



EFFECTS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING ON EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCESSES IN KWALE COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Across Africa, women and men often experience different opportunities, conditions and privileges; they earn different wages, do not have the same access to education and are not always equal before the law. The research was guided by the following specific objectives; to establish the effect of gender equality, gender equity, gender empowerment and gender audit on employee recruitment and selection process in the County Government of Kwale. It employed the socialist feminist theory, gender role ideology theory and the theory of liberal feminism. The target population was 193 employees in the County Government of Kwale who are directly involved in the process of recruitment and selection process specifically the middle and top-level management also including the Public Service Board. A census was therefore adopted. The study employed primary data sources. The study established that gender mainstreaming positively and significantly affect recruitment and selection at the Kwale County government. The study recommended that Kwale County government should consider gender equality, gender equity, gender empowerment and gender audit before they start any recruitment and selection process.

Key Words: Audit, Empowerment, Equality, Equity, Gender, Recruitment, Selection

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INTRODUCTION

Recruitment is the process of identifying, screening, shortlisting and hiring of the potential human resources for the purpose of filling up the positions within the organizations. It is the central function of human resource management. Recruitment is the process of selecting the right person, for the right position at the right time. The educational qualifications, experience, abilities and skills of the individuals need to be taken into consideration when recruitment takes place. It is the process of attracting, selecting and appointing potential candidates to meet the needs and requirements of the organizations. Recruitment takes place internally, i.e. within the organization and externally, i.e. from the usage of external sources. Internal factors include, the size of the organization, recruiting policy, image of organization and image of job. External factors include, demographic factors, labour market, unemployment rate, labour laws, legal considerations and competitors. Efficiency in the recruitment processes generates productivity and builds a good working environment and good relations between the employees (Derous & Defruyt, 2016).

Selection is the process of picking or choosing the right candidate, who is most suitable for the job. It is the process of interviewing the candidates and evaluating their qualities, which are necessary for a specific job and then selection of the candidates is made for the right positions. The selection of right candidates for the right positions will help the organization to achieve its desired goals and objectives. When selection of the employees takes place, it is vital to ensure that they possess the desired qualifications, skills and abilities that are required to perform the job duties in a well-organized manner (Rozario, Venkatraman & Abbas, 2019).

Recruitment is called a positive process with its approach of attracting as many candidates as possible for the vacant positions. It is the process of identifying and making potential candidates to apply for the jobs. On the other hand, selection is called a negative process with the elimination of

many candidates as possible. There are numerous individuals, who apply for the jobs, but selection is made only of those individuals, who are qualified and proficient. Selection is important, the reason being, hiring of good resources can help in increasing the overall performance of the organization. Both the processes of recruitment and selection are considered important for the effective functioning of the organizations and they take place simultaneously. They are imperative for growth and development of the organization (Nikolaou, 2021).

At the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women, the strategy of gender mainstreaming was explicitly endorsed by the Platform for Action which was adopted at the end of the Conference. The Platform for Action calls for the promotion of the policy of gender mainstreaming, repeatedly stating that governments and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs, so that, before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of the effects on women and men, respectively (Abbasi et al., 2020). Recent literature on Gender Mainstreaming (GM) has focused on government policy and strategy to advance gender equality, in particular in relation to employment strategy within the European Union and in the policy of the United Kingdom government (Staudt, 2017) and the place of social regulators in this process (Rees, 2004). It has pointed to the lack of effective mechanisms to address employer behavior. Whilst the business case for gender equality has been recognized, it is considered insufficient to advance women in the workplace (Giscombe & Mattis, 2017). Dickens (2019) argues that equal opportunities for women in the workplace are best advanced by a combination of legal compliance, the business case and social regulation.

Across the world, gender mainstreaming activities rank high on global, national and organizational agendas. Threading gender-specific interventions into strategic intent enables governments and organizations to ensure equal participation and benefit for all genders, economically and socially. For example, in the Nordic region, the Nordic

Council of Ministers, implemented a unified approach to gender equality through the Cooperation Programme for Gender Equality 1995 – 2000 (Åseskog, 2018). The program mandated that gender equality must be executed across all aspects of society including decision making, economic empowerment, the labor market and parenting amongst others. This holistic approach is the backbone for the Nordic region's demonstrated success with progress towards gender equality, as is discussed later in this paper, and provides the basis for why gender mainstreaming must be an intrinsic part of planning and budgeting processes in the most effective of organizations.

Approaches to gender mainstreaming further acknowledge the need to ensure women's participation in all sectors of the economy and more specifically as a driving force in leadership. National frameworks, derived from best practices, provide a blueprint for how female inclusive policies strategies should be designed, monitored and implemented to achieve inclusion for women in the workplace, in society and at home (Packett, Grigg, Wu, Cuddy, Wallbrink & Jakeman, 2020). Moreover, wholly inclusive approaches require commitment from women and men, international and national players, as well as public and private sector actors. In line with this, the BDPA specifically asks key stakeholders to address twelve critical areas of concern. Of specific relevance to this research, is the matter of inequality in economic structures and policies, the matter of inequality between men and women in the sharing of power and decision making at all levels, as well as insufficient mechanisms at all levels to promote the advancement of women (Cavaghan, 2017).

Since the turn of the 21st century, there have been emerging global initiatives fair recruitment and selection including the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Alrawashdeh & Allouzi, 2019) and the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (Kumar, Kumar & Vivekadhish, 2016) where fairness in recruitment and selection is highlighted as a key priority. The significance of gender goals in these programs is to provide the foundation upon which

country and organizational plans are built and in turn set a minimum standard for gender equality worldwide and ensure women's full participation in leadership at all levels (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2017). Across Africa, women and men often experience different opportunities, conditions and privileges; they earn different wages, do not have the same access to education and are not always equal before the law (Africa development bank, 2015). Omoyibo and Ajayi (2016), state that the awareness of the importance of gender in the development agenda has grown considerably in many African societies. There is mounting interest to address gender inequality as a means of leveling the platform for development. This is due to the fact that equal opportunities and access to economic activities plays a vital role in development. Various governments in Africa have developed policies and shown commitment to gender mainstreaming as a tool for achieving economic reform. Durojaye and Okeke (2017) state that at a regional level, attempts made to address gender inequality and improve the status of women include the Dakar Declaration of 2002, the Solemn Declaration on Gender of 2004 and the African Union's 2005 Protocol to the African Charter on the Rights of Women.

Statement of the Problem

Despite women's tremendous accomplishments in education and the workplace over the last few decades, men still outnumber women in leadership roles, and employment opportunities particularly at the top (Mwangi & Kimani, 2023). These gender gaps exist notwithstanding evidence that women's equal participation in leadership and decision-making is key in advancing other elements of gender equality, including increased access to services and influencing policymaking on gender norms. A study by IDinsight in Ethiopia, India, Kenya, and Nigeria to understand factors contributing to the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles in economics and financial services. Insights from 21% of women, 25% of whom work in finance and 18% in economics, indicate that gender bias and stereotypes are among the most significant barriers to women's advancement into leadership (Idinsight, 2022). Women said feel they must work

harder than their male counterparts to be seen considered for promotions at their workplace. While the burden of gender bias and stereotypes disproportionately affects women, it can also be a barrier for men and shows the need for more inclusive and flexible policies that support both men and women (Pyke, 2013).

Muchira (2015) delved into recruitment and selection on gender equity in the ministry of agriculture, livestock and fisheries in Kirinyaga County, Kenya. The study applied the descriptive research design and the findings revealed that the ministry ensured fair recruitment and selection and put gender equity at the forefront (36%) although very little has been done to enhance gender awareness as gender balance awareness trainings were lacking. Kanjere & Rachidi (2019) tackled the interrogative approach to gender mainstreaming as a vehicle to women development in Africa. They discovered that the responsibility for translating gender mainstreaming into practice lied with all the people concerned. Addressing gender inequality goes beyond merely enacting laws and adopting policies. This is because gender issues was crucial to the achievement of organizational as well as national imperatives.

Therefore, it is apparent that women faced challenges when in employment as the community associated women with household chores and family life. This is further affirmed by the hurdles which have made it difficult to achieve the two thirds gender rule in leadership positions and roles as ascribed in the 2010 constitution (Oduori, 2019). Presently there is considerable gender bias in decision making in favour of men. Though women have demonstrated commendable leadership qualities in community, informal organization and public offices, they remained under represented in county positions. This study sought to address this issue when the researcher assessed the impact Gender Mainstreaming had on employee recruitment and selection processes in Kwale County Government.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of gender mainstreaming on employee recruitment and selection processes in County Government of Kwale.

The specific objectives of the study were;

- To establish the effect of gender equality on employee recruitment and selection process in County Government of Kwale.
- To investigate the effect of gender equity on employee recruitment and selection process in County Government of Kwale.
- To determine the effect of gender empowerment efforts on employee recruitment and selection process in County Government of Kwale.
- To determine the effect of gender audit on employee recruitment and selection process in County Government of Kwale

The study was guided by the following research hypotheses

- H₀₁: Gender equality has no significant effect on recruitment and selection processes in County Government of Kwale
- H₀₂: Gender equity has no significant effect on recruitment and selection processes in County Government of Kwale
- H₀₃: Gender empowerment has no significant effect on recruitment and selection processes in County Government of Kwale
- H₀₄: Gender audit has no significant effect on recruitment and selection processes in County Government of Kwale

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the human capital theory, socialist feminist theory, gender role ideology theory and theory of liberal feminism.

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory by Brundell et al, (1999) asserts that people possess a wide range of competencies, abilities and personalities that can be tapped into to dictate human capital in the organization. The theory asserts that investments

intended to be valorized in the labour market by earning good jobs which imply those accruing high wages and good working conditions) The theory offers a coherent vision of training and educational paths as a set of rational decisions made by individuals so as to improve their productivities which allow seamless transition into the labour market (Giret, 2000). Most studies in Africa reveal that the lack of human capital increases the vulnerability of marginalized people in the labour market. Moreover, those with lower academic qualifications are often lack employment opportunities due to little accumulated human capital (Word Bank, 2009; Antoine et al., 2001). This theory argues that the firm's employees are the most valuable organizational assets. It asserts that the recruitment and selection processes should be skewed towards identifying and acquiring candidates with valuable knowledge and skills (Pabna et al., 2013). The emergence of the knowledge-based economy has seen firms emphasize more on scarce resources and knowledge so as to increase organization, organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage, (Debrulle & Maes, 2014). Knowledge, skills, and abilities are considered as an invisible asset for the sustainability of the organization (Wright et al., 2001). Continuous training and education as well as fast paced technologies global for maintaining the organization's competitiveness. The workforce must be upgraded to retain a high standard of living knowledge, skill building through training.

Socialist Feminist Theory

Socialist Feminist theory as advanced by Fraser (1968) looks at the role of capitalism, gender and patriarchy in the oppression of women. Fraser postulates that, in a capitalist society, a minority of people (the capitalist class) own all means of production. The great majority must work out of sheer necessity under conditions set by the capitalist, for wages. At the same time, in such society, there exists some degree of inequality between the sexes, subjugation of women to male authority in the family and community in general. In this patriarchal system, women are objectified as

form of property, and there is a sexual division of labor in which they concentrate on activities like child care and certain forms of productive labor (Fraser, 1968). Patriarchy is essential for the preservation of the capitalist system of production. In a capitalist patriarchal society, men form the ruling class controlling all means of production. Women, on the other hand, are excluded by economics and tradition from participating in public social production and are confined to private domestic labor (Ibid).

Socialist feminist theory advocates for a holistic approach to the analysis of the woman's situation. In making the recommendation, she examines three areas of concern. These areas of concern are the psychosocial, socio-biological and socio-political. The psychosocial concerns focus on the processes of acquiring masculine and feminine identities. The socio-biological concerns focus not on whether there are biological, psychological or physiological differences between women and men, but on why differences result in a higher value being placed on what men do. The socio-political concerns focus on how subjectivity, or the way people feel about themselves as members of a particular race or class, contribute to the structuring of gender equality, as well as how gender contributes to the structuring of the political and the economic system. The concern here is the promotion of policies that are aimed at eliminating discrimination of women in community participation.

Gender Role Ideology Theory

Peterson and Runyan's (1993) theory concurs with Bem's (1993) theory "Lenses of Gender". Bem (1993:3) developed three concepts. The first lens is androcentrism (male-centeredness); it defines males and male experience as a standard or norm and females and female experience as a deviation from that norm (Bem, 1993:41). The second lens, gender polarization, superimposes male-female differences on virtually every aspect of human experience, from mode of dressing and social roles to ways of expressing emotion and sexual desire (Bem, 1993:4). The third lens, biological essentialism, rationalizes and legitimizes the other

two lenses by treating them as the inevitable consequences of the intrinsic biological natures of women and men (Bem, 1993).

Oduyoye (2001) concurs that we are born male and female but we become who we are according to cultural socialization. This kind of socialization is continued and becomes reinforced in the society during the various programmes and group's formation and in particular in church and other religious gatherings. This lens is portrayed in the women's struggle to access administrative leadership. The concept of gender polarization seems to encourage, the roles of men and women as distinct in the job, with the men in administrative positions and women in service giving roles.

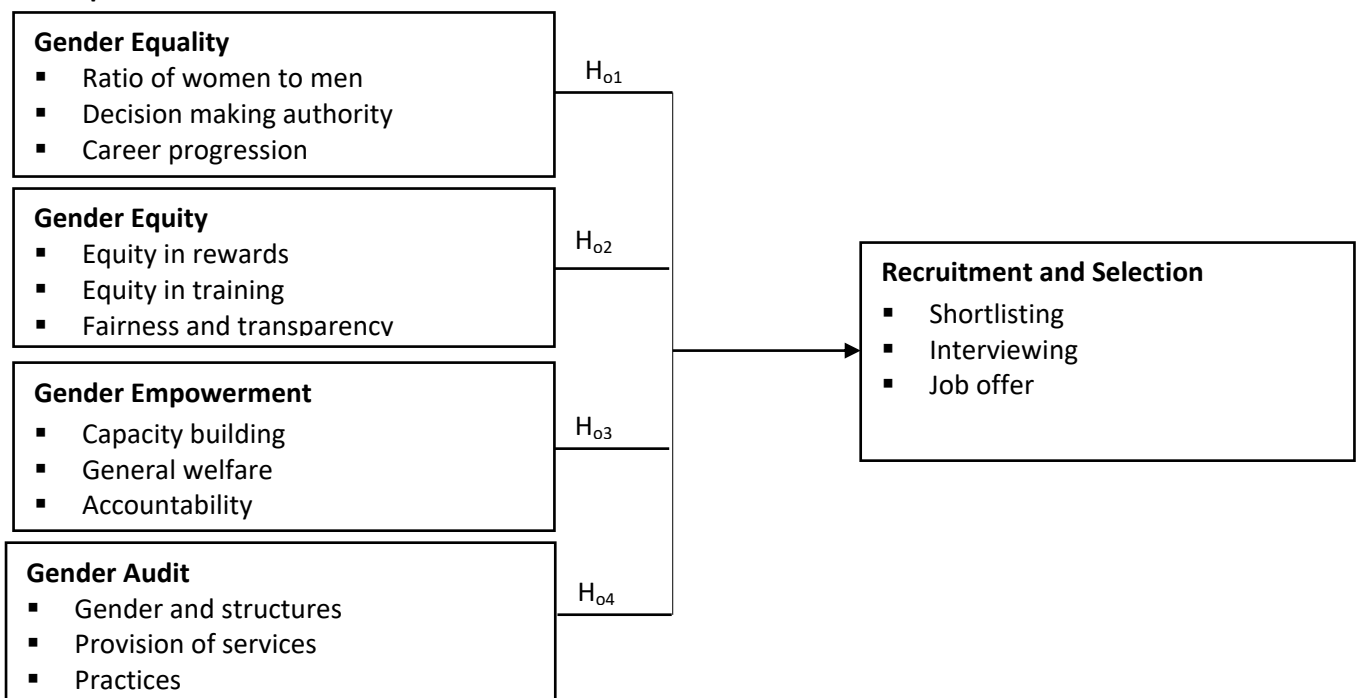
The gender role ideology theory has been used in assessing the working time and roles amongst European families (Emerek, 2019), engendering of poverty analysis in developing regions with specific focus on feminization of poverty (Chant, 2003) and in evaluating gender mainstreaming within the UNDP work environment (UNDP, 2006). Although the gender role ideology theory recognizes that the

society views all activities that are carried out to be based on social roles and interactions of men and women and further that the society seems to have ultimate authority on the precise nature of what women and men actually do, and their real contribution to production and reproduction which turns out to be prejudiced against women, the theory does not suggest what should be done to overcome the gender disparity and to ensure that the experiences of women in the society are the same as those of their male counterparts.

Theory of Liberal Feminism

This theory was founded by John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), when he advocated for equal access and equal rights among men and women. The liberal feminist theory advocates for strategies and policies such as the political will, amendments of law to ensure equal rights and rule of law, affirmative action. These are inclined to address the barriers. The theory emphasizes on the need for equal access to opportunities for women and men, it is concerned merit-based access to opportunities and resources rather than equality of outcomes. It rejects bias based on sex (Wolff, 2007).

Conceptual Framework



Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Researcher, 2022

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the explanatory research design as it aims to explain the researcher's findings and ideas to expand the theory to study the effect of gender mainstreaming on recruitment and selection at Kwale county. The target population was 193 employees in the County Government of Kwale from the middle and top-level management also including the Public Service Board. Due to the small size of the target population, a census was hence conducted.

Primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire and multiple linear regression model was used to explain the relationship between the variables. The model was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Table 1: Descriptive Results

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Dev
Gender Equality	141	3.72	0.87
Gender Equity	141	3.83	0.94
Gender Empowerment	141	4.01	.97
Gender Audit	141	3.37	0.90
Recruitment and selection	141	3.66	0.79

The majority of respondents agreed to a greater extent (4.0) that gender equality, gender equity and gender empowerment affected recruitment

Where;

Y = Employee recruitment and selection

X₁ = Gender equality

X₂ = Gender equity

X₃ = Gender empowerment

X₄ = Gender audit

In the model, β_0 = the constant term while the coefficient $\beta_i = 1...3$ was used to measure the sensitivity of the dependent variable (Y) to unit change in the predictor variables X₁, X₂ and X₃. The error (ϵ) term term

RESULTS

Descriptive results

The study reported descriptive statistics on the five variables under study.

and selection. Further, they agreed that gender audit affected recruitment and selection at Kwale county government.

Correlation Results

Table 2: Correlation Results

		Equality	Equity	Empower	Audit	R select
Equality	Pearson Correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Equity	Pearson Correlation	.063	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.574				
Empower	Pearson Correlation	.245*	.010	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.026	.926			
Audit	Pearson Correlation	.358**	-.111	.291**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.316	.008		
R select	Pearson Correlation	.373**	.545	.432**	.377**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.045	.000	.000	

The results indicated that gender equality, gender equality, gender empowerment and gender audit are all positively and significantly correlated with recruitment and selection. This implies that an

improvement in all the four constructs will directly affect recruitment and selection at Kwale county government.

Table 3: Model summary

R	R Square	Adjusted Square	RStd. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
.576 ^a	0.342	.327	.557	2.397

The model summary results showed that the four mainstreaming measures accounted for 32.7% (adjusted R²=.342) on recruitment and selection at

Kwale County government. The rest is explained by variables that are not in this model.

Table 4: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	11.148	4	2.787	9.765	.000 ^b
Residual	22.491	136	.288		
Total	33.639	140			

Source: Research Data, 2022

The ANOVA results showed that the model was statistically significant as indicated by an F ratio with p value less than 0.05 ($F_{(4,78)}=9.665$, $p<.001$).

This meant that the fairness in recruitment and selection could be predicted by the level of gender mainstreaming progress in the county.

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.662	.363		4.574	.000
Equality	.139	.070	.189	1.986	.042
Equity	.130	.065	.191	1.991	.040
Empowerment	.237	.084	.280	2.806	.006
Audit	.154	.071	.222	2.171	.033

The multiple regression analysis results indicated that gender equality, gender equality, gender empowerment and gender audit all positively and significantly affect recruitment and selection. This implies that an improvement in all the four constructs will directly affect recruitment and selection at Kwale county government.

The fitted gender mainstreaming model of the study was therefore of the form;

$$R\&S = 1.662 + .189\text{Equality} + .191\text{Equity} + .280\text{Empowerment} + .222\text{Audit}$$

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The study concluded that;

- Gender equality has a significant positive influence on recruitment and selection in Kwale county government.
- Gender equity has a positive significant effect on Recruitment and Selection process in the Kwale County government.
- Gender empowerment has a significant positive influence on recruitment and selection in Kwale county government.
- Gender audit has a significant positive influence on recruitment and selection in Kwale county government.

Recommendations

- The county government should nurture a culture of gender equality at all stages of the recruitment and Selection process.

- The county government should nurture a culture of gender equity at all stages of the recruitment and Selection process.
- The county government should enhance gender empowerment in the recruitment and Selection process.
- The county government should implement gender audit at all stages of the recruitment and Selection process.
- The county government should have in place a policy geared towards enhancing gender mainstreaming in the recruitment and selection process.

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