Analysis of political representation effects on subjective well-being of women employees in the county government of Kakamega

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Abstract
The Kenyan Constitution in Articles 27(8) and (81) (b) promises to increase space for women's representation and provide for a minimum of one third of either gender representation in all elective and public appointments. Kenya's male-dominated Senate and National Assembly have been reluctant to pass legislation to put this constitutional principle into practice despite article 27(6) of the Constitution requiring the State to enact legislations that will redress historical discriminations and injustices. This study sought to analyze political representation effects on subjective well-being of women employees in the County Government of Kakamega. The study adopted descriptive research design, which ensured ease in understanding the insight about the problem under study. Primary data from a sample of women employees and members of the County Assembly of Kakamega making a total of 1,078 formed the target population. A sample size of 291 respondents was used to represent the target population. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection since this can be send to a large number of people. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 5% of the sample size to ensure that it was manageable, relevant and effective. The collected data was analyzed using inferential as well as descriptive statistics. The study findings showed a significant relationship between women political representation (χ^2 (1) = 157.672, p < 0.01)) on subjective well-being.

Keywords: political representation, subjective well-being, women employees

Introduction
In 2015, 10 heads of state and 14 heads of government were women, and the number of women in cabinet between 1999 and 2010 had increased from 9% to 17% (Hughes, 2014) [11]. De-busscher and Ansoms explain that Rwanda has recognized the necessity to promote women`s educational, political and economic empowerment as part of its strategy for poverty reduction and sustainable development (Debusscher & Ansoms, 2013) [7]. Despite subscribing to international commitments to empower women, Kenya still lags behind in terms of women representation in politics and decision making in East African region (Kivoi, 2014) [16]. In the 2012 Gender Inequality index, Kenya was ranked at position 145 out of 186 countries (Human Development Report, 2013). Available data indicate that gender inequity is still prevalent in the country (Ouma & Maina, 2010) [24]. According to Nyanjom (2011) [22], lack of political will is partly to blame for the 10th Parliament's failure to legislate constitutional guarantees of affirmative action. At the national level, the Government has tried to address women's concerns by creating the National Commission on Gender and Development (2004) and a gender department within the Ministry of Gender, Sports and Culture (2002). The low participation and representation of women in public and political institutions of the country like the Senate, National Assembly and County Assemblies negates the equity that is affirmed in the constitution. Kenya acceded to the gender equality platform in the context of its commitments to various United Nations (UN) resolutions, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Nyanjom, 2011) [22].

Statement of the Problem
A number of policies are emerging that support and encourage women's participation in development. The Constitution of Kenya 2010, guarantees equal rights and freedom for women and men, and upholds the principles of non-discrimination and equality and provides for no more than two thirds representation of one gender in elective and appointive positions as a way of bridging the gender gap (Government of Kenya, 2010). The Kenyan Constitution in Articles 27(8) and (81) (b) promises to increase space for women's representation and provides for a minimum of one third of either gender representation in all elective and public appointments. Kenya's male-dominated Senate and National Assembly have not passed any legislation to put this constitutional principle into practice despite article 27(6) of the Constitution requiring the State to enact legislations that will redress historical discriminations and injustices (Okello, 2010). Previous studies on subjective well-being among women have used independent variables such as health, gender violence, access to and control over resources, participation in economic and child-related decisions, self-esteem, mobility, freedom from domestic violence, employment opportunities and political awareness and participation (Waswa & Mukanzi, 2018; Balk, 1997; Blumberg, 1994; Morgan & Niraula, 1995; Hashemi, Schuler & Riley, 1996; Jejeebhoy, 2000; Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001).

While these proxy measures are important and are ideally associated with well-being, they may not capture all aspects of the multidimensional concept of subjective well-being (Joshi, 1999). There is inadequate research relating to women effect of women political representation on subjective wellbeing in Kakamega County Government. This study sought to fill this knowledge gap.

Objective of the Study
To analyze political representation effects on subjective well-being of women employees in the County Government of Kakamega.

Literature Review
Feminist Theory
The feminist theory is a group of progressive theories that provide leadership for the struggle for the attainment of gender equality, economic security, religious tolerance and political freedom (Banks, 1986) [2]. As an approach feminism was developed in 19th and 20th centuries in the years 1960-1980 with the aim of overturning gender discrimination and violence against women. It first appeared in France in 1864, Netherlands in 1872, Great Britain in 1890s and United States in 1904 (Evans, 1981) [10]. The Feminist theory is one of the major contemporary sociological theories which analyses the status of women and men in the society with the purpose of using that knowledge to better women's lives (Mason, 1968). It is an approach to gender equality like education, economic opportunity along with women's rights and equal access to resources and decision making processes. The feminist framework is mostly concerned with giving a voice to women and highlighting the various ways women have contributed to the general development of the society. The argument of feminist theory is that gender discrimination makes women disillusioned and unable to develop their potentials (Eisenstein, 1991) [9].

Liberal feminism as derived in the works of Friedman (1963) and Kanter (1977) [13], sees the problem of gender inequality in terms of exclusion of women from a public sphere dominated and defined by men. It argues that women should have the same legal rights as men as well as educational and work opportunities. Liberal feminist thinking has characteristically underlined much of development discourse and practice, particularly as espoused by bilateral agencies. One of the main aims of liberal feminist theory is to create a society where neither women nor men are socially meaningful categories and both are treated in a gender neutral manner; what came to be known as the WID approach (Women in Development) (Razavi & Miller, 1995). It also aims at achieving equal individual rights for both genders via government and organizational policies such as antidiscrimination and affirmative action programs (Khoreva, 2012) [15].

Political Representation
One major focus for international organizations has been electoral reform to increase the representation of women in formal political institutions. In the post-Beijing era, quotas have become a universal instrument for increasing women's political representation, but these are blunt instruments with which to address gendered inequalities in political representation. Research highlights a number of barriers to effective implementation. Much depends on the electoral system and on political parties (Ballington, 2012) [3].

Women's political empowerment is increasingly recognized as critical to modern states. The recommendations and declarations of a wide range of international bodies, led primarily by the United Nations, urge member states to achieve a minimum of 30 percent women in all elected positions (Towns, 2010) [29]. And, given the inclusion of women's political representation in one of the Millennium Development Goals, women's political empowerment is now a high-priority issue in international development cooperation (Mosedale, 2014) [20]. In Costa Rica, Sagot's research revealed how political parties grudgingly accepted a 40 per cent quota and then employed counter-strategies to avoid it being implemented (Sagot, 2010) [26]. In Brazil, Costa found a lack of effective sanctions to enforce compliance and of support to women candidates from political parties (Costa, 2014) [4].

Research in Sierra Leone revealed the extent to which women candidates face violence and intimidation (Abdullah, 2014). Research in Pakistan (Khattak 2010) shows how quotas can be used by political parties to extend political patronage, and as Jad (2010) [12] shows for Palestine, there is no guarantee that women elected via quotas would be any more inclined towards gender equality than the men they displace. Research suggests that quotas should not be seen as a proxy for women's political empowerment, and can be used to bolster authoritarian regimes, as in Egypt under the Mubarak regime, where Tadros (2011) [28] shows how the quota was manipulated to win more seats for the ruling party. Abbas shows for Sudan how quotas were used by a highly undemocratic regime to undermine the opposition's power base (Abbas, 2010) [1].

Karl (2001) [14] identifies some obstacles that hinder women's participation in political affairs worldwide. They include low education and literacy levels, low access to financial resources, cultural attitudes and stereotypes, religion and socialization, among other factors. Cooper and Karl (1982) [14] found that women face stress while at work, home and in social environments. Women are also supposed to acquire masculine leadership characteristics and management skills like aggressiveness and assertiveness among others so as to excel in their careers. Scholars like Tremblay (1998), Devlin *et al.* (2008) among others have argued that there is a strong link between increased presence of women in parliament and the representation of issues affecting women (women issues). Tremblay (1998) further argues that female members of parliament represent the needs, wishes and interests of female members of the populace in a country.

Oduol (2011) [23] considers lack of institutional political party structures with which to enhance women's participation, which he blames for the low levels of women in politics thus their limited representation in Parliament and also within political parties. Political parties seem to be a waterloo for increased women representation since stringent party rules, violence meted against women; cultural barriers among other impediments always appear to halt increased women participation in active politics and decision making. Kenya's social cultural beliefs and practices such as patriarchy and

elder veneration have most of the time worked against women empowerment. That is why Kenya's extensive commitment to various gender equality protocols have hardly narrowed the inequality gap (Nyanjom, 2011) [22].

The low participation and representation of women in public and political institutions of the country like the Senate, National Assembly and County Assemblies negates the equity that is affirmed in the constitution. Kenya acceded to the gender equality platform in the context of its commitments to various United Nations (UN) resolutions, such as them Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Convention for the Elimination of Violence against Women (Nyanjom, 2011) [22]. Some recent studies have also shown that enhanced female participation in politics changes the role of the government and of governance. A look at the relative performance of countries with women heads of government like Germany (Angela Merkel) and Britain (under Margaret Thatcher) reveal the power of women in politics.

Empirical Literature Review

Lee (2013) [19] looking at the case of Senegal confirms that the country has done much in meeting the 5th SDG. According to his findings, Senegal enacted the gender parity law in 2012 where women's representation in local and national elections through political parties had to be at least half of the candidates. This law increased the proportion of women in the government from 22% to 43%. Also Senegal has a balance between the number of girls and boys enrolling into primary schools. But there is still disparity between the number of boys and girls who actually complete primary schools. Furthermore, at the level of secondary and tertiary education, that gap still exists.

Bjornskov et al. (2007) used a measure of gender equality taken from the CIRI database and looked at the impact of past levels as well as changes in discriminatory practices over the last 20 years. They show that overall both men and women are more satisfied with their lives when access to political participation becomes more equal. For men, the effect is driven by middle and high income and left-wing people. For women, the effect is general, without distinction of income or political ideology. Women are also more satisfied with their lives in countries where discrimination was lower 20 years back in time.

Research Design

Creswell (2009) [6] defines research design as plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. According to Kothari and Garg (2014) [18] social science research designs are classified as descriptive/diagnostic or exploratory. Descriptive research design was used in this study. According to Creswell (2003) [3], descriptive research designs are used to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present data, and interpret it for the purpose of clarification. This design was appropriate for this study since Zikmund (2003) [5] note that descriptive research design is intended to produce statistical information about the aspects of the research issue (in this case subjective well-being among women) that may interest policy makers.

Target Population

According to Kothari and Garg (2014) [18] population refers to all the items under consideration in any field of inquiry. A study population is a group of individuals taken from the general population who share a common characteristic (Sekara & Bougie, 2010). The target population for this study included 1078 female employees in the county government of Kakamega drawn from different Departments.

Data Collection Instruments

According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000) [8], a data collection instrument is a document containing questions presented in a systematic, highly precise fashion. Data collection instrument refers to the device used to collect data such as a paper questionnaire or computer assisted interviewing system (Sekara & Bougie, 2010). The instrument that was used for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire. This provided respondents with a fixed set of choices commonly referred to as closed questions. The closed-ended questions consist alternative answers expressed in a Likert scale style. Each item here is evaluated between respondents whose total score is high and those whose score is low (Kothari, 2004) [17].

Data Processing and Analysis

Qualitative data was converted to quantifiable forms by coding using SPSS text editor (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) [21]. According to Saunders, et al. (2007) [27], quantifying qualitative data means converting it into numerical codes so that it can be analyzed statistically. Data collected was sorted, cleaned and coded and then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25).

Descriptive statistics for was calculated and tabulated using frequency distribution tables. In order to test the hypotheses, chi-square test was used. To test for the strength of the model and the relationship between gender equality practices and subjective wellbeing, the researcher conducted an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study was tested at 95% confidence level and 5% significance levels.

Reliability Results

The reliability tests for the questionnaire in this study gave a Cronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.777. The value of Cronbach's alpha was above the suggested value of 0.7 thus the study was reliable.

Findings

The objective of the study was to investigate the effect of political representation on subjective well-being among women employees in Kakamega County Government. The researcher found a significant relationship between the number of women nominated in the county assembly of Kakamega and their lifestyle (χ^2 (1) = 35.253, p < 0.01). There's also a significant relationship between women being more satisfied when they access political participation and their lifestyle (χ^2 (1) = 157.672, p < 0.01). We therefore do not reject the alternative hypothesis since the study reveals that political representation has a significant relationship on subjective well-being. However, It was found that there's no significant relationship between the number of women elected

in the county assembly and the quality of lifestyle (χ^2 (1) = 35.253, p>0.01)

Conclusions

The study results indicated a significant relationship between political representation among women employees and their subjective well-being. Hence, subjective well-being of women will be realized when they are given equal opportunities in politics as men. It can therefore be deduced that women are more satisfied when there is a level playground for both gender in politics as well as the two thirds gender representation through nominations.

Implications of the Study

The research findings present a number of issues that have implications for the theory, policy and the practice of subjective well-being. The results from the analysis indicated that women political representation is important in realizing subjective well-being of women employees in the county. Therefore this forms the basis for policy proposition from this study. To begin with the government of Kenya has put in place measures to ensure women inclusion in development. This has been cascaded down to the county governments with the county government of Kakamega trying its best in ensuring gender equality as seen in the study results. The study established that equal opportunities in politics as well as nomination of women in the county assembly positively influence their subjective well-being through asset possession and quality of life of their households. To foster gender equality practices that subsequently affect their subjective well-being, policy makers should come up with measures to ensure such is sustained in the County Government of Kakamega.

Recommendation

The study showed that the County Government of Kakamega has sufficient women nominated to the county assembly. However there were very few women elected to the assembly. This shows that women in the county either shy away from contesting, are intimidated by powerful male counterparts or lack the resources to participate in politics. Gender equality practices in the county should be such that women are able to favorably compete for opportunities as the men and measures put in place that will encourage them to move from their subordinate position.

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