in the middle job group M to P, where women were underrepresented at 27%, compared to men at 73%. In the upper echelons, although there was a slight and gradual increase in women's representation from 23% in 2010 to 29% in 2020, it was not significantly substantial.

The study recommended that there was need for a purposed intention by the Public Service Commission to ensure full implementation of the two thirds of either gender principle in ensuring success in closing the gender gap in all sectors of the public service.

1.1 METHODOLOGY

The gender audit conducted by the National Government marked the initial phase of the team's methodology, aimed at assessing the current state of the public service over the past decade, particularly under the constitutional provision concerning the two-thirds gender principle in elective and appointive positions. This study utilized data from the total population of the Government Public Service spanning the last ten years, encompassing 22 Ministries of the National Government. Quantitative data was sourced from the Ministry of State for Public Service, specifically the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Database (IPPD) from 2010 to 2021.

Primary data collection was carried out in Nairobi City County in the national government ministries for Public Service, Gender, Publics Works and National Gender and Equality Commission which were selected through cluster sampling.

Structured interview schedules were employed to collect data from both women and men at various career stages, including entry-level and middle management within the selected Ministries. These interviews aimed to extract information concerning their roles, placement, involvement, and career progression. Additionally, key informant guides were utilized to gather insights from women and men in senior management, who were perceived to possess comprehensive knowledge regarding women's empowerment, placement and participation in managerial and leadership positions. Simultaneously, these guides delved into examining the intersectionality between systemic structures and gender dynamics.

A representative sample, constituting 3% of the total population, was selected for the study. A sample of 63 respondents comprising 19 women and 44 men was drawn from a pool of 2,109 employees within the national government ministries of Public Service, State department for Gender, State Department for Public Service, Public Works and National Gender and Equality Commission, where 690 (32.7%) were women and 1,419 (67.3%) were men. The survey purposively targeted both men and women in the entry level (Job groups J-L) and middle level (Job groups M-P), while key informant interviews focused on men and women in senior management levels (Job groups Q-S). The research aimed to capture and document the experiences of both men and women and how these experiences influenced their involvement in leadership and management roles within the public service of the national government.

The study's primary objective is to attain a sustainable outcome by increasing the involvement of women in management and leadership roles within the public sector by 30% before the year 2025.

The study was guided by four specific objectives;

1. To establish factors that contribute to women's under-representation of women in management and leadership positions for women's economic empowerment in the public sector in Kenya.
2. To examine the extent to which the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and its subsequent amendments 2011 and 2019 have been implemented in the public sector in Kenya.
3. To examine the extent to which the participation of women in management and leadership in the public sector as evidenced by monitoring and evaluation indicators promotes women's economic empowerment.
4. Suggest how the National policy on Gender and Development Policy can be made more effective in enabling the participation of women in positions management in the public sector for economic empowerment.

The following section presents and discusses the findings of this research.

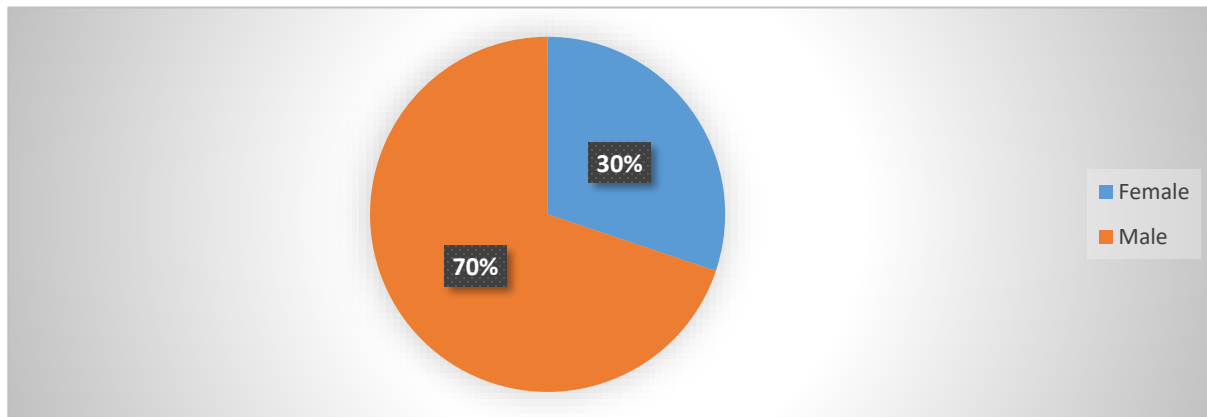
2.0 FINDINGS

2.1 DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

2.1.1 Sex of Respondents

This study explored the demographic characteristics of women and men's participation in management and leadership roles within the public service. The study sample comprised 44(70%) men while women comprised 19(33%) as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Sex of Respondents (Entry to Middle level management - Job group J-P)



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

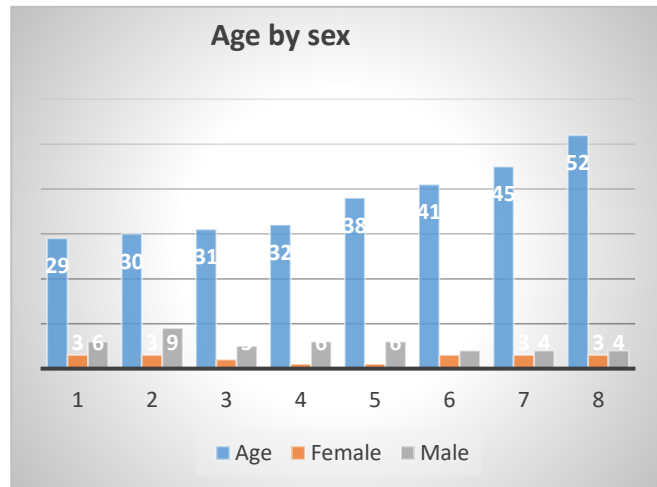
2.2.2 Age by Sex

The results show that the majority of employees in job groups J-P were aged 29 and 30 years. As you move up the ranks, there is a greater proportion of men than women aged between 31 and 52 years. This is likely because women may face barriers such as implicit bias, limited access to mentorship and sponsorship, or discriminatory practices that impede their advancement to higher-

level positions. This could lead to fewer women progressing into senior roles within institutions, resulting in a smaller proportion of women in the 31 to 52 age range at higher ranks.

Figure 2 -Age by Sex (Entry to Middle level management - Job groups J-P)

| Age | Sex | | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| | Female | Male | |
| 29 | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| 30 | 3 | 9 | 12 |
| 31 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| 32 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| 38 | 1 | 6 | 7 |
| 41 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 45 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| 52 | 3 | 4 | 7 |
| Total | 19 | 44 | 63 |

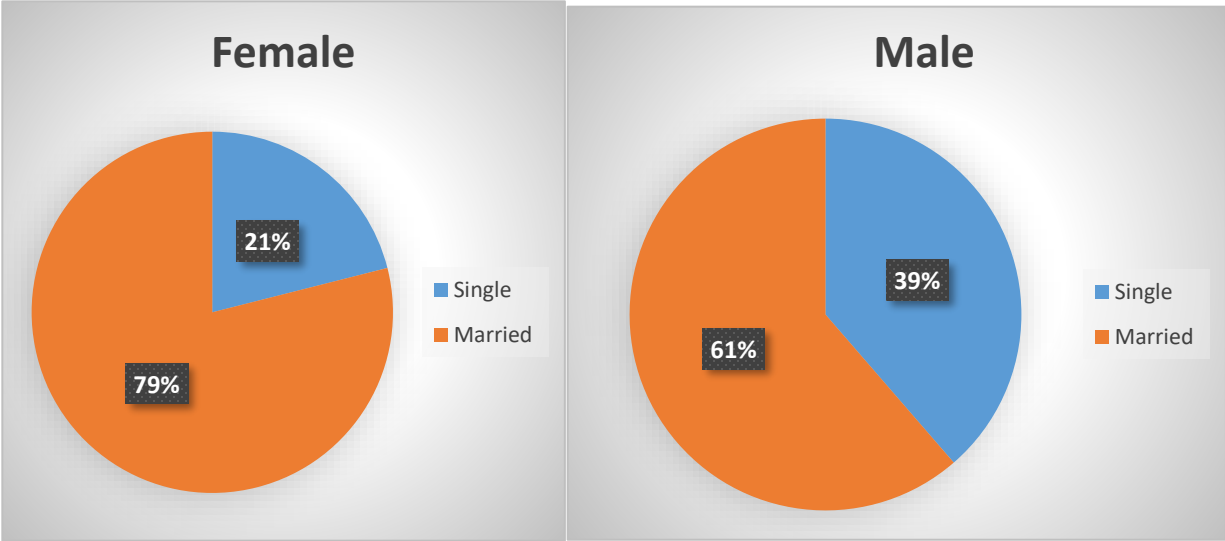


Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

2.2.3 Marital status by Sex (Job groups J-P)

An analysis of the marital status by sex revealed that 21% of women in Job group J-P were single while 79% were married. Similarly, the analysis revealed that 61% of the men in job group J-P were married while 39% was single.

Figure 2 Marital status by Sex (Entry to middle level management -Job group J-P)

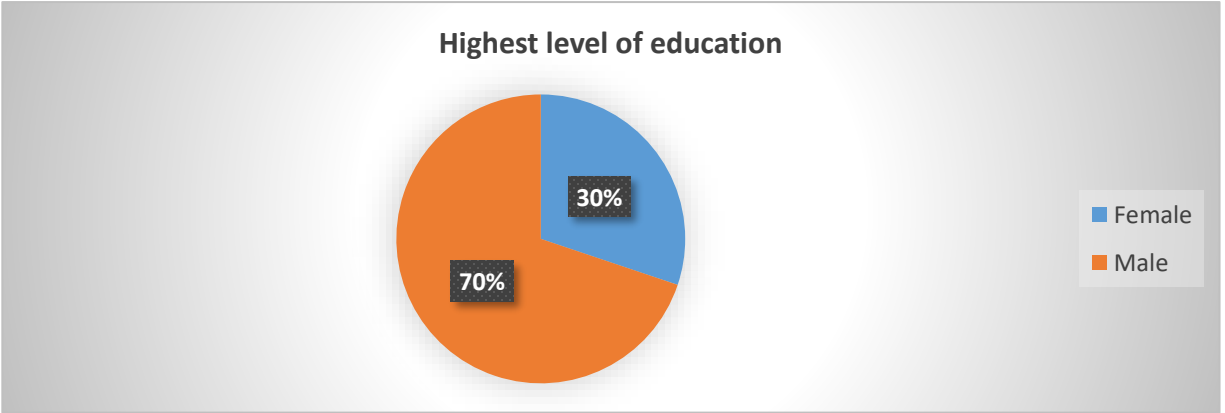


Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

2.2.4 Level of Education by Sex (Job groups J-P)

The research aimed to ascertain the educational attainment of the participants, with findings indicating that 19 (30%) of female respondents possessed a university education, whereas 44 (70%) of male respondents had attained a university degree. Job groups J-P, spanning entry-level to middle-level management, necessitate a university degree as a prerequisite. Consequently, the entirety of participants in these job groups, comprising 100%, were graduates. This underscores the correlation between educational qualifications and the specific job requirements within these managerial positions. See Figure 3

Figure 3: Highest level of Education by Sex



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

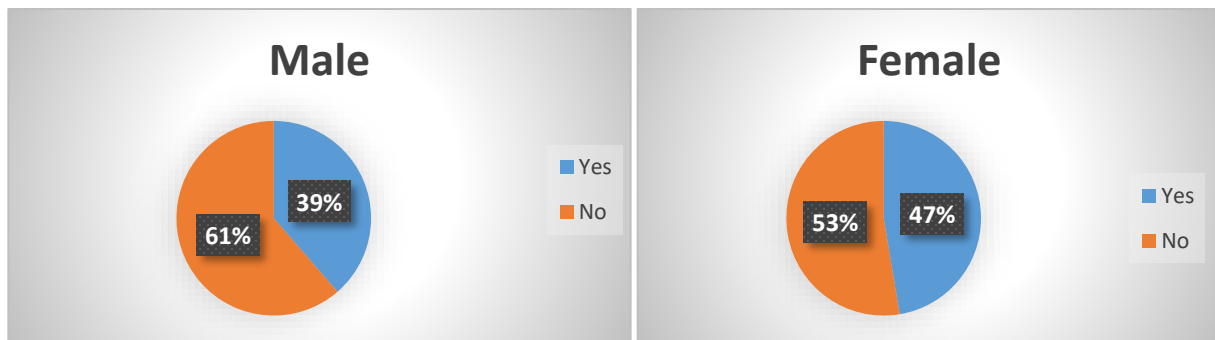
2.2.5 Years Stayed in the Current position (Job group J-P)

The research aimed to determine the duration of tenure for the participants in their current roles. Results indicated that 36.84% of females and 36.36% of males had been in their current positions for one year. Additionally, 21.05% of females reported a tenure of over 9 years while 27.27% of their male counterparts reported a similar tenure as indicated in Table 1. When asked if they believed they had overstayed in their current positions, 47% of female respondents stated they had overstayed, while 53% acknowledged that they had not overstayed. In contrast, 61% of male respondents claimed they had not overstayed in their current positions while 39% said they overstayed as illustrated in Figure 4.

Table 1: Years Stayed in the Current Position

| Years | Female | Male | Total |
|--------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | 7 | 16 | 23 |
| 2.5 | 3 | 10 | 13 |
| 3 | 5 | 10 | 15 |
| 9 | 4 | 8 | 12 |
| Total | 19 | 44 | 63 |

Figure 4: Have you overstayed in your current position?



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

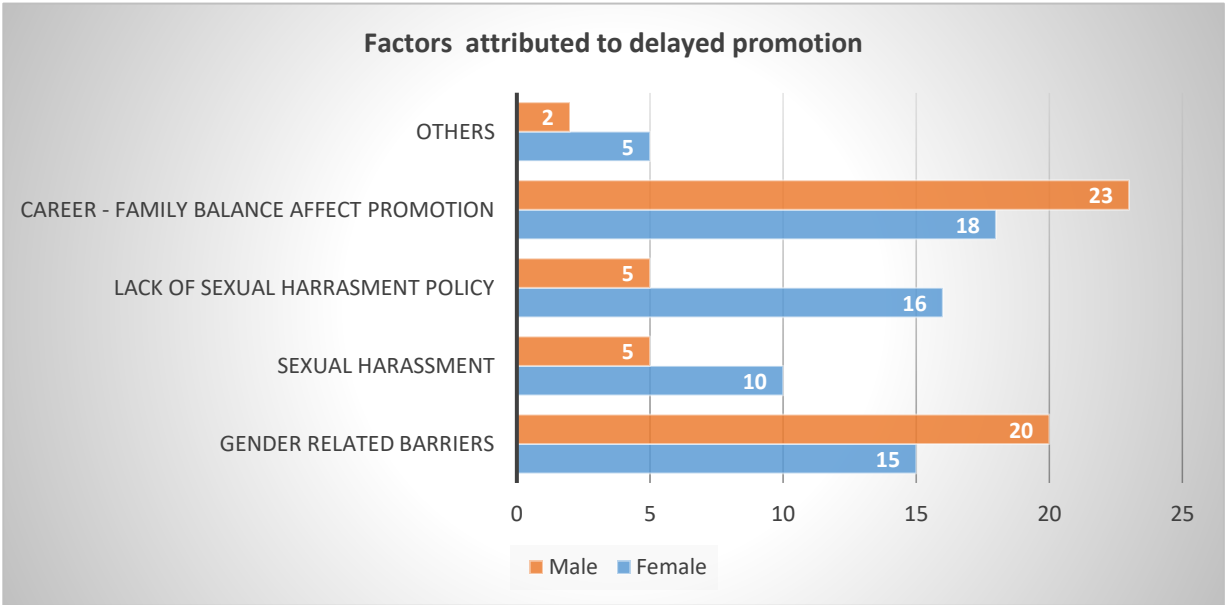
3.0 BARRIERS TO WOMEN’S REPRESENTATION IN MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

3.1 Factors attributed to delayed promotion

The research sought to pinpoint the factors responsible for impeding the career advancement of women within Kenya's public service. The study revealed that women predominantly identified career-family balance (94.7%) as the primary obstacle to their professional progression, closely followed by the absence of a sexual harassment policy and gender-related barriers (84.2% and 83.3%, respectively). When men were asked about their perspective on why women were facing challenges in advancing their careers, a significant portion highlighted career-family balance (52.37%) as a major hurdle for most women, trailed by gender-related barriers (45.45%).

Several additional factors were recognized, including biases and discriminatory practices in hiring and promotions, a lack of mentorship and networking chances, societal expectations concerning women's roles and responsibilities, inadequate family support systems, instances of sexual harassment, and limited access to educational and training programs that could bolster their skills and qualifications for career advancement. Furthermore, it was observed that workplace policies and cultural norms upholding gender inequality were hindrances to women's professional development.

Figure 5 Factors attributed to delayed promotion



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

Employees who had overstayed in their current position attributed their overstaying to various factors ranging from individual, cultural, institutional and policy related. The following is what a male respondent 1 in a senior management position said;

Women have the habit of undermining their capabilities and settling for less. Work place incentives target both men and women but sometimes women drop out for various reasons some not wanting to engage in rigorous trainings.

Female respondent 2 in senior management;

Cultural barriers play a big role in hindering the progress of women at the workplace. Even when opportunities are availed, women fear rising beyond what their husbands have achieved.

Male respondent 3 in senior management;

'women have an innate fear therefore even Affirmative Action does not seem to work because there are no women looking for these positions.'

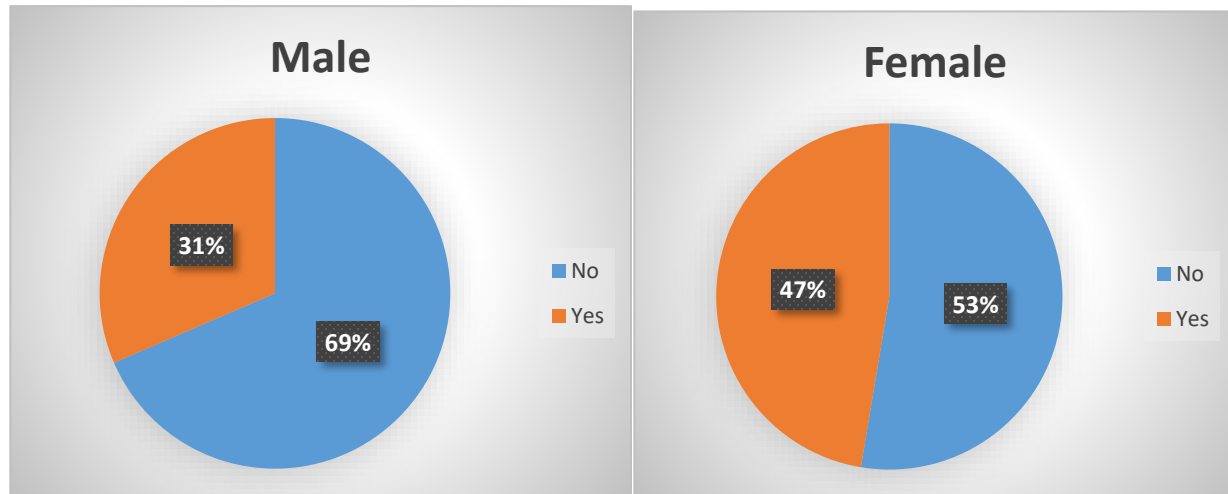
Salisbury (2022), by Claudia Goldin argues that despite the considerable progress made by women in their career advancement, many women do not combine career and family as seamlessly as it is assumed. Goldin notes that this is highly likely to contribute to the gender wage gap earnings and career achievement.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL POLICY ON GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT 2019

4.1 Awareness of the existence of the NPGD

The study further sought to examine the extent to which the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019 has been implemented in the public service. Respondents were first asked if they were aware of the existence of the NPGD 2019. 69% of the men said they were not aware while 31% said they were aware. On the other hand, nearly half of the women respondents (47%) said they were aware of the existence of the policy while 53% were not. In essence, a majority of the respondents were not aware.

Figure 6: Knowledge about the existence of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

Several reasons could contribute to public servants in Kenya being unaware of the existence of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019. Some of the reasons may be a lack of dissemination where the policy may not have been effectively disseminated to all relevant government departments and agencies, leading to a lack of awareness among public servants. Public servants may also not have received adequate training or capacity-building sessions to familiarize themselves with the policy and its provisions. Additionally, gender issues may not be considered a priority within some government departments, leading to limited attention and resources allocated to promoting awareness of gender-related policies. This is echoed by one gender officer.

Male respondent 4 in senior management;

'We have very good policies, but they are only on paper. If there was a mechanism for following up and holding the people responsible accountable then perhaps we would have less gender related problems at the work place.'

Female respondent 5 in senior management;

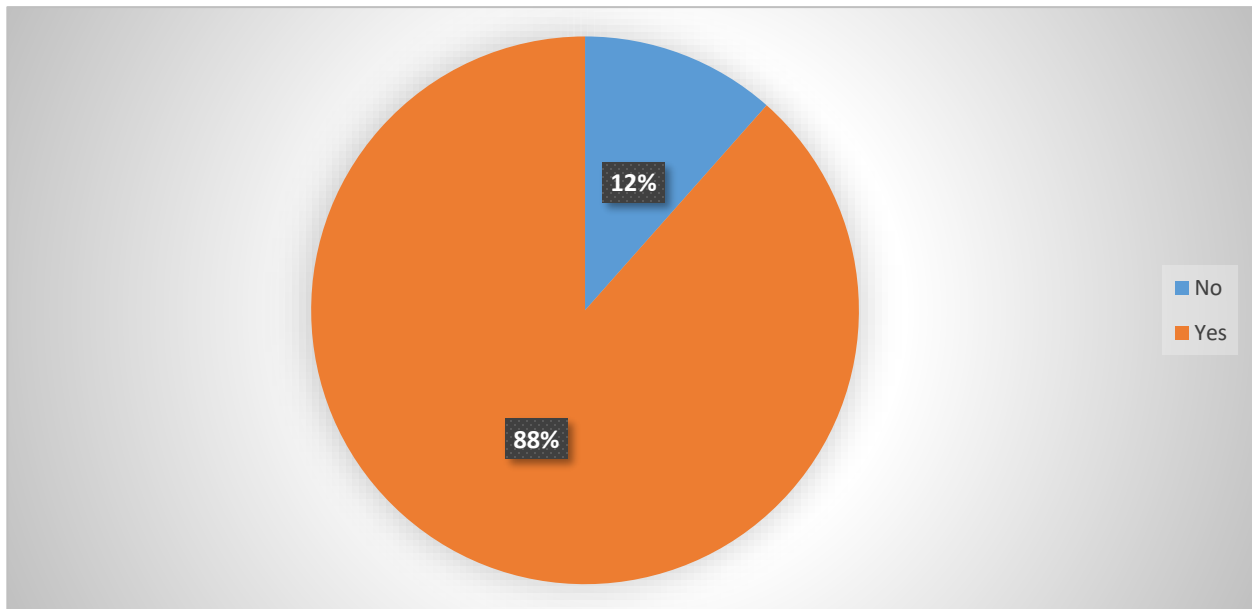
Policies are good but the problem needs to be handled from a cultural point of view. Women are not able to balance their formal work with their home life. They fear depriving their family's quality time.

Addressing these factors require proactive efforts from government authorities to ensure effective communication, training, and implementation of gender-related policies across all levels of the public service.

4.2 Implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019

For those respondents (both men and women) who affirmed that they were aware of the existence of the NPGD 2019, a follow-up question was asked as to whether it had been implemented in their respective ministries/departments. An overwhelming majority, comprising 88%, acknowledged the policy's implementation, while the remaining 12% reported that it had not been implemented as indicated in Figure 7.

Figure 7 Status of implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

The respondents collectively concurred that there has been an attempt to enforce the two-thirds gender rule and one-third gender rule, even though the outcome is yet to be realized. Additionally, they noted an increased presence of women in the public service, but this representation tends to be concentrated at the entry level. Respondents were of the opinion that there was need to take the necessary steps to fully implement the two-thirds gender rule in the public service, thereby promoting gender equality and enhancing the effectiveness and inclusivity of government institutions. The following are the sentiments of a female director in one of the State Departments;

‘There is need to consider amending legislation to provide clearer guidelines and mechanisms for implementing the two-thirds gender rule. This may involve revisiting constitutional provisions or enacting specific laws to address gender representation in public institutions’.

However, respondents pointed out several challenges that hindered the implementation of both the NPGD and the two-thirds gender rule. According to a study by Freidenvall & Ramberg (2021) the key obstacles to the implementation of gender mainstreaming are complacency that is, the perception that work on gender mainstreaming is satisfactory and that no extra attention to the matter is needed and the congestion of perspectives, the fact that the gender equality perspective must compete with other relevant perspectives, a process in which gender equality is often the loser. Another obstacle is lack of political will.

Among the challenges cited were, but not limited to, the following, segregated by gender.

Table 2 Factors that hinder the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019

| Female Responses | Male Responses |
|--|---|
| <p>1) Despite legal provisions and policy frameworks, there's often a lack of political will to fully implement gender equality measures.</p> <p>2) Deep-rooted cultural beliefs and societal norms perpetuate gender inequalities and discrimination.</p> <p>3) Weak institutional structures and legal frameworks can pose challenges to the effective implementation of gender policies</p> <p>4) Inadequate enforcement mechanisms, loopholes in legislation, and lack of accountability mechanisms can impede progress</p> <p>5) Inadequate data collection and monitoring systems make it difficult to assess progress towards gender equality goals and identify areas requiring intervention. Without accurate data, it's challenging to measure the impact of policies and track disparities.</p> <p>6) Misconceptions about Meritocracy: There may be a perception among some men that achieving gender balance through affirmative action measures undermines the principles of meritocracy. They may argue that appointments should be based solely on qualifications and merit, disregarding systemic barriers that hinder women's access to opportunities.</p> | <p>7) Resistance from entrenched interests and stakeholders who benefit from the status quo can pose significant obstacles to gender equality initiatives. Resistance may come from both men and women who perceive gender equality measures as threatening their interests or traditional roles.</p> <p>8) Limited financial resources and capacity constraints within government agencies can hamper efforts to mainstream gender considerations into policies and programs. Insufficient funding for gender-related initiatives may lead to under-resourced implementation efforts.</p> <p>9) Political Expediency: In some cases, male leaders may prioritize short-term political gains over long-term gender equality objectives. They may resist implementing the two-thirds gender rule if they perceive it as unpopular or politically risky among their constituents or allies.</p> <p>10) Perceived Threat to Power and Privilege: The implementation of the two-thirds gender rule may be seen as a threat to the existing power dynamics and privileges enjoyed by men in leadership positions. Some men may resist efforts to increase women's representation as it could challenge their dominance in decision-making roles.</p> |

It was agreed that the implementation of the NPGD necessitated fostering a supportive environment for gender mainstreaming and ensuring that women have equal opportunities to participate in decision-making processes at all levels.

4.3 Ways of promoting the implementation of the National Policy on Gender and Development 2019

Respondents were requested to share their insights on actionable ways to foster the effective implementation of policies in the public service domain. Some of the recommendations included;

(a) **Awareness Campaigns:** There was need to conduct comprehensive awareness campaigns to educate the public, government officials, and stakeholders about the importance of the policy and its objectives.

(b) **Capacity Building:** There was a need to provide training and capacity-building programs for government officials and civil servants on gender mainstreaming, gender analysis, and the principles outlined in the policy. This would ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively implement gender-responsive policies and programs.

(c) **Institutional Reforms:** There was a need to strengthen institutional mechanisms for gender mainstreaming within government agencies and ministries. This may involve establishing gender focal points, developing gender-sensitive budgeting processes, and integrating gender considerations into policy formulation and implementation frameworks.

(d) **Monitoring and Evaluation:** There was a need to establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress in implementing the policy and assess its impact on gender equality outcomes. Regular review and reporting on the implementation status, identifying of challenges, and adjusting of strategies was needed to address gaps and shortcomings.

(e) **Legal Reforms:** There was a need to review existing laws and policies to identify gaps and inconsistencies with the National Policy on Gender and Development. Advocate for legal reforms to align national legislation with the policy objectives and ensure their effective implementation.

(f) **Stakeholder Engagement:** There was a need to foster partnerships and collaboration among government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector to support the implementation of the policy. Engage stakeholders in dialogue, consultations, and joint initiatives to leverage their expertise and resources towards common goals.

(g) **Resource Allocation:** There was a need to allocate sufficient financial and human resources to support the implementation of the policy while ensuring that budgetary allocations are gender-

sensitive and prioritize investments in programs and initiatives that promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

(h) Data Collection and Analysis: There was a need for improved data collection systems and methodologies to generate sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators. This data could be used to inform policy planning, decision-making, and program design, as well as to monitor progress towards gender equality goals.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Women's Participation in Management and Leadership

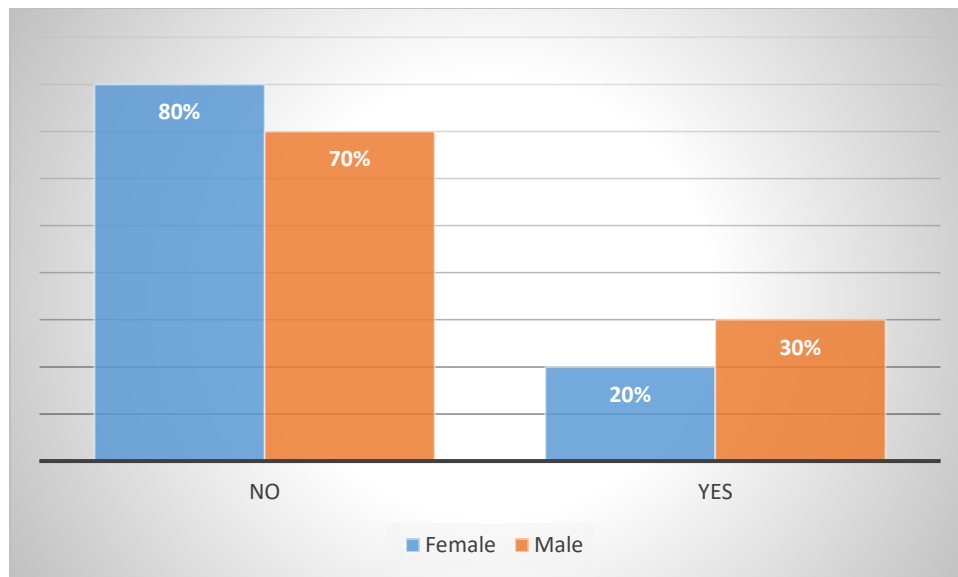
To effectively track the progress of gender mainstreaming, this study considered the understanding of monitoring and evaluation processes to be crucial.

In its third objective, the study therefore sought to establish whether there are any mechanisms in place to monitor and evaluate opportunities for the representation and participation of women in management and leadership within selected ministries in the public service.

Table 3 illustrates the responses from women and men.

| | Female | Male | Total |
|-------|--------|------|-------|
| No | 15 | 31 | 46 |
| Yes | 4 | 13 | 17 |
| Total | 19 | 44 | 63 |
| | | | |

Figure 7 monitoring and evaluation of women’s participation in management and Leadership



Source, Theme 1.1, 2020

The figure above depicts the views from respondents explaining the mechanisms, sourced from job groups J-T. The findings reveal that 80% (15) of females and 70% (31) of males indicated the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Equally, 20% (4) of females and 30% (13) of males acknowledged the presence of such mechanisms to monitor and evaluate promotions and women's participation in management and leadership within the public service.

Among those who responded affirmatively, the study probed further into the measures that have been implemented. The following responses were provided: Some respondents cited the two-thirds gender rule as a measure encouraging and sustaining the upward movement of women into leadership roles across various sectors. Others mentioned that specific jobs/positions are reserved for women to ensure their representation in management and leadership positions. Additionally, respondents noted that during the recruitment stage, job advertisements actively encourage women to apply whenever a need arises. However, many highlighted that the most significant challenge in ensuring fair representation of women in leadership and management could be effectively addressed by the Public Service Commission, which oversees hiring processes

It was notable that some respondents argued that: *their sections had not implemented any such measures, while others stated that they were unaware of any measures in place to monitor the representation of women in management and leadership positions.*

Upon further inquiry on how monitoring and evaluation regarding the inclusion of women in management and leadership positions was conducted, a senior officer stated that:

They do not monitor except when reporting to PSC and that this process is guided by policies and by the 2/3rds either gender principle, a role played by NGECC, Ombudsman or sometimes when sex disaggregated data is collected (KII-Senior manager)

Another respondent had the following to say:

Monitoring and evaluation is done by gender mainstreaming committees and the Human resource office that follow up (KII - HR Manager)

“During my time, women are known to be promoted” but the gender mainstreaming committees are the guardians of making the work environment favourable and non-discriminative (KII-Senior manager).

A senior officer said that there are no M/E Frameworks to measure gender mainstreaming but “there used to be a gender and ethnicity scanning which is no longer in use, this responsibility is now left to the HR to make the environment conducive for both women and men (KII-Senior manager)

There is a weak link in M/E of gender mainstreaming in most directorates because the coordination is not structured (KII-Senior manager)

.

A senior male respondent cited that: “male dominated culture is a deterrent to women’s upward movement to leadership and management” (male respondent-A).

These revelations align with Sandberg (2013), who explains the systemic barriers that hinder women's progress in leadership roles, including male-dominated cultures and the lack of supportive mechanisms within organizations. Similarly, Eagly and Carli (2007) explore the complex dynamics that influence women's advancement in leadership positions, highlighting the role of organizational cultures and structural barriers. Based on these findings, it is evident that there is a need to develop and implement clear monitoring and evaluation frameworks to support the gender mainstreaming processes within the various sections of the public service.

Measures that should be put in place to ensure that women have equal opportunity for representation in management and leadership in the Public Service at National/County government.

The study brought to light a scenario in ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Works, where the promotion or hiring of women was hindered by the scarcity of graduates from technical courses essential for that specific ministry. Other challenges were captured as follows:

A respondent said that women under representation is a historical injustice where boys/men are mostly exposed to technical subjects (male respondent-B).

On the same vein, a respondent stated that cultural factors influence what courses boys and girls take. Change must therefore start here (male respondent- B).

Balancing of the Triple roles is an uphill task for many women - many end up not applying for promotion (female respondent-C).

Various respondents offered several recommendations on actions the public service can take to ensure women have equal opportunities for promotion to management levels. Some of these suggestions made on how to address the problem included the following:

Respondent's observed that more girls need to be encouraged to take STEM courses. "Education is a game changer and an equalizer" (female respondent-C).

In addition to the STEM courses, girls also need training in soft skills such as confidence building to give them a competitive edge (female respondent-C).

One respondent also mentioned the need to expose girls to role models who can inspire them not only in education but also in taking up leadership positions" (KII-Senior manager)

A woman-friendly work environment was mentioned as a way that could encourage more women to pursue growth in leadership and management.

"Sensitize both men and women on gender perspectives and further reevaluate our communication strategies" (KII-Senior manager).

Affirmative action was mentioned as a key priority in the Ministries but a respondent argued that "affirmative action can only work if women Prompt themselves" (KII-Senior manager)

In addition, the study revealed that while working, women may also need further training on matters such as leadership. A senior respondent stated that;

"Trainings are provided for but some courses require personal sponsorship to get the papers needed for promotions KII-Senior manager.

This was echoed by another officer who said when one must undertake the relevant courses to move through the ranks" KII-Senior manager.

A respondent suggested that "An audit of public works is needed to see the glaring gender gaps" (KII-Senior manager)

Assisting women in achieving a balance between family and work, providing longer maternity breaks, promoting self-drive and proactivity, and cultivating mutual support among women were also suggested strategies to enhance women's representation in management and leadership positions (KII-Senior managers)

According to one respondent, the issue of under representation of women in management and leadership is caused by the small pool of female candidates to choose from. Therefore, policies

should be tailored in such a way that they address the root causes of this under representation (KII-Senior manager).

These suggestions lay the groundwork for initiatives that the public service can undertake to mitigate the under-representation of women in the Kenyan public service. The findings of this study clearly indicate that progressive measures must be implemented.

In this connection, Davidson and Burke (2015), editors of the book "Women in Management," emphasize the importance of developing strategies to address the challenges that women encounter in management roles.

Conclusion

The research findings highlight several key issues that hinder women from progressing to positions of management and leadership. Some of these barriers include systemic and cultural barriers such as family responsibilities that hinder women's work-life balance, lack of adequate training, mentorship and preparation, low self-esteem and other personal attribute as well as a lack of implementation of appropriate policies such as the NPGD, misinterpretation of the constitutional 2/3 gender rule by the implementers and the lack of legal enforcement. These exacerbates gender inequities in management and leadership positions.

Additionally, there is a lack of understanding of gender policies among most employees and this highlights the need for comprehensive sensitization efforts. Besides, the absence or failure to use monitoring and evaluation tools in gender mainstreaming processes aggravated the issue. These findings therefore underscore the imperative for comprehensive policy reforms and institutional support to address gender disparities and create inclusive work environments in all levels of management and leadership in public service. Such an initiative stands to promote gender equality, a vital pillar for advancing women's economic empowerment across diverse sectors.

Recommendations

1. The Public Service Commission must make concerted efforts to ensure the full implementation of the two-thirds gender principle and establish clear milestones for its achievement. These measures are essential to successfully closing the gender gap in the Public Service
2. The implementation of the gender policy, as outlined in Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2019, must undergo thorough and systematic monitoring and evaluation by the NGEC, as

mandated by the legislation establishing the commission. The findings derived from this monitoring process should inform the Public Service Commission's efforts in achieving the set milestones toward attaining the two-thirds gender representation

3. There is a critical need for a decisive and efficient policy shift, accompanied by the provision of necessary resources, to enhance the monitoring and evaluation frameworks regarding the two-thirds gender principle as articulated in the 2010 Constitution.
4. Assess the influence of caregiving responsibilities on women's progression to management and leadership positions within the Public Service, and advocate for the creation of awareness and mentorship opportunities for women managers

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