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## **Abstract**

Gender equality in leadership is a practice and notion that is contested and obligatory requisite. The term gender parity has been acknowledged by mutually globally and by government Institutions. Appreciation of the impact of gender fairness is a pleasing objective required across many avenues in internationally progression practice. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the influence of historical stereotype on women access to leadership in Murang'a County Government. The study was anchored on The Liberalism Theory. The study adopted descriptive research design, and the population under study comprised 159 senior government officers and political elite in Murang'a County Government and the legislative assemble of Murang'a. The study used purposive sampling in identifying persons with requisite knowledge of the concept of the study. The primary data was collected using the questionnaire and the secondary data was obtained from the government policy documents, gender policies annual reports, strategic plans as well as periodic reports both published and unpublished. The study findings were analyzed with the aid of SPSS software and Microsoft Excel Software and presented by use of tables and percentage for ease of data interpretation and consumption by the readers. The study established that historical stereotype was able to explain 60.4% of the variation in women leadership in Murang'a County Government as indicated by R-squared on 0.604. The study moreover established that there was a positive relationship between historical stereotype and women leadership. The study concluded that stereotyped point of view regarding women comprises key hindrances which include societal insight in relation to leadership aptitude of women's lack of assertiveness in participation in political sphere and leadership positions. Owing to the findings, Women should be exposed to work in sections with higher amount of progressive advancement or in areas that transform to executive progression since they are not inferior provided they have the same qualifications with the male counter parts.

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**Keywords:** *Historical stereotype, Women leadership Structured women empowerment, Murang'a County Government*

## 1.0 Introduction

Appreciation of the impact of gender fairness is a pleasing objective required across many avenues in internationally progression practice (UN Women, 2014). According to Walby (2004), gender equality is not only seen as the re-invention in women leadership but also seen as a way to restructure and re-brand a vital feminism part in the contemporary era. The term gender parity has been acknowledged by mutually globally and by government Institutions. Sexual orientation is considered by United Nations (2002) as "the movement of evaluating the consequences of people of any expected activity including enactment, strategies and projects in all roads and at the three levels." It is an approach for empowering ladies' like men's interests and encounters a basic part of the execution, plan, and evaluation of methodologies and projects in monetary, political, and aggregate circles with the goal that ladies and men advantage consistently and divergence isn't sustained. The pivotal reason for existing is to accomplish sexual orientation equality (United Nations, 2002).

Over the previous years, cognizance and devotion taking into account sexual orientation equity in authority has been on the expansion. Sex can be defined as the status of both genders. Sexual orientation portrays all people in network and is eminently by physical and conceptive dissimilarities. The term 'sexual orientation' has slowly procured a mutual implication where it signifies how guys and the females cooperate in the network. The cultural significance of "sex" alludes to orchestrated mutual anticipated set of accepted rules and obligations dependent on an individual sex (Mehra & Gupta, 2006). Then again, McCall (2005) indicates that no careful sexual orientation ought to plan thoughts based on cliché duties. In this manner, individuals ought not to endure sex prospect. As explained by UNESCO (2000), equality happens when people can: circulate incomparability and weight uniformly, have comparable possibilities for money related independence throughout occupation or by methods for trade, can get identical right to tutoring and the opportunity to extend singular premium and abilities where kids are illuminated from weight and sex based hostility in the work and at habitation.

Globally, women consistently encounter disparities on the basis of society forced factors such as customs and religious belief. These hindrances differ depending on state. Sorrowfully, girls and women from third world countries have persistently experienced the repercussions on the basis of gender prejudice for ages (Grigorian, 2007). Gender equality in leadership has created chances for several individual living in developing countries. According to Grigorian (2007), the Asian states for example, South Korea, India, Japan, Thailand and China has included sex equality and has been acknowledged to be an important dynamic force at inspiring both female and male to discover the need of gender equality thus working together to overcome the obstacles. " In South Korea, the gender equality in leadership lobby group was acknowledged as an essential approach of ensuring women's enlightenment through issuance of the Gender equality in the platform for Action Statement at the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 by the United Nations" (Lee, 2016).

As females were fighting for elimination of household oppression in 1941, improved women's living principles, equal rights to education and freedom from household labor, their rights and gender uniformity for inspiration were renowned and valued in Europe within the knowledgeable

circles. The society delegated gender responsibilities and jobs and the duties often imitate the religious, political, economic, and cultural experience and viewpoint of a specific society (Ravindran & Kelkar-Khambete, 2007). Concerns to sex predominantly in Russia, if considered in the phase of females' enlightenment and overwhelming biased one-sided worldwide view of inferior societal category in relation to females and inquiries relating to society, fit in the universal inhabitants' margin and political wellbeing and consciousness. Concerns relating to gender and traditions are inclined to compound in Russia. Expert and educational isolation relating to women, gender unevenness, and women considerably under-represented in choice-making and inferior female income levels have overwhelmed Russia. Frequently, these concerns are applicable to the traditional section (Fedorova, Savitskaya, & Yakovleva, 2016).

Gender responsibilities have assured dynamic distinctiveness and these are; they adjust from time to time; they are learned deeds and they fluctuate between cultural spheres. As a result, due to conflicting cultural ascription pertaining to gender responsibilities and gender impartiality becomes indispensable to ensure gender mainstreaming perspectives become a custom (UNESCO, 2015). Women still encounter segregation politically collectively in societal set up and in economic set up with their narrow voice improbable to manipulate any choice-making supremacy both locally and at employment positions. The government of Kenya has put up measures for ensuring that women are included in the transformation of economy. This has been achieved through a nationwide strategy structure where gender fairness is embraced.

The Kenyan Constitution of 2010 is this structure's basis in which fairness for all is established and a share for representation of female is mandated in the government of Kenya. According to Frosina & Mwaura (2016), the Government in 2011 approved gender strategy principal policy declaration that stipulates her effort in gender justice. Gender equality debate is an exercise and notion acknowledged by all Government Organizations and worldwide. According to UN Women (2014), the value of gender parity is a fulfilling aim required across many spheres in global development practice. In Murang'a County the debates of women in leadership is on the rise though at a low rate. The slow-moving advancement to the gender parity in leadership that allow women take up leadership position in Murang'a county is a huge subject matter that require lawful debate and interest of scholarly research equality strategies in leadership in the patriarchy society that we live in.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Women make up 52% of the Kenyan populace and 60% of the country's registered electorate; political representation is deeply skewed favoring men. Since 2007, 2013 and 2017, the total number of women parliamentarians is still low, at 9.8%. Some improvement has been made in the present parliament, with women members of parliament now comprising 19.5% of the members of parliament. Thus an equality strategy in women leadership has not been implemented fully. The gender fairness in leadership is intended to stabilize the structure of elective positions in Kenya in order to ensure there is justice in the government by not allowing one gender to take up more than two-thirds of elective position as per the 2010 Kenyan Constitution.

Women in management are highly included at the middle and lower levels with the principle of gender equality not being seen at the top management where decision making on how to run the County Government takes place. The National Gender and Equity Commission was established but the country still does not include women fully in most of decision making positions. This



study therefore, aimed at examining the equality strategies in women leadership in Murang'a County.

A number of studies have been conducted in the area of women leadership in different contexts. For instance, Dhatt, Theobald, Buzuzi, Ros, Vong, Muraya and Jackson (2017) evaluated the role of women's leadership and gender equity in leadership and health system strengthening. The findings highlighted gender biases in leadership in global health, with women underrepresented. The study established that gender roles, relations, norms and expectations shape progression and leadership at multiple levels, so increasing women's leadership within global health is an opportunity to further health system resilience and system responsiveness. Since the study was conducted in a different context and used different objectives, both contextual and conceptual gaps are presented.

Additionally, Wagana and Mabonga (2020) interrogated company policies, educational qualification and motivation of women in leadership in telecommunication industry in Kenya with a focus on Safaricom limited by employing a descriptive survey design. The study found that good company policies which are not discriminatory are one of the key factors influencing performance of women in leadership position at Safaricom Limited. Since the study focused on women leadership in telecommunication sector and adopted descriptive survey design, conceptual, contextual and methodological gaps are evident. Further, Kossek and Buzzanell (2018) examined women's career equality and leadership in organizations by creating an evidence-based positive change. The study found that despite the increased attention being given to gender equality for decades, progress has slowed or stalled world over, in many countries, such as United States. Since the study was conducted in a developed context, contextual gap was evident. It was in the light of these identified gaps that the current study sought to evaluate the influence of historical stereotype on women access to leadership in Murang'a County Government.

## **1.2 Research Objective**

To evaluate the influence of historical stereotype on women access to leadership in Murang'a County Government.

## **1.3 Research Question**

How does historical stereotype influence women access to leadership in Murang'a County Government?

## **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

The study was anchored on The Liberalism Theory. This theory was proposed by Hobbes and Locke (1959). Liberalism theory is a political philosophy or worldview founded on ideas of liberty and equality. Liberals adopt a wide range of views depending on the principal understanding of these, but in general they support programmes and ideas for example the freedom of speech, press, religion, civil rights, free markets, democratic societies, international cooperation, gender equality and secular governments (Crenshaw, 2017). Gender equality, which is one of the views supported by liberals, is a state of equal access to opportunity and resources on the gender, decision-making plus participation in the economy; valuing the stature of different behaviors, equal needs and aspirations despite the gender. Equality on gender, equality in men and women, has the concept that all human beings, men and women, can without charge to develop on their personal abilities, making choices without the limitations of rigid gender roles,

stereotypes as well as prejudices (Moravcsik, 1992). Gender equality denote that the different aspirations, behavior as well as the needs of both men and women are looked in to, valued and favored in equal measures (Green, 2017).

Liberalism is based on the moral argument that ensuring the right of an individual person to life, liberty and property is the highest goal of government. Consequently, liberals emphasize the wellbeing of the individual as the fundamental building block of a just political system. A political system characterized by unchecked power, such as a monarchy or a dictatorship, cannot protect the life and liberty of its citizens (Seidman, 1983). According to Schalkwyk (2015), participation additionally leads in conveying of legitimate and noteworthy administrations as it is an appropriate for each resident to be allowed to contribute in choices making. This is accomplished through instruction of individuals on the current issues accordingly guaranteeing all formative exercises meet the individuals' needs and wants, a method for dissimilarity goal is given and each individual is given a feeling of ownership in methodology advancement and thinking of activities.

The U.N agenda for 2030 on Sustainable Development Goals embrace the specific goal towards gender equality, which aims to stop on discrimination and cruelty towards girls and women in ensuring equal opportunities and participation in all the areas of life. Advancing female political participation is a means to the attainment of the SDGs. It is amongst the Targets for Goal Five that "Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life" (United Nations Women, 2017).

Over the years, different countries around the world have developed policies and strategies to improve women participation in politics. Some of these policies and strategies include creation of new parliamentary seats research for women (women representative) and the one third gender rule. Other strategies include advocacy and capacity building (Malongza, Apusigah & Abagre, 2017). Despite the formulation of these policies and the adoption of different strategies, women participation in political leadership remains low. This implies that strategies for improving women participation in leadership should focus on specific factors such as historical stereotype.

Administration turns out to be more multifaceted consistently thusly; there is better require for connecting each person by giving the option to participate in the decision - making measure. As to sex mainstreaming, each affiliation, government and whole humanity needs to prop up sexual orientation decency. Concordance quickens execution as each partner turns into a huge entertainer. This theory is basic in this specific investigation as it assists with valuing that sexual orientation mainstreaming and balance requires partners and accomplices' cooperation through counsel (Kirima, 2020). This theory was considered relevant to the current study since it informed the dependent variable of women participation in leadership.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Tabassum and Nayak (2021) examined gender stereotypes and their impact on women's career progressions from a managerial perspective. The study by adopting survey design indicated that gender stereotypes continue to exist and are transmitted through media, and through social, educational and recreational socialization, which promote gender prejudice and discrimination. The study also argued that contemporary management culture does not critically engage with the social theories of gender studies, which could help in developing gender-neutral affirmative action-oriented managerial perspectives. The paper outlined different aspects of gender stereotyping and their impact on women's career progressions from a managerial perspective,

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which engages with the critical theories of gender studies. The paper contributes to existing literature by identifying the antecedents of gender stereotypes and their impacts on the career progressions of women in management and also advances theoretical understanding of three clear conceptual shifts, that is, Women in Management, Women and Management and Gender and Management.

Baker (2019) in a research study assessed the relationship existing between stereotyping and women's roles in leadership positions. The purpose of the study was to provide a literature review of current trends with regard to women in leadership positions, since women are increasingly reported as having excellent leadership skills. In fact, women, more than men, are praised for having traits and styles that are associated with effective leadership performance. The design used by the study was a literature review of current research on gender differences in men and women in top leadership roles. The findings revealed that despite the evidence that women are capable of being top performers, women are still not attaining top-level leadership positions in comparison to their male peers. This paper will consider some of the reasons that women have difficulty in climbing the corporate ladder as well as discuss stereotyping and gender as it relates to leadership traits.

A study by Alvarez and Lopez (2013) reported that from unheard screams to powerful voices, it is commonly believed that since men are the main producers in the “contemporary” society. In the past, matriarchal communities existed where women were praised as goddesses, were paramount cultivators and were in high position, they were major food gatherers and producers. Varieties of theories have explained why this was distorted. Reed come up with the idea that women lost their position in cultural, societal and productive life due to the private property advancement and their value disappeared with their previous position. Others such as the De Beauvoir pointed that transformation happened when it was recognized that both genders were engaged in the reproductive course (De Beauvoir, S. (2010), *The Second Sex*).

The study by Lee Bon Psychology of People (2015) established woman is our possessions we are not hers because she bears off springs for us-we do not produce any to her. She is therefore our ownership as the fruit tree is that of the gardener. Scholars further seconded reproductive ability of women to conclude their mental weakness and then twisted around and drew a conclusion using the intelligence would obliterate reproductive aptitude. For instance, “the woman who regularly uses her mind losses her mammary role very fast and had little optimism to be other than an ethical and medical freak” (Hall, 1905). Compared to an adult enlightened man, women are nearer to the kids and savages.

According to Welsh, Patrick (2010) Community Development; the family unit is the central organization of patriarchy, which is a vital notion in displaying gender disparity. This implies “the rule of the father”. Generally, it is a society controlled and subjugated by men. In most African families, this is widespread. The scenario of men being given a superior societal prominence over women is cropping into public life, which is reflected even in state performance. The family performs a key part in ensuring status quo of this patriarchal order across generations. The socialization of offspring to anticipate and admit diverse responsibilities in life has formed a societal system for the progress of principles that prompt numerous forms of inequity against the female sex. The main mental weapon obtainable to man is the span of time they have enjoyed supremacy over women and taking it for granted particularly in politics that often stereotype women and rationalize their inferiority.

According to Guerrero (2011) in most societies, women are seen as feeble and incompetent of making smart choices. Women have been represented across generations to be simply able of deciding on small matters, frequently occupied in rumour and gossip, and less intellectual. This was planned and strengthened for many years through male-supremacy institutions and patriarchal societies which incorporate the thought that the woman was lesser. With the invariable strengthening of the idea that women are substandard in each facet, it became difficult for women to follow their political path as an active member. This patriarchal belief makes it even hard for a woman to be involved in politics. The fact is that such attitudes and behaviour are not a thing of the past since such attitudes directed to women are present in societies all over the world today in both urbanized and developing nations. According to Greene and Elffers (2000), the 48 Laws of Power, Politics is the art of science involved with influencing governmental policies and strategies. Aspiring female politicians in Kenya have noted the gender discrimination they encounter when running for office.

A study by Robert (2014) highlighted how ethnic barriers, gender favoritism and a lack of information were hindering women's responsibility in public life. Women also assert that party leadership (institutional favoritism) hinder them run for office especially during 2013 county assembly elections despite the fact that they had conquered their opposition in the nomination process especially in Kibra slum in Nairobi. The 2010 Kenyan constitution brought about positive approach for women to have more likelihood of being voted and to go through a political party which in most cases as witnessed in the past is not fair.

According to Lawson, Martin, Huda and Matz (2022), gender equality in the various political arenas worldwide has been a challenging task to achieve despite the efforts made by most countries in embracing democracy. Further, realization of gender equality in matters of political participation and its leadership is yet to be achieved. The involvement of women in political leadership is low, over the globe and not only limited to African countries. A notable exception has been on the Nordic countries, with the number of women in parliamentary positions at 42% (Elias, 2018). Rwanda and Andorra have been able to achieve a parliamentary representation of 56.3% and 50% respectively. The two countries are ranked among the top in world, in having gender equality in representation of women in political leadership at the parliament (Parvin, 2014). On the contrary, there are other seven countries in the world that do not have women representation in their parliaments and they include countries such as Micronesia, Nauru, Qatar, Belize, Palau, the Solomon Island and Saudi Arabia, among others (Peace Women, 2012).

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

A descriptive research design was deployed, which allows the researcher to describe the state of activities as it happens at the present with minimal bias and make the most of the reliability of the evidence gathered. This study therefore has taken a wide view of the outcomes of Murang'a County Government. The population of this study was 159 employees of Murang'a County Government. The County employees included Chief Officers, County Executive Officers, and Directors in various offices in the executive and elected as well as appointed representatives. The major reason why the respondents were targeted is that they are conversant on the subject matter of the field of study. The units observed is 100% of the sample size that form 159 respondents of the target population sampled from all the departments within the Murang'a County. The reason for using 100% sample size is that the target population is small and accessible to the researcher.



With regard to equality strategies in women leadership in Murang'a County Government, the investigator utilized both primary and secondary data for analyzing data to be collected using the questionnaire. The researcher adopted the questionnaires given that large percentage of respondents were reached with ease as well as it's economical. The questionnaire contained close-ended questions. Close-ended questions according to Kombo and Tromp (2006), offer more structured responses to aid concrete recommendations.

The questionnaire was well planned and tried with some individuals from the population for extra enhancements. This ensured the boosting of its rationality and exactness of data gathered. The secondary data was obtained from gender policies, passes and pending legislations on women empowerment, strategic plans, and government policy documents, annual and periodic reports in Murang'a County Government. The study also adopted the use of interviews. Briefly, unstructured interviews were conducted to ensure the researcher gets additional information on the respondent's attitudes and perceptions giving further insights to the research problem. The questionnaires were administered separately to the study respondents using a drop and pick later technique by use of research assistant. A record of leaving and arriving questionnaires administered to the respondents was kept to ensure that all questionnaires were collected back.

The data was collected after the approval by Kenyatta University graduate School and NACOSTI. The data was collected within 4 weeks commencing March 2021 to April 2021 including weekends when the politicians were on Building Bridges Initiatives (B.B.I) campaigns. The researcher adopted descriptive statistics in data analysis as they are best suited for studies dealing with social phenomena Mugenda (2006). The study findings were analyzed by use of SPSS version 26 using frequencies and percentage tables for ease of data interpretation and consumption by the readers.

#### **4.0 Findings and Discussion**

The study realized a response rate of 100%. Demographic data revealed that 53 percentage of respondents had worked for 10-15 years and 47 percentage below 5 years. None of the respondents have worked above 20 years since County governments were formed after 2010 constitution was made. There is a high proportion of male respondents 121 (76%) as compared to females 38 (24%). The results further showed that majority were 31 to 50 years old with 40 percent of respondents falling in this category. The responses showed that most of employees were young as compared to employees over 50 years who represent 6% of the respondents. Majority of respondents in Murang'a county government were educated with 145, 91% attaining University/College education while those with Secondary education are 7 percent and Primary education are 2 percent.

#### 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of Statement

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics on Historical Stereotype**

Mean	2.121
Standard Deviation	1.043

The results on Table 1 depicts that the respondents were of little extent that gender roles patriarchy in society affects equality in women leadership in Murang'a County Government by aggregate mean score of 2.121. According to Welsh, Patrick (2010), Community Development; the family component is the key organization of patriarchy in displaying gender disparity. The society is controlled and dominated by men especially in most African families. According to Guerrero, L. (2011) in most societies, women are seen as weak and unskilled of making smart choices. Women have been represented across generations to be simply able of deciding on small matters, often engaged in gossip, and less intellectual. This was planned and strengthened for many years through male-supremacy institutions and patriarchal societies which incorporate the thought that the woman was lesser. Women in recent years have opposed this notion. In March 2021 Africa acquired the first female president of Tanzania (President Samia Suluhu Hassan) after the death of John Magufuli on March 26, 2021. This shows that women are competent and skilled in leadership.

#### 4.2 Regression Analysis

Table 2 shows model summary results for the analysis.

**Table 2: Model summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.777a	0.604	0.601	0.65976

a Predictors: (Constant), Historical Stereotype

Table 2 depicts a coefficient of determination (R-Squared) of 0.604 and R is 0.777 at 0.000 significance level. The model indicates that historical stereotype explains 60.4% of the variation in women leadership in Murang'a County Government. The remaining 39.6% of the variation in women leadership in Murang'a County Government can be attributed to other factors that are not part of the current study.

**Table 3: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	104.078	1	104.078	239.106	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	68.339	157	0.435		
	Total	172.418	158			

a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Historical Stereotype

The ANOVA Table depicts that the model used was statistically significant in explaining the influence of Historical Stereotype on women leadership in Murang'a County Government as indicated by a p-value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . This was further affirmed by a computed F-statistics value of 239.106 which was greater than the tabulated F-statistics value. Presented in Table 4 are regression coefficient results.

**Table 4: Regression Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
	(Constant)	0.275	0.194		1.415	0.159
1	Historical Stereotype	0.880	0.057	0.777	15.463	0.001

a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

The study found that the beta coefficient of historical stereotype was 0.880, implying that there existed a positive relationship between historical stereotype and women leadership. In this case, the significant level is  $0.001 < 0.05$  which means the relationship between historical stereotype and women leadership is statistically significant at 0.005 significant level. This implies that a positive increase in historical stereotype to a positive effect on women leadership.

## 5.0 Conclusions

In reality stereotyped point of view regarding women comprises key hindrances which include societal insight in relation to leadership aptitude of women's lack of assertiveness in participation in political sphere and leadership positions. In the standpoint of African societies, there is a historical conviction that, women are accountable to take care of kids and do household chores than involving themselves in outside home activities like career advancement or furthering in higher education. For this reason, there is sharing out of tasks between men and women, which mean household deeds are attached to women and beyond home activities attached to men. Women are over tasked with diverse domestic roles which include but not limited to cooking, take care of kids, washing among other endless roles which have neither pay nor compensation. All these actions make women fully engaged in the family unit tasks and hamper their participation in the politics and leadership of the nation.

According to cultural perspective in many societies, women are believed to be led but not to be the leaders. In this regard, long-established opinions regarding gender fairness manipulate women's progression in political involvement. These discriminatory behaviours are learnt in

early stages of life throughout formative stages, as well as the continuation of traditional sex functions acquired at home, family, local community, in learning institutions and the place of work. Cultural issues with long-established standards pertaining to the tasks of women in the home and family unit where most of women hesitant to vie for a seat and if they get the chance, they may fail to draw adequate electoral and party support so as to win. Significantly in Africa, females are considered subsidiary to men and second category members particularly in rural areas.

## 6.0 Recommendations

Women should be empowered and equipped with the economic wealth they require to ascend to leadership. If women are empowered and equipped with the economic wealth they will be motivated to advancing and having confidence in top leadership positions and over ruling the notion that men are the 'heads' in all sectors including the top leadership position and opposing women advancement in top leadership especially presidency women governorship positions. Women should be exposed to work in sections with higher amount of progressive advancement or in areas that transform to executive progression since they are not inferior provided they have the same qualifications with the male counter parts.

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