Strategy

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY DETERMINANTS AND PROPORTIONS
OF WOMEN IN TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAMILY DETERMINANTS AND PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN IN TOP LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The combination of legal developments, including the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 and legislative enactments by the Kenyan Government, have specifically sought to ensure there is equality by advancing the position of women within leadership positions in the Kenyan public sector. However, despite these efforts, women have yet to make the sort of advances in leadership positions within Kenya anticipated by such policies. There are existing factors that still hinders women in Kenya from attaining these positions of leadership within Kenyan state corporations. The study sought to determine the relationship between family and proportion of women in top leadership positions in state corporations in Kenya.

Methodology: This thesis used mixed method methodology (qualitative and quantitative). The study design was cross a sectional study and the data was collected using structure questionnaires, with closed ended questions for quantitative data and open ended questions for qualitative data. 221 senior managers in state corporations were sampled using stratified sampling technique. The questionnaires were self administered.

Results: The findings of this study found that family responsibilities hinder the progression of women to high leadership positions in state corporations in Kenya. Further study results showed that Family Responsibilities and Family status were statistically significant in assessing Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The thesis makes an important contribution in understanding the influence of family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions in state corporations in Kenya. Study recommends that future studies may also use the case study approach, which would add value to understanding the relationship family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions. Case studies may be used to generate other theories that can be empirically tested, thus enabling general knowledge on proportion of women in top leadership positions in organization get richer.

Keywords: *leadership position, family determinants, proportion of women, State corporations*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Women's participation in leadership and decision making within public sector positions in Kenya has made some progress in the recent past although a lot still needs to be done. According to the United Nation's Millennium Development goals, status report for Kenya, 2008, the number of women members of parliament has steadily increased. This progress has not been confined to the National Assembly, but is also reflected in the various positions and appointments in the public service (Government of Kenya, 2013). The government of Kenya has made a concerted effort to increase the number of women in leadership positions in state organizations. The major progress has been brought about by the new constitution of 2010 which, as discussed below, seeks to advance the position of women in Kenya. There have also been specific policies focused on affirmative action measures, and gender mainstreaming effort, and other measures that the Kenyan Government has adopted in an attempt to empower and increase the number of women in leadership positions within state organizations (Nzomo, 2013).

Gender inequality in various sectors is a serious issue in Kenya. Addressing it will lead to improved outcomes, not only for women, but for families and the society as a whole (Ellis *et al.,* 2007). Even though some progress has been made in addressing low level representation of women in positions of leadership, a lot of effort still needs to be put in place to remove all obstacles that hinder women's effective contribution to national development.

Various challenges have been identified as hindering the progression of women to high level leadership positions. Most African cultures value qualities such as "masculinity", which, it is believed, is an important attribute of great leaders, and it is assumed, is only to be found in men, both in community and the workplace (Rowley, Hossain & Barry 2010). In addition, certain African cultures, at the social level, associate leadership with men and this is apparent from the family level to more complex organizational levels (Pheko, 2009). In addition to the higher value placed on male attributes in some African cultures, another factor hindering the advancement and greater equality of women in Kenyan society concerns the unequal distribution of labour within many Kenyan families. Women have been known to carry more family responsibilities than men, and this has also interfered with their progress to leadership positions (Koyuncu & Burke, 2012).

Major political barriers prevent women from ascending to political leadership at the macro-level where major decisions that affect their lives are made. In marginalized communities such as the Maasai, the Samburu, and the Turkana tribes in Kenya, young girls are not sent to school, as their fathers believe that it is a waste of time and money to educate a girl, as her only role will be that of a wife (Sang, Masila, & Sang, 2012).

Family voting is a practice where women are led to the voting booth by their male relatives or husbands. This hugely constricts their freedom to vote for whomever they please. Raising sufficient resources to fund a campaign for office is extremely difficult, particularly for women who often lack established funding networks or collateral. In Kenya, women who run for political posts face societal opposition, from both male and female citizens and most opt to drop out of the political race (Nzomo, 2013).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The lack of significant proportions of women in leadership and senior management positions in almost every organization, irrespective of whether in the commercial, industrial, military or public sector appears to be a worldwide phenomenon (Heslop, 1994). Adler (1993) states: About the single most uncontroversial, incontrovertible statement to make about women in management is that there are very few of them.

A survey conducted in Kenya by the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development in 2008, showed that only approximately 20 percent of women occupy high level positions in the public sector in Kenya. This prompted the President of Kenya to issue a decree for affirmative action on employment and recruitment of women in the public service. The decree compels the public sector to have at least 30 percent women representation (Government of Kenya 2008). This decree however, was not legislated, and reports show that the number of women in public service has not reached the 30 per cent mark (Government of Kenya 2010). Women, who choose careers over family or want to be leaders and still have a family too, are often labeled as somehow different, greedy or even strange. Stereotypes and prejudice still affect women's career development strongly. More than 70 per cent of women, who answered the survey by Lahti (2013), said that traditional gender roles and certain expectations of women make women's career development slower.

It is on this basis that the study sought to establish the relationship between family responsibilities and the low representation of women in high leadership positions in State Corporations in Kenya.

1.3 Objective of the Study

Determine the relationship between family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 The Synergistic Leadership Theory (STL)

The effective practices highlighted above further demonstrate that women should be themselves and should not feel the pressure to conform to patriarchal practices in order to move forward. Women's practices of inclusion, collaboration, valuing others and their contributions, and the ability to balance work and family are helpful in breaking barriers to gender equity in educational leadership. In any case, Irby, Brown, Duffy, and Tautman (2002) affirmed, that even though such practices are widely advocated, they are not incorporated in common leadership theories. Synergistic leadership theory (SLT), however, "openly acknowledges the feminine organization as a major component," which lacks in other leadership theories (Irby *et al*. 2002 p. 315).

The leadership model by Irby *et al*. (2002) has the following four factors that serve as dynamic interactions: (a) attitudes, beliefs, and values; (b) leadership behavior; (c) external forces; and (d) organizational structure. These four factors have six interaction pairs, and there is no structural hierarchy or linear nuance (Leonard & Jones 2009). Further, the model contains "both male and female leadership behaviors, a range between closed and open organizational structures, and infinite possibilities of external forces and attitudes, believes, and values" (Irby *et al.*, 2002 p. 312).

Leonard and Jones (2009) noted that effective 21st century leadership can be fostered through the gender inclusive framework of STL.

2.2 Empirical Review

There has been an increase, over the years, in participation in the labour force of women with families. According to Higgins, Duxbury, and Lee (1994), the changing workforce demographics have created difficulties in balancing work and family demands. The traditional situation whereby the wife cares for the family, and the husband is the breadwinner, is no longer the case for modern couples. The consequences of difficulties in balancing work and family demands have led to conflict experienced by workers (Punch, 2001). More women are entering the workforce, and this has made work-life integration a topic of interest to researchers. Many employees are now working longer hours. Also there has been an increase in travel requirements on managers and professionals with more of this travel becoming international (Reynolds, 2005). Work affects personal and family life and personal and family life affects work (Reynolds, 2005).

Dunne (2007) argues that problems of balancing family and work are generally a concern for both employees and employers. These problems manifest themselves in the form of stress, and low commitment to work that ultimately leads to low productivity. On the issue of time, the study found that men have more control over the distribution of their time than women, and this has made them able to satisfy both family and work expectations. According to Reynolds (2005), men's perception is that they can fulfill their family role expectations by just being good providers. Women on the other hand are traditionally expected to physically contribute to family care, even if they are also family providers. This lack of control, leads to the perception that women experience greater work-family conflict (Koyuncu, Burke &Wolpin, 2012).

Dunne (2007) argues that efforts to understand the challenges that women and men face in integrating work roles, and family roles has focused on work-family-conflict. Work-family - conflict has been found to be higher in working women than in working men. According to Crompton Lyonette (2006) work-family-conflict has been shown to be associated with psychological distress, job and career dissatisfaction, turnover intentions, absenteeism and lower life satisfaction. Dunne (2007) argues that one of the major challenges facing managerial and professional women in achieving successful careers in organizations is managing and integrating work and family. Work and family are the two most important roles for most people. Juggling these two domains has been particularly challenging for women managers. Women who start their careers in large organizations sometimes "opt out" because of work-family concerns. There has been a decrease in the number of traditional families – father at work and mother staying at home (Reynolds, 2005).

Voydanoff (2005) observed that socio-structural constraints informed women's relationship to employment. Women's choices and preferences in relation to paid work are an outcome of the interplay between these factors. Women's wider goals and desire to succeed within the remit of the family framework facilitate a situation that result in women limiting their career opportunities to accommodate these perceptions. For women, perceptions directly linked to motherhood frequently lead to their devaluation in employment both as women and as employees (Hall & Richter 1989). Mclnotosh *et.al* (2012) found that the majority of mothers do not have a strong personal commitment to paid work or to a career after having dependent children. They argued that the

majority of women who enter occupations are adaptive – they choose these occupations so they can fit paid work around their domestic role, rather than vice versa. Women have been known to reject the greater responsibilities and additional hours of certain employment to concentrate on the family through personal choice (Perrewe & Hochwarter, 2001).

Explanations for professional and managerial mothers' departure from paid work concentrate on childcare and women's preferences or choices, for instance working time norms particularly in senior positions require these mothers to work long hours (Toivonen, 2010). Mothers are limited in their ability to protest or implement creative working time solutions because they feel they must hide their motherhood, which in itself creates tension. Mothers who are seemingly supported to work fewer hours are sidelined to lower-status roles for which they are underpaid and undervalued in relation to their experience and previous seniority. Unless mothers mimic successful men, they do not look the part for success in organizations (Hill *et al.,* 2004).

Hoobler, Hu, and Wilson (2010) noted that when workers experience conflict between work and family, it resulted in a negative impact on the ratings of workers both in their individual capacity and in their managerial capacities. According to Nordman and Wolff (2009), employers are reluctant to invest in female employees as they believe they are bound to spend more time attending to family matters than their male counterparts. Perrewe and Hochwarter (2001) are of the opinion that an individual's experiences in terms of conflict between work and family demands depends on the value the individual places either on family or work. The work family conflict leads to job and life dissatisfaction for individuals, as the individuals feel that the conflict makes them not able to attain important work and family values (Voydanoff, 2005).

Hall and Richter (1989) maintain that many employees find that their family demands, such as staying at home to care for a sick relative, may interfere with work, and work demands such as a late business meeting may interfere with family obligations which then lead to work-life conflict. Reynolds (2005), sought to integrate work-life and work-hours literatures by examining the relationship between work-life conflict and the desire for paid work. He found that work-life conflict makes women want to decrease the number of hours they work, irrespective of whether the conflict comes from home or work. Men only want to decrease their hours of work when the work-life conflict originates at work (Punch, 2008).

A model that sought to explain the effects of home and work related features on the public sphere career possibilities and influence opportunities of elites was developed by Hansson (2010). He used the Swedish Parliament, which he considered one of the few organizations which had almost equal gender proportion. He concluded that, in order to achieve gender equity in terms of career and influence opportunities for workers, there needs to be an equal distribution of home and work demands between men and women. He noted that efforts of organizations and the society are required to achieve gender equity in the workplace. The study confirmed that the relationship between home and work influenced opportunities for the elite group of Swedish parliamentarians.

In economies like those of Europe and North America, popular understandings of work–family balance are generally based on sharply different expectations of mothers and fathers, where employment for men is seen as an integral part of what fathers do. Mothering and paid employment are seen as oppositional arenas whereby the term, 'working mother' bears the conceptual weight

of these different understandings (Ranson, 2012). Furthermore, it is "mother" that, linguistically, stands for the essential self'. There is no equivalent term 'working father', 'even though most men are employed and most men have or will have children'. The cultural image of the new father, involved with his children and engaged in hands-on care giving, now looms large. But it has not displaced the breadwinning requirement. Rather, it 'is culturally assumed that men will work and pay attention to their families, in that order (Punch, 2001).

In their study of Turkish women holding managerial and professional jobs Koyuncu, Burke and wolpin (2012) found that although women continue to enter managerial and professional jobs in increasing numbers, they continue to be underrepresented at more senior levels of management. Several factors were found to account for this, an important one being women's responsibilities for home and family functioning, often resulting in work-family conflict.

In a study carried out by Rafnsdottir and Heijstra (2011) on structuring of time among academic employees in Iceland, they noted that men and women differed on how they organize and reconcile their work and family life. The findings showed clear gender differences in time use. Although flexible working hours helped academic parents to organize their working day and fulfil the ever-changing needs of family members, the women, rather than men interviewed, seem to be stuck with the responsibility of domestic and caring issues because of this very same flexibility.

Huat and Torrington (1998) noted that despite the availability of domestic help, working women in Singapore still feel that the care and education of their children are their sole responsibility. In a country where the education system is highly competitive, a strong desire exists for them to ensure the success of their children in education. A study by the Asian Institute of Management found that more than 50 percent of women interviewed felt that the most significant price they had to pay for success in their careers was the poor quality of relationships with their spouses and children. Huat and Torrington (1998) noted that in Indonesia, women are poorly represented in high level positions in organizations even though they are more highly educated than men. This has been attributed to socio-cultural constraints, mainly the role conflict between being a wife, mother and being a career woman.

The traditional roles of women in Kenya affect women's careers and indeed how workplace and leadership are structured (Maathai, 2006). The model of the family is that of male provider, and head of the household and the women as mother and nurturer. As educated persons, Kenyan women are still expected to retain their traditional roles, of being mothers and submissive wives, while at the same time opening up new normative spaces for themselves (Maathai, 2006). Unfortunately, workplace and political norms in Kenya do not allow for combining of domestic and public roles, therefore creating conflicts for professional women who try to balance the dual careers (Onsongo, 2005).

In Kenya, there are negative community perceptions with regard to women in leadership, whereby women are not recognized as leaders. Many people do not believe that women should hold positions of leadership. Many communities today believe that public leadership is a man's domain and women cannot succeed in it (FIDA- Kenya 2010). Others believe that women have far too many responsibilities in the homestead to actually have time to dedicate to governance and leadership (Siringi 2011).

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design employed was a survey of state corporations in Kenya. The chosen design was able to offer the researcher the opportunity to establish the relationship between leadership skills and proportion of women in top leadership positions. This was a census study of all State Corporations in Kenya. There were eighty four (84) state corporations in Kenya, according to the official government website as at December, 2009. Fifty of the State Corporations were classified as large corporations (more than three hundred employees), while thirty four were small corporations (less than three hundred employees), as defined by the State Corporations Act (Government of Kenya, 2009). The main focus was on top management of the Corporations, and the study respondents were senior management level staff that included chief executive officers.

Primary data was used in the study. Primary data was collected on the respondent's general information as well as the variable under consideration. Simple random sampling method was used to select the respondents. Such a method of identifying respondents for study has been used in the previous researches with little bias reported (Sekeran, 2003).

To establish the nature and magnitude of the relationships between the variables and to test the hypothesized relationships, the researcher used inferential statistics. The appropriate tests applied were Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient Correlation (r) and bivariate regression. The relationship between family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions was investigated by testing the hypothesis.

H_1: There is a relationship between family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions.

H_1: There is a relationship between family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions

Family determinants were measured by both family responsibilities and family status. Data was obtained using a Likert type scale of 1-5 where 1= not at all, 2 = rarely, 3= sometimes, 4= often and 5= very often. Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions focused on the number of women on top leadership positions visa vie the number of their male counterparts. Proportion was measured using the ratio scale. The result findings of the variables included indicated that hours of working, Unsympathetic ear for family issues, Caring responsibilities prevent women from applying for jobs and Lack of support from family and community prevents women from applying for jobs in the State Corporations.

4.1 Correlation Results for leadership skills and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to test the relationship between family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions. The results in Table 1 above indicated a statistically significant relationship between family determinants and Proportion of

Women in Top Leadership Positions. Further analysis presented on Table1, also show that family determinants was positively related to Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

Table 1: Regression results for Family Responsibilities and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions			
Family determinants.	Pearson Correlation	.504**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

4.2 Regression results for family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

The R value was 0.531 indicating that there is a positive relationship between family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions in table 2. The R squared (R^2) value of 0.281 explains indicates that 28.1 percent of the variation in the Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions can be explained by family determinants. The remaining 71.9 percent is explained by other factors not included in the model.

This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory.

Table 2: Model fitness

Indicator	Coefficient
R	0.531
R Square	0. 281
Adjusted R Square	0. 252

Table 3 provides the results on the analysis of the variance (ANOVA). The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. Further, the results imply that the independent variable was a good predictor of proportion of women in top leadership positions. This was supported by an F statistic of 9.597and the reported p value (0.000) which was less than the conventional probability of 0.05significance level.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	14.003	2	7.001	9.597	**0.000**
Residual	35.747	49	.730		
Total	49.750	50			

Regressions coefficients were presented in table 4. The study found out that Family Responsibilities and Family status were statistically significant in assessing Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions.

Table 4: Regression of Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	t	Sig
(Constant)	1.528	.521		2.930
Family Responsibilities	.260	.112	.268	2.321
Family status	.338	.149	.332	2.264

5.0 FINDINGS CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Findings

The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between Family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions. The relationship between Family determinants and Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions with R = .531, and the R squared value was .281 at a confidence level of 95 percent. The F values and the corresponding p values were significant. The study found out that Family Responsibilities and Family status were statistically significant in assessing Proportion of Women in Top Leadership Positions. It is on the basis of these findings that H_3 was accepted**.**

5.2 Conclusions

This study used top level leaders to point to the causes of low female representation in top-level leadership in state corporations. The objective of the study was to determine the relationship between family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions. The study findings revealed that family determinants influence proportion of women in top leadership positions.

5.2 Recommendations

The thesis makes an important contribution in understanding the influence of family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions in state corporations in Kenya. Study recommends that future studies may also use the case study approach, which would add value to understanding the relationship family determinants and proportion of women in top leadership positions.

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