Influence of Human Resource Organizational Factors on Employment Opportunities amongst Women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties

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Abstract

The study sought to establish the influence of human resource organizational factors on employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study were 1690 employees in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The researcher sampled 170 employees (10%) using simple random sampling. The data was collected using closed and open-ended questionnaire. The researcher analysed data by descriptive and inferential statistics. Human resource organizational factors had improved employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties by offering effective job selection, equally putting consideration for both male and female on employment opportunities, designing advertisement which are women sensitive, ensuring equal opportunities for training and development and providing equal opportunity for promotion. The study therefore recommended that human resource organization factors influencing employment opportunities amongst women should be approached holistically.

Key words: Human resource, Organizational factors, employment opportunities for women

1. Introduction

Gender equality require that men and women be given equal opportunity to realize full potentials so as to contribute and benefit from social, economic, cultural and political opportunities in the society (Mukuka, 2013). Gender equity is about being fair to men and women. It requires that fairness measures are put in place in order to address social barriers that hinder men and women from operating on the same level ground (Hassan, 2015). Gender empowerment is concerned with men and women taking full responsibility to set agendas, obtaining skills, building confidence and solving problems with support from institutions to nurture such empowerment of groups or individuals (Cuddy et al., 2010).

Gender studies across the globe reveal gender disparities between men and women in job opportunities (World Bank, 2007). However less had been done globally to challenge the situation. Despite the fact that implementation of equal opportunities has got great impact in reducing discrimination against one gender in employment opportunities, these had been hindered by numerous factors such as organization factors. The fifteen Organizations on Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries had come up with its comparison pertaining workforce participation, proportion of women and men holding managerial positions and women representation in parliamentary seats. It was revealed that the lowest participation rate for women is in Turkey (33.6%), followed by Mexico (46.8%), and Italy (55.2%). It was found that there are a higher proportion of working men holding managerial positions than working women across the countries. Australia had the highest proportion of female employees that are managers (8.9%), and the second highest proportion of male employees that are managers (13.3%). Korea had the lowest proportion of female managers (0.4%) and male managers (2.4%). Men hold the majority of parliamentary seats in these countries. The average representation of women in parliamentary seats across OECD countries is 28.6%. Australia was just below the average, with women holding over a quarter (26.7%) of parliamentary seats. Just five countries had reached gender equality (40:40:20) with parliamentary seat representation: Sweden; Mexico; Finland; Iceland; and Spain. The highest representation of women was in Sweden, where women held over two in five seats (43.6%) (OECD, 2015).

In Africa, employment opportunities amongst women had received mixed reaction by different countries. In some countries there had been major advancements in ensuring that men and women had equal chances, however gender inequality remains widespread (Lahoti & Swaminathan, 2013). Ensuring equality in the treatment of men and women who work, African countries
require equal employment opportunities laws and its effective enforcement (Fanworth, et. al., 2013). In many African countries, the incompatibility between positive and customary justice systems may reinforce discrimination against men and women (Sambrook & Wanoni, 2008). In some cases, customary law may even reinforce certain inequalities, especially involving women, including denial of their rights to work in formal sector and attend schools (Siaroff, 2002). Most African women earned less than men and are more likely to be trapped in low pay, low-skilled jobs often in the informal economy (Sambrook & Wanoni, 2008).

Although women had joined the labour force in large and increasing numbers over the last two decades due to increased access to education in Kenya, the majority of them are still concentrated in traditional female occupations and the informal sector. The urban labour force participation rate for women in Kenya had increased from 30% in the early eighties to 56% in 1999 (Okumu, 1999). Despite their growing participation in the workforce, there are still very few women in the top public decision and policy making positions in Kenya. Most women in Kenya are concentrated in low paying jobs, low status occupations with poor fringe benefits and carried out under poor working conditions and therefore held very little prospect for poverty reduction and upward mobility. On the other hand, the majority of the women in the rural areas spend a great deal of time on low productivity work which had created major income disparities between men and women (Okumu, 1999). The reasons for gender disparities in employment opportunities include segregation in the labour market, social attitudes towards women, inadequate capacity on the part of women in terms of their knowledge and skills and lack of gender responsive policies and programmes.

The constitution of Kenya 2010 devoted most of its functions to the County Government including Human resource management function. In West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties, the employment opportunities amongst women had not been fully achieved over time. Disparities between men and women had been witnessed in middle and high-level management, position in the two Counties. For instance, in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties workforce, clearly showed that there was very negligible number of women in high level management as there are 7 female workers representing 13.2% while male is 46 representing 86.7%. Further, at the middle level of the workforce, there are 136 female workers representing 29.1% out of 330, male workers representing 70.8%. (CPSB, 2017). The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of human resource organizational factors influencing employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

2. Research Problem

Human resource organization factors are influenced by policies that support employment opportunities amongst women. Some of these policies included the Parliamentary Service Commission (Article 127), which provides for four (4) women out of a total of eleven (11) members and the Judicial Service Commission (Article 171) which required that there should be two members, one male and one woman (Wanjohi, 2013). The current Constitution of Kenya gave room for the equal employment opportunities by stipulating not more than two thirds members of the same gender in elective positions (GoK, 2010). In 2007, the employment act outlawed discrimination in a wide range of employment and employment-related areas (Nyaencha, 2014). These included; recruitment and promotion; equal pay; working conditions; training or experience; dismissal and harassment including sexual harassment (Tripp, 2000). An International Labour organization (ILO) required public authorities to make active, targeted and systematic efforts to promote gender equality (Gok, 2008).

Human resource organizational factors influenced the gender roles and composition of men and women in the workplace. The knowledge acquired, skill and competences of men and women determine their organization roles both at work place and home. Hassan (2015), carried out study on factors influencing the changing of gender roles among the Somali women of Garissa County. The study targeted a total of 60 households. The study revealed that changes and flexibility in gender roles being experienced today, had its roots in the changing social structure. Economic factors, advancement in sciences and changed value system are the major change driving force.

The enactment of the Kenya’s constitution 2010 was rooted in elimination of the gender disparities in work place. This was attributed by men and women as light to gender issues. Unfortunately, women were discriminated in recruitment and selection, promotions into senior positions, training and development and even paid low salaries compared with male employees with same qualification as theirs. Nzomo (2003), noted that when a public body appoints or selects committees, governing boards, councils, boards, delegations, etc. it was observed that women had significantly low percentage of the total number of persons participating (Gok, 2008). This was contrary to provision of the Convention to Eliminate All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) which put a critical mass of 30-35% women’s participation in governance structures for objective representation. In comparison to East African countries, Kenya was the only country in East Africa that had not achieved gender equity in its legislature, measured by women comprising at least one-third of its national legislators (Chitere, 2013).

In West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties, it was in record that of employment opportunities amongst women had been at its lowest due to; weak legislation, deliberate sabotage of the implementation and lack of support from leadership. Thus, this necessitated the comprehensive investigation to the current employment opportunities amongst women.

3. Research Methodology
The descriptive research design was preferred for this study. Descriptive research design seeks to obtain information that describes the existing phenomenon (Kothari, 2004). Descriptive was preferred as it was appropriate to use more than one variable. Descriptive research design that was used employed methods of analysing correlations between multiple variables by using multiple regression analysis (Aiken and West, 1991). Therefore, this method was appropriate as it gave detailed description of the human resource factors influencing employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

Population is all members of set of people, events or objects which the researcher generated (Kothari, 2004). The population of the study was departments and employees within West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The study targeted employees in top management such as Heads of departments, middle and lower level employees so as to establish the gender composition at each level and thus determine employment opportunities amongst women. Employees of different levels from 13 departments of West Pokot County and twelve departments of Elgeyo Marakwet County was targeted. The target population of the study were 1690 employees in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

The researcher adopted stratified sampling technique to categorize employees into various categories. The technique was suitable since it grouped population into homogenous subjects that share similar characteristics and it also ensured that sub-groups are proportionately represented (Sekaran, 2003).

From the population of 1690 employees recruited by the County government of West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties, the researcher selected a sample size of 170 respondents (employees) which represented 10% of the targeted population. This was in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), recommendation of at least 10% sample size. The sampled respondents were considered as a sample figure, selected using simple random sampling technique where every element had equal chance to be selected. The researcher used simple random sampling technique in order to give equal chance to every member in sub set department. According to Kothari (2004), a population from which a sample was drawn should constitute a homogeneous group, if not stratified sampling technique was applied to obtain a representative sample. Therefore, the researcher used the formula below to obtain representative sample from each Strata (department).

The target population for West Pokot County was 1,047 while that of Elgeyo Marakwet County was 643 employees. Therefore, the study targeted a total of 1,690 employees in the two Counties. A sample of 170 respondents were selected as a representation of the total population.

The descriptive statistics allowed data to be represented with bar graphs, pie-charts, and tables. Qualitative research was analyzed to come up with a rich and meaning picture of a multifaceted, complex situation (Kothari, 2004). This allowed exploration and better understanding of the complexity of the phenomenon under study. Qualitative data was analyzed using content analysis. The researcher edited and classified the qualitative data into classes or groups with common characteristics or themes in order to draw conclusions. Quantitative data was analyzed statistically using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of statistical tool SPSS.

The regression model was in the form:

\[ Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X + e \]

Where:
- \( Y \) = Employment opportunities amongst women.
- \( \beta_0 \) = Constant
- \( \beta_1 \) = Coefficient
- \( X \) = Human resource organizational factors
- \( B \) = regression coefficient
- \( e \) = error term

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics Analysis

4.1.1 Influence of Human Resource Organizational Factors on Employment Opportunities amongst Women

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of human resource organizational factors on employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The respondents were presented with a five Likert questions; strongly disagree (SD), disagree (D), not sure (NS), agree (A), and strongly agree (SA) in which they were to rate the statements presented. During analysis, the response was summarized in frequencies (F), percentages (%), Means (M) and standard deviation (SD). The thumb rule for the study was that higher the percentage the better the agreement and vice versa. On the mean and standard deviation, higher deviation from mean leads to rejection of the agreed response and vice versa.
The study established that the job advertisement made by the organization is women sensitive, as indicated by 70(45.8%) of the respondents who agreed and 56(36.6%) who strongly agreed, 5(3.3%) of the respondents had neutral view. On the other hand, on equal measure of 11(7.2%) strongly disagreed and agreed on the statement (Mean = 3.9, SD = 1.6). Similarly, most of the respondents 85(55.6%) agreed and 54(35.3%) strongly agreed that the job selection in the organization offers employment opportunities for women. On the other hand, 5(3.3%) strongly disagreed, 7(4.6%) of the respondents disagreed while 2(1.3%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean = 4.1, SD = 1.1). On statement that the organization consider both male and female equally for training and development opportunities, 31(20.3%) strongly disagreed, 34(22.2%) disagreed while 45(29.5%) agreed and 38(24.8%) strongly agreed. Only 5(3.3%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean = 3.1, SD = 1.5). The majority of the respondents 42(27.5%) agreed and 41(26.8%) strongly agreed that employee promotion in the organization provide equal chances in accordance to employment opportunities amongst women while 33(21.6%) strongly disagreed and 30(19.6%) disagreed with the statement. Only 7(4.6%) neither agreed nor disagreed on the statement (Mean =3.1, SD = 1.5). Most respondents, 54(35.3%) agreed and 77(50.3%) strongly agreed that employee groups and teams are equally considered for male and female on basis of employment opportunities. On the other hand, 7(4.6%) and 8(5.2%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 7(4.6%) of the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed on the statement (Mean = 4.2, SD = 1.2). Since deviation from mean did not exceed mean the response from all the items were valid. The results of the findings are as indicated in Table 1 below.

### Table 1 Response on Effect of Human Resource Organizational Factors on Employment Opportunities Amongst Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resource Organizational Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The job advertisement made by your organization is women sensitive</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The job selection in your organization offers employment opportunities for women</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your organization consider both male and female equally for Training and development opportunities</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee promotion in your organization provide equally chances in accordance to employment opportunities amongst women</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee groups and teams are equally considered for male and female on basis of employment opportunities</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher interviewed heads of departments and some stakeholders which influence one way or the other on employment opportunities for women. After interview and to bring out meaningful information and to reduce bulk of data collected content analysis was used. Data was organized according to the following themes; influence of human resource factors on employment opportunities amongst women, influence of human resource cultural factors on employment opportunities amongst women, influence of socio-economic factors on employment opportunities amongst women, the influence of stakeholders’ involvement on the employment opportunities amongst women and information on employment opportunities amongst women.

On influence of human resource factors on employment opportunities amongst women, the interviewers were to provide information on recruitment and selection, promotion and training and development. The following were reported; First, recruitment and selection. It enables department identify vacancy and create new positions for women, it identifies duties and responsibilities which are women friendly, develops future recruitment plans which favour women employment, and it gives women opportunity to participate in selection committees to ensure that chances for women employment are full adhered.

Through the findings of the study it was established that the job advertisement made by the organization is women sensitive. Similarly, most of the respondents agreed that the job selection in the organization offers employment opportunities for women and consider both male and female equally for training and development opportunities. The majority of the respondents agreed that employee promotion in the organization provide equal chances in accordance to employment opportunities amongst women. The results are contrary to Maingi (2016), who carried out a study to examine one-third rule on gender diversity and its impact on performance of listed firms on Nairobi stock exchange among forty-seven (47) firms listed in NSE, the study found that firms had proportion of their board composed of women below 20%. Most respondents agreed that employee groups and teams are equally considered for male and female on basis of employment opportunities. The study established that human resource organizational factors significantly influence employment opportunities amongst women.

### 4.1.2 Earning Replacement and Financial Performance

The study sought to determine human resource factors influencing employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The section of questionnaire on employment opportunities amongst women was answered by 35
female employees only. The thumb rule for the study was that higher the percentage the better the agreement and vice versa. On the mean and standard deviation, higher deviation from mean leads to rejection of the agreed response and vice versa.

The study established that the County government had not fully achieved employment opportunities for women, as indicated by majority 18(51.4%) of the respondents who disagreed, on the other hand 7(11.4%) agreed and 13(37.1%) strongly agreed (Mean = 2.8, SD = 1.3). Despite lack of achievement of employment opportunities for women, 11(31.4%) of the respondents agreed and 14(40.0%) strongly agreed that the employment opportunities for women had led to employment of women, while 7(20%) strongly disagreed and 3(8.5%) disagreed (Mean = 3.6, SD = 1.1). 10 (28.5%) the respondents agreed and 12 (34.3%) strongly agreed that the County governments employed techniques and efforts of realizing employment opportunities for women, on the other hand 5(14.3%) strongly disagreed and 7(20%) disagreed (Mean = 3.4, SD = 1.2). Moreover, the majority of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that County governments employment opportunities for women are observed as indicated by 10(28.6%) of the respondents who agreed and 18(51.4%) who strongly agreed respectively, on the other hand 2(5.7%) strongly disagreed and 3(8.6%) disagreed while 2(5.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed on the statement (Mean = 4.2, SD = 0.9). The study established that Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, biases and stereotypes are major barriers to employment opportunities for women as evidenced by 25(71.4%) of the respondents who strongly agreed and 6(17.1%) who agreed, similarly on contrary view, 2(5.7%) strongly disagreed and agreed on the statement (Mean = 4.4, SD = 1.2). On the statement that employment opportunities for women has led significantly to equal opportunity for women, majority 20(57.1%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 5(14.3%) agreed, on the other hand 8(22.9%) strongly agreed and 1(2.9%) disagreed, while 1(2.9%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean = 3.8, SD = 0.8), on the statement despite the employment opportunities women are concentrated in low social status jobs, majority of the respondents 21(60%) of the respondents strongly agreed and 3(8.6%) agreed. On the other hand, 4(11.4%) strongly disagreed and 5(14.3%) disagreed while 2(5.7%) neither agreed nor disagreed (Mean = 3.9, 1.1). The standard deviations of the item did not exceed mean, therefore the response from all the item were valid. The results of the findings are as indicated in Table 2 below.

### Table 2 Response on Employment Opportunities amongst Women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Human Resource Organization Factors</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>S.D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your county government has fully achieved employment opportunities for</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The implementation of employment opportunities for women has led</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to employment of women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The County government employs techniques and efforts of realizing</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>employment opportunities for women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The County government employment opportunities for women are observed.</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, biases and stereotypes are major</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>barriers to employment opportunities for women.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings of the study concur with the findings of Yaro, Rozita and Dani (2017), which indicated that stakeholders had significant role to play in policy formulation and implementation which was categorized into two themes (total commitment and system support). It is therefore, recommended that stakeholders should be allowed to full participate in policy formulation and implementation; government should as well provide sound measures of effective implementation. Further, the findings of this study agree with the paper of Gianluca and Keasey (2009), they analysed the impact of policies introduced during 1997 and thereafter in English National Health Service aimed at increasing stakeholder’s participation in the decision-making processes of the organization directly responsible for delivery of health care. The evidence gathered by the study also suggests that enhanced stakeholder involvement contributed to quality services provided. The study established that Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes, biases and stereotypes are major barriers to employment opportunities. The study concurs with the findings of Styodana (2015), who investigated the challenges on implementation of gender policy, the findings indicted gender equality challenges stem from organization and leaders not being accountable, responsible and committed to gender equality initiative. Further the research established that organization and leadership beliefs, practices and behaviours impact the implementation of gender equality in organization. Organization environment, culture and element were also found to be influential in gender equality policy in organization.

### 4.2 Inferential Statistical Analysis

The R square indicated the coefficient of determination which explained how well the changes in the dependent variable can be explained by changes in the independent variable. The R square was 0.533, the result indicate that organizational factors
contribute 53.3% change on employment opportunities amongst women while 46.7% of the variation in employment opportunities amongst women was explained by other factors.

**Table 3 Model Summary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.730</td>
<td>.533</td>
<td>.523</td>
<td>.44712</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), sociocultural, Organizational factors, socioeconomic factors

The F-value of 56.635 with a p-value of 0.000 at 0.005 level of significance implies that the combined contribution of independent variables was significant in predicting the dependent variable. The result of the findings is as indicated in Table 4 below.

**Table 4 ANOVA**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>33.967</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11.322</td>
<td>56.635</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>29.788</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>.200</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>63.755</td>
<td>152</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Financial performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Capital Expansion Decision, Earning Replacement

The coefficients indicated the change contributed by each independent variable on the dependent variables. The study established that human resource organizational factors significantly influenced employment opportunities amongst women ($\beta = 0.525, p = 0.000$) as indicated in Table 5 below. The results implied that job advertisement; which include the medium used to publicize job vacancies and job requirements, selection procedure among other organizational factors affects employment opportunities amongst women.

**Table 5 Regression Coefficients**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>B 1.731</td>
<td>Std. Error .299</td>
<td>Beta .766</td>
<td>5.788</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Organizational factors</td>
<td>.525</td>
<td>.041</td>
<td>.766</td>
<td>12.730</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Dependent Variable: Employment opportunities amongst women

The regression model guiding the analysis was;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta X_1 + e$$

Hence, replacing the values of the significant variables, the equation for the results will be;

$$Y = 1.731 + 0.525 \times X_1 + e$$

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Human resource organizational factors had improved employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties by offering effective job selection, equally putting consideration for both male and female on employment opportunities, designing advertisement which are women sensitive, ensuring equal opportunities for training and development and providing equal opportunity for promotion.

The study established human resource organizational factors significantly influence employment opportunities amongst women in West Pokot and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. The study therefore recommended that human resource organization factors influencing employment opportunities amongst women should be approached in holistically.
References