

Pathways to African Feminism and Development

The African Women Studies Centre is a training, research, evidence-based policy, advocacy and lobbying institution of the University of Nairobi. The Centre is committed to promoting African Women's experiences and worldview in scholarship, policy and institutional development. Among the Centre's publications are: The Beginnings; Rebuilding the Broken African Pot; Gender and Policy Analysis Tools; Making Women's Perspectives Count in Policy Development and Implementation; and Status Report on the Kenya National Food Security. In the spirit of the multi-disciplinary nature of the AWSC, Pathways to African Feminism and Development promotes African women's studies in all aspects of scholarship and development.

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Pathways to African Feminism and Development

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The focus of the Journal is on all aspects of African women's studies, both on the continent and in the Diaspora. This Journal promotes scholarship on African women in all spheres of life.

In this issue:

Technology and Changing Gender Roles

Mary Lou Williams Examined in the Context of Race and Gender

The Implications of Religion and Culture on Gender Equality

Parents' Social and Financial Status as Determinants of Child Gender Preferences

Persistent Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University

An Expansive Realization Perspective

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Pathways to African Feminism and Development

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FROM THE DESK OF THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Anna Petkova Mwangi

Women have traditionally been marginalised in the structures of society. However, it appears that currently this situation is changing significantly in the way societal norms and roles are being re-defined. This issue of the Journal gives a cross dimensional study of women issues and presents an exploration of emerging factors empowering women, pulling them out of the societal prejudices and cocoons they had been confined in and putting them to sit at the table at the same level with men, to discuss issues and make key decisions.

This issue of the AWSC Journal is very informative as it highlights women issues from a global arena since the authors come from Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, Nigeria and the USA, thus providing both regional and global perspectives. It is clear from the various articles that the traditional paradigm is shifting and women are finding their voice to correct the gender imbalance and come to the fore of society.

While we hope that you will find the articles in this issue informative and useful, we are now inviting your articles for the next issue on the broad topic of women economic empowerment. For more information, please read the Call for Papers.

Call for Papers

Pathways to African Feminism and Development
the Journal of the African Women Studies Centre (AWSC),
University of Nairobi, Kenya

Original articles are invited for Volume 6 (special) issue No 1 of *Pathways to African Feminism and Development* on the theme: Women Economic Empowerment: Theories and Practice. The theme allows for a wide range of research or literature reviews on:

1. Evaluating the impact of affirmative action funds in promoting women's entrepreneurship
2. Evaluating the Government of Kenya's Economic Stimulus Packages and Social Protection safety nets during the Covid 19 pandemic and their implications for WEE
3. National Budget Policy Statement, 2020 and its implication on sectors that support child care and women's work
4. Assessing what works for WEE in Policy Advocacy and strengthening women's self-mobilization for WEE

5. Analysis of strategies that women's movement used to realize the gains in the Kenya Constitution 2010 for strengthening self-mobilization for policy advocacy for WEE and learning from past experiences
6. Feminist Perspectives on Economic Development
7. Women Economic Empowerment Indicators
8. Translating theories into practice in the field
9. Lessons learnt from practical experiences enriching the theoretical perspectives.
10. Policy Advocacy Strategies to influence policies and programs and promote WEE: Challenges and opportunities

Case Studies should be based on real-life situations and highlight decisions taken that can be replicated in other similar situations.

A single article should not exceed six thousand words; Times New Roman, Font size 12. Each manuscript should include an abstract of about 250 words. Key words used in the paper should also be given.

Clarity and Consistency: Please check your manuscript for clarity, repetition, grammar, spellings, punctuation, and consistency of references to minimize editorial changes.

There will be a Book Review corner: Book Reviews on recently published books on Women Economic Empowerment are welcome.

Please submit an electronic copy of your papers in MS-WORD format by 30th June 2021 [to: awsikenya@yahoo.com](mailto:awsikenya@yahoo.com)

Editor-in-Chief

INTRODUCTION

Rosemary Wanjiku Mbugua

Ten years ago, the idea of establishing an African Women Studies Centre was a dream. The Centre was born out of the recognition that the experiences of African women in almost all spheres of life had not been part of the mainstream knowledge development. In other words, African women had often not spoken for themselves, and their experiences had not shaped, ordered, and named our world. African women's experiences had for far too long remained outside the debates in our academic institutions and were often not used to inform the policymakers and other key leaders in our region. Furthermore, scholarship on women based its arguments mainly on experiences of women in the West, while African women's experiences remained invisible, even in Africa.

Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira, a professor of Literature and the founder of the African Women Studies Centre, envisioned that through the establishment of the Centre, African women could challenge and push the frontiers of knowledge by firstly, interrogating traditional theoretical, conceptual, and methodological frameworks for their capacity to capture African women's experiences and their world view; secondly, enhancing and enriching African women's scholarship and experiences through sharing and collaborating with African women in the Diaspora; thirdly, by bringing African women's experiences into mainstream knowledge development; and fourthly, by informing policy and institutional development through the utilization of African women's experiences, perspectives, and worldview.

This issue of the *Pathways to African Feminism and Development* captures the spirit of the AWSC by presenting articles that are both intellectually stimulating and thought provoking. It brings aboard diverse topics, thoughts, perspectives and experiences of scholars from different geographical locations and environments. It is an issue that provides a platform for interrogating and sharing knowledge and evidence of new trends that make the society of today more inclusive.

In the first article, *Technology and Changing Gender Roles: A Paradigm Shift in the Utilization of Environmental Resources*, Dr Joseph Muleka from the Department of Literature of the University of Nairobi, interrogates the changing gender roles and how this impacts the women and environment of the Luhya community of Western Kenya. He says that the changing times

and emerging technologies appear to be reversing traditionally assigned gender roles, where the woman, previously the cook (*omudekhi*), is now charting new waters. He says that, "With modern technology, the macho man is getting put into a paradoxically unprecedented position that seems to inadvertently re-assign the gender roles.

In the second article titled *Mary Lou Williams Examined in the Context of Race and Gender*, Fabu Phillis Carter, a PhD candidate and Prof. Wanjiku Mukabi Kabira from the African Women Studies Centre, look at Mary Lou Williams, a jazz musician, through two critical lenses: as an African American and as a woman, and how both race and gender impacted her career as a jazz musician. She examines the extent to which Mary Lou Williams was conscious of multiple jeopardy and multiple consciousness. The article demonstrates how she used her musical creativity to resist both racism and patriarchy.

In the third article titled, *The Implications of Religion and Culture on Gender Equality: Observations from the 2014 Elections in Malawi*, Dr Anthony M. Gunde, discusses ways in which patriarchal discourses, rooted in religion and culture in many African societies, may be manipulated by politicians to aggravate gender disparities in power relations. The article looks at how a major opposition party used a campaign slogan laden with sexist religious and cultural overtones, to vote out Joyce Banda, Africa's first ever female President.

The fourth article: *Parents' Social and Financial Status as Determinants of Child Gender Preferences: A Study of Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District, Lagos State, Nigeria* Dr Ubendu C. Chika and Dr Sulaiman, Lanre Abdul-Rasheed, examine the social and financial factors underlying child gender preference among the Igbo people in Lagos, West Senatorial District. The study finds, among others that there is a "significant relationship between education and parental preference for the gender of their children. The higher the education of the parents, the lower the parental preference was for a particular gender". It concludes with the recommendation that "efforts should be made to raise the educational levels of people and to ensure that the government tackles poverty aggressively in the society".

In the fifth article, Dr Elizabeth Kaase-Bwanga from Makerere University, Uganda, in her article titled: *Persistent Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University: Is There a Gendered Agenda?* investigates gender inequity in academic employment to establish, what explains and maintains gender inequity and what can be done to close the gap at Makerere University. The study finds that gender inequity in academic employment was not a gendered

agenda but rather, it was influenced by various factors, which she discusses extensively. She concludes with some recommendations on what could be done to remedy the situation.

In the next article, *Gender Concerns on Climate Risks and their Implications for Livelihood Sustainability*, Oluoko-Odingo A. A. from the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies of the University of Nairobi argues that climate change in Africa affects women more adversely than men. Therefore, efforts should be made to adapt to climate risks through gender-responsive development, women participation as well as mainstreaming climate risk reduction in all institutions. Moreover, women should strive to create their own employment opportunities where they directly determine future innovations and conduct of employees not only in climate risk reduction but also in various other development sectors. Lastly, gender contour leadership should be avoided at all costs in climate risk reduction for livelihood sustainability.

Last but not least, Grace Githaiga a PhD candidate from the Institute for Development Studies and George Nybuga from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication, in the sixth article titled, *An Expansive Realization Perspective: Access and Use of ICTS by young women of Mathare's Informal Settlements*, seek to establish the access and use of ICTs by young women in the informal settlements of Mathare, Kenya. She finds that young women in these settlements are enjoying the same opportunities as men in the access and use of ICTs. She concludes that access and use of ICTs have facilitated expansive realization among young women of Mathare.

This issue of the *Pathways to African Feminism and Development* provides a platform to discuss African knowledge and experiences on gender and women, from different perspectives and pushes the boundaries of new knowledge creation.

TECHNOLOGY AND CHANGING GENDER ROLES: A PARADIGM SHIFT IN THE UTILIZATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

Joseph Muleka
University of Nairobi

Abstract

Among the Luhya community of Western Kenya – whether in the traditional or modern social setups – the woman was, has been and largely still is defined as a cook. A man looking for a wife, for instance, is said to be looking for omudekhi, (a cook). If not, the man could be looking for amaika, (cooking place), which by implication still points to a cook. Consequently, a woman getting married is going to okhudekha, (to cook). Expectedly, the gender roles of the woman as a cook, place on her the attendant duties of fetching water and firewood for the cooking; food to be cooked (vegetables and grains, which may also need grinding); and other requirements to facilitate ‘successful cooking’. Her patriarchal macho husband will on his part, sit waiting for the services of omudekhi. However, changing times and emerging technologies appear to be reversing this age-old modus operandi. With modern technology, the macho man is apparently getting put into a paradoxically unprecedented position that seems to inadvertently re-assign the gender roles. Basing on oral performances and personal testimonies from a number of men and women living with their spouses in different urban and suburban environments in Western Kenya, this study interrogates the apparently changing gender roles and how this impacts the women as well as the environment. In an attempt to investigate what has changed; how and why, the study draws on ‘reversal theory’.

Key words: amaika, environment, macho man, okhudekha, omudekhi, reversed gender roles, technology, woman

Introduction

This paper was inspired by performances of different groups of women dancers in Busia County that I have attended on different occasions, from which I picked a number of songs, two of which I have included here below. The messages emanating from the performances prompted me to undertake random interviews with different couples and individual respondents from Busia and the larger Luhya community of Western Kenya. This was so that I could interrogate and/or validate the messages. The question(s) in my mind was/were: Are the gender related messages in the songs a reality on the ground or simply the imaginations and aspirations of art? Meanwhile, what kind of light were the messages throwing on the age-old gender roles in the community? And of what significance were the gender roles to the environment as the stage for the age-old

gender practices?

Song 1

Soloist:

Bakhaye ba Mundika

Women residents of Mundika

Khwenyanga obweruki

We seek to govern ourselves

All:

Lero bakhayire

Despite resistance

Soloist:

Bakhaye ba Mundika

Women residents of Mundika

Khwenyanga obweruki

We seek to govern ourselves

All:

Lero bakhayire

Despite resistance

Lero bakhayire

Despite resistance

Muche mulole bakhaye

Come and see the women

Bakhenga iyeka

With a claim to land

Lero bakhayire.

Despite resistance.

Song 2

Soloist:

Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba

Signal, eh a whistle signals

All:

Ilanga bandu

Gathering people

Soloist:

Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba

Signal, eh a whistle signals

All:

Ilanga bandu,

Gathering people,

Abasacha bali bakana

Men had vowed

Sibacha machi

Never to fetch water

Lero ngabacha machi

Now they fetch water

Muyingananga

You thought it unthinkable

Khane bindu bichenjanga

But things have changed

Basacha bacha machi.

Men now fetch water.

Soloist:

Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba *Signal, eh a whistle signals*

All:

Ilanga bandu *Gathering people*

Soloist:

Ikhuba, ee firingi ikhuba *Signal, eh a whistle signals*

All:

Ilanga bandu, *Gathering people,*

Abasacha bali bakana *Men had vowed*

Sibarenya chikhwi *Never to fetch firewood*

Lero ngabarenya chikhwi *Now they fetch firewood*

Muyingananga *You thought it unthinkable*

Khane bindu bichenjanga *But things have changed*

Basacha barenya chikhwi. *Men now fetch firewood.*

From the lyrics of the two songs above, one notes revolutionary demands and changes that we may guess could shake the very core of the hitherto patriarchal setup and its beliefs. As it appears, Song 1 brings out two issues that are crucial to a patriarchal setup: firstly, women governing themselves and by extension becoming part of the society's leadership; and secondly, laying claim to land ownership. Meanwhile, Song 2 brings society together to declare men as part and parcel of household chores such as fetching water, a chore that had hitherto been considered as a woman's duty. Of course the song in later stanzas also mentions other chores including, but not limited to cleaning the compound; fetching firewood; looking for food; grinding corn and even cooking.

This paper analyses the significance of the messages in the two songs, not only for societal gender roles, but also for the society's relationship to the environment. What, for example, is the impact on the environment if men are now involved in fetching firewood, among other household chores?

Methodology

My initial attendance and observation of the performances by the different women's traditional performing groups, was for entertainment and partly for the promotion of interest in cultural dances. This lasted only until some of the messages in the performances began to arouse my

interest and curiosity in what the singers were saying about the environment as well as gender matters. In particular, I could see an implied relationship between the role of women in society and the state of the environment. Even of greater interest to me was the aspiration in the songs to change gender roles, or, in fact the declaration that the roles had actually changed in today's technological advancement.

To satisfy my curiosity, I identified a number of songs, from which, due to the space of this paper, I have quoted only two, the messages of which I undertook to analyse for greater depth. With the assistance of some of the performers whom I interviewed in order to understand the actual spirit and nuances of the messages in their songs, I translated the songs and found a number of themes coming out. One theme was the aspiration of the women to either, take up leadership roles, or, at least be included in decision making. The other was about the steps taken by women towards acquisition of land. Of course there was the underlying theme of resistance by the society against the two possibilities, where the reason could be the wish to protect the patriarchal structures of leadership and land ownership. Another pertinent theme was that of how the changing technologies are causing a change in gender roles.

I set out to seek opinion on the above themes by interviewing men and women from different walks of life, mostly confining myself among the Luhya community of Western Kenya, from which the performances I was studying came. I later, however, extended my interviews to other respondents who were not necessarily from Western Kenya, for the purpose of being able to rate the universality of the issues under investigation. Meanwhile I also benefitted from my own observation of certain situations. The choice of respondents was mostly random, while the interviews were conversational but focusing on the scope of the ongoing research. I sought opinion on the question of decision making by women, particularly, as concerns the utilization of land as a factor of production and the pertinent concerns of environmental preservation and conservation. I also investigated the facts of division of labour in society, in particular, whether, what and how men were taking up roles traditionally considered as women's, as some of the songs appeared to suggest. I also interrogated the consequences to the environment, of men working where and on what had from time immemorial been left for women.

Women's Control over Land and Environmental Conservation

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, gender disaggregated data analysis report of 2014 indicates that land under women-alone ownership is about 7%. Meanwhile, the Kenya Land

Alliance Progress Report on Land Ownership shows that between 2013 and 2017, out of the 10,129,704 hectares of land titled, women only got 163,253 hectares while men got 9,903,304 hectares. This ratio represents approximately 1.63% for women compared to 97.76% for men. These figures reveal that land ownership is almost entirely a preserve for men.

With the above figures as they are, one begins to wonder what one of the songs cited above was really celebrating, as it calls, in its last stanza upon the audience to (*Come and see the women, with a claim to land*). I wish to share my own guess that the song was perhaps celebrating two achievements, one, present and the other futuristic. In the present, the celebration would still be justified despite the dismal percentages of women with land titles. The reason is that at 1.63% ownership, this is a huge improvement on the ‘nil ownership’ in the past.

On the other hand, the celebration could be based on the hopes of women who see their aspiration to greater say on land ownership succeed, perhaps in the near future. Notably, they say in the song that they seek to govern themselves. It, of course, goes without saying that the possibility of the women governing themselves could open greater opportunities for a greater claim to land ownership.

From the findings of my research, land ownership by women has a close relationship with women governing themselves. A woman who owns her own land is always likely to make decisions on how the piece of land will be utilized without facing the restricting control of the man. On the other hand, a woman who has also built on the land she owns is almost always likely to be free to make her own decisions on how to run her home. Indeed, it is becoming less and less surprising today that women are now buying land and building. The trend seems to develop exponentially with the growing number of single parents – single mothers, for the sake of this study. Apparently, a single mother – even if she has not built her own home – has much more latitude to make her own decisions on how to live her life and that of her child/children.

The case also applies to women who are in well-paying employment. Kenya’s one third gender rule, though not strictly adhered to, has opened more space for women in public offices. Of course, the rule was targeting both men and women, however, in the prevailing imbalance in the sharing of positions in the majority of setups, the law appears to favour women much more. And so, with more and more women getting employment, possibilities of women staying on their own and making their own decisions are more enhanced.

It is not clear if the song presented above was talking about the possibilities of the women governing themselves by avoidance of the control of men that comes through marriage. However, since the majority of the performers were married women, anyway, one concludes that the women were in fact appealing to their wish to be in charge of decisions on issues touching them – including land – regardless of whether the men/husbands were present or absent. Of course the phrase “despite resistance” indicates that the song already recognizes the fact that society would go to all lengths to prevent this, since decision making is perceived as a role for men, leave alone talking about owning land.

Meanwhile, while Song 1 decides to take a more winding and slippery route to the change of gender roles (women’s involvement in decision making and owning land), Song 2 is more exacting. The song states unequivocally that the change of gender roles has in fact occurred. The men who had “*vowed never to fetch water, now fetch water*”. The song continues to point out that this may have been unthinkable, but things have since changed and men now fetch water. Of course the song does not end with the stanza on the men fetching water. Men now fetch firewood, another chore that traditionally was left to women. As the song progresses, many more household chores that men have now taken up are named. These also include grinding corn, cleaning the compound and even cooking, thereby prompting the question: What has necessitated, if not, prompted the change?

Technology and Changing Gender Roles

According to women respondents (especially those with some income), they are now less burdened with household chores initially always left to women, thanks to modern times and technology. It sounded quite interesting the way modern technology has militated the change in gender roles – roles that apparently the men have taken over without coercion and perhaps without knowing. One woman narrates laughingly how she has never bothered with looking for firewood since her husband opted for cooking gas in the house. “*Mine is simply to inform him that the gas cylinder has emptied. He will then leave me sitting at home as he rushes to the gas depot for a refill.*”

The above scenario identifies a really interesting development. In the past, it would be the husband who would remain at home as the woman searched for firewood. Of course it was a big surprise to the men as they had not realized that by them going to buy the gas, they were, in fact, doing what their wives had done before. The use of gas for cooking is, thus, technology that has

changed the dynamics of cooking as well as the person who fetches the cooking materials. As it came out, men play a major role in providing the kitchen with materials that facilitate cooking; if not going for gas, they could be paying for electricity tokens or solar panels or litres of kerosene. All these actions demonstrate that men were taking over roles hitherto performed by women, as is confidently expressed through the songs above.

Notably, technology has made many other activities that were considered specific to women to become gender-shared, if not wholly transferred to men. In some households where water supply is not stable, it is a common practice to see the men carrying jars of bottled water that they have bought from supermarkets, or collected from the mushrooming water distribution kiosks. Often, some of the men who work in institutions with a clean supply of water, will sometimes be seen packing water containers in the boots of their cars to take home for family use. Families are also beginning to take more interest in harvesting rain water and refining it for use. Before the onset of these sources of water, it would have been unthinkable for a 'normal' man to be part of the water fetching team.

Incidentally, men also grind corn, in another turn of events on an activity which in the past was the duty of women and the performance of which was not negotiable. Indeed, with posho mills as the preferred technology for grinding corn, and with more and more men accessing upgraded means of transport such as bicycles, motor cycles and cars, the men apparently have no problem going to grind. As one man explained, he found it not a problem to have a bag of maize or millet put in the boot of his car, for him to drop at the posho mill and pick it after it has been ground. This was, in the recent past, clearly the responsibility of women. The list of activities which men perform now and which were strictly seen as a woman's work, cannot be exhausted.

As explained in this paper's abstract, the symbol of a woman's existence and occupation was and still largely is, *okhudekha* (to cook); where even marriage for a woman is itself defined in terms of *okhudekha*. Indeed the woman in the community from which this paper started is synonymous with cooking. The man, therefore, stayed away from cooking, lest he was associated with womanhood. But cooking has also been traditionally associated with the hearth, soot and smoke. However, modern technology has with time been setting alternative cooking stages, a development that starts to remove cooking from the singular traditional hearth allocation. For instance, cooking with gas or electricity does not strictly demand for a hearth. Perhaps it is this apparent, if not possible disassociation of cooking from the traditional hearth that appears to 'un-

tether' the men from the age-old stigma usually attached to them (the men) cooking. Now with the technology in cooking improved, the man will warm his food in a microwave; make his tea on a gas cooker or boil his water in an electric kettle. He will, without any qualms, fry his egg on a stove. This, indeed, confirms the argument of this paper that technology is causing a change in gender roles, whereby cooking as an activity that from time immemorial was treated as woman's work, can now be shared.

The Significance for Women of Changing Gender Roles

Given the excitement with which the women performers appeared to announce the prospect of men now engaging in chores that they earlier abhorred, I found it logical to engage the former on what this emerging trend meant for them. For a majority of the women, the direct involvement of men in some of the household chores meant one major achievement: men could finally appreciate the difficulty that preceded setting a meal on the table. As one woman explained, men could now realize that, for example, buying a piece of fish did not always mean that a meal was assured. The piece of fish was only one of the many requirements that were necessary for people to be able to eat. Indeed, as she further explained, her husband had of late, had the sense to ask if she had water, fuel, flour, and so on, even after making fish available. If this was an experience to be universalized, we would perhaps conclude that the men were becoming more sensitive to what it takes to run a family.

For other women, men's willingness to prepare a meal for themselves, or even the rest of the family, meant that the pressure of running the household was reduced and women could have some time to do other things. This means that they would become productive even in areas away from the confines of the home. One woman, who was enrolled on a study programme that took her away from home for days, expressed joy that she could be away without worrying about the children because their father was now willing to look after them in her absence. *"He has no problem preparing meals for our children,"* she remarked. *"It makes me feel that we both care about the family and we can share the challenges that go with running the family,"* she added. One woman's observation which she pointed out laughingly, was about the quality of the food set at table. She commented:

Since he too sometimes cooks, he can now understand and forgive when I sometimes serve soup that is slightly over salted, or vegetables that were beginning to burn. He now knows that even an expert chef every now and then experiences small accidents that occur in the course of preparing a meal. It of course, has happened to him. He now realizes that only ten seconds away from the gas cooker

could determine if one will have milk in their tea, or not.

This was a confirmation that she, perhaps like other women, was celebrating greater partnership with her husband as a result of the latter's participation in household chores.

I found it worthwhile to also capture men's sentiments about the situations that led them to sharing in the household chores. While some could not forgive a situation that made them carry out chores that were traditionally done by their wives, others found it refreshing to share the chores. *"It makes me feel closer to my family,"* one man said. Indeed, another man advised that instead of wasting their energy jogging, it was more rewarding to participate in the more engaging household chores. *"The alertness that I have to maintain when I am taking up duties, say, in the kitchen, keeps my brain more engaged than just jogging,"* he argued. Of course, there were those who lamented that women tended to back away from their duties every time they saw the man take the lead. They accused their wives of hiding their own money when they realized that they (the men) were ready to go for gas, buy water, or take up other engagements that would otherwise have involved them. All in all, the majority of men agreed that times were changing and no one was likely to escape using modern technology in the running of their family. And that with greater embracing of the emerging technology, men were going to be called upon to directly or indirectly take part in household chores, including cooking and other kitchen related activities.

What Modern Technology Means for the Environment

As I watched the women who had performed celebrating the milestone of men eventually taking up chores they had vowed never to touch, (some of the women looked triumphant as if it was their own power which had reined in the men) I wondered if they were aware what role technology had played. Of course, one must appreciate the force of the changing times, especially the emergence of liberating discourse on the rigid patriarchal cultures that shared out roles based on gender. One cannot, however, deny the role technology has also played in easing the abhorrent features of the chores. One cannot, for example, deny the contribution of technology in, say, reducing the soot, smoke, and heat associated with cooking at a hearth – a discomfort that the proud, macho man domiciled in the male egoistic patriarchal setup has considered an environment only habitable by women. Of course, this designation of women is not surprising in a patriarchal African setup in which the man has assigned himself the role of the special overseer for whom things have to be done by those subordinate to him, that is, women and children.

Meanwhile, if the women dancers were aware of how technology had contributed in causing a paradigm shift in their men's view of household chores, the same women should be equally celebrating what the very technology has done for their environment. As the area Chief explained to me, there was less pressure on the environment now that many more people were turning to the use of gas and kerosene. This meant that tree cutting for firewood was reducing and that the environment was getting greener. Besides, electricity power connections had reached some of the most interior places, thereby, further reducing the need to burn matter to cook or boil water. He admitted that the use of gas, kerosene and electricity was not by any chance comparable to the level one found in up market environments in towns and cities, but the switch over was slowly but surely gaining ground. The more technology became widespread, the less the destruction of the environment happened.

On their part, the women who use modern technologies, whether in part or in full, confirmed that they lived in a cleaner environment devoid of the suffocating smell of soot and smoke associated with the use of firewood. Besides, those who still solely depended on firewood were adopting modern *jikos* distributed by organizations that were promoting more modern styles of constructing fire places that used minimal firewood. These *jiko* types such as *Jikokoa*, for example, enabled cooking that would reduce the time and fuel for cooking in half, to cook as much food, meaning that fewer trees would be cut.

The *jikos* also use simple cooking materials such as saw dust, rice and wheat straw, dried cow dung, recycled charcoal dust and much more of the material that would otherwise not be usable in ordinary hearths. These, of course, demand conventional cooking fuel like firewood that can only be available after felling trees or cutting shrubs and thickets. Indeed, evidence that technology is a crucial player in environmental preservation and conservation cannot be overemphasized.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that decision making by women is gaining greater space, with more and more women entering the public space as employees, employers and business women. Besides, the number of women living on their own and those acquiring personal land has been rising, thereby increasing the number of women who depend on themselves to make decisions touching on their lives. Meanwhile, gender roles are changing from the strictly traditional way they were allocated to men and women. In particular, tradition had always spared men household chores,

prescribing the same for women. The change has been attributed to two reasons: the changing societal attitudes towards the initially rigid patriarchal allocation of gender roles and modern technology. This is because with more and more people getting exposed to other cultures, the perceptions of what belongs to men and what belongs to women begin to change.

Meanwhile modern technology appears to influence the way certain tasks are performed including household chores, such as fetching firewood, water or cooking. The use of gas, for example, tends to make cooking less abhorrent, therefore, more attractive to the men who had earlier on given the activity a wide berth. But even of greater significance is the fact that with technology, the environment is better conserved. This is because with improving ways of running the household such as the use of gas, kerosene, or electricity to cook, there is less pressure on the forests to provide firewood. I conclude by asserting that technology has had a monumental impact of changing gender roles. It is also helping improve environmental conservation.

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MARY LOU WILLIAMS: EMPOWERED BY CREATIVE GENIUS

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Abstract

This paper breaks new ground in understanding how the African American jazz genius, pianist, composer and arranger Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981) utilized her music during her life time on a national and international scale. She created a new form of jazz called Sacred Jazz, wrote hundreds of original compositions, and completed successful arrangements for leading musicians, trios and bands, while mastering performance of sixty years of different styles of jazz. It examines the historical context of her life and career and juxtaposes her against two major events during her life time: The Civil Rights Movement and the Black Arts Movement. Williams, as a Black woman and as a jazz artist, did not participate in any significant way with either movement and used her music as a creative shield that never allowed self-examination based on race or gender. This paper, through the theory of intersectionality, further examines how colourism, race and gender oppression are connected in impacting the life and career of Mary Lou Williams because of the racial and patriarchal systems that adversely affect the African American woman and that caused Williams and her music to be marginalized. Current scholarly writings have not examined these deleterious effects on her career that caused her and her music to remain largely unknown, obscured and forgotten in contemporary times. My key findings are that music was a limited shield against racism and patriarchy for her, but that she utilized creative resilience to overcome all these barriers to continue creating music over a long career. Despite chronic illness and advanced age, she became an even better pianist, composer and arranger at the end of her life. Mary Lou Williams and her music, empowered by her sheer genius and prodigious musicality, need to be acknowledged in the jazz cannon.

Key Words: African American, also Black Americans or Blacks (used interchangeably); Black Nationalism; Canon; Colourism; Patriarchy; Racism; Segregation

Introduction

An examination of Mary Lou Williams' jazz career revealed that her creative genius empowered her as an artist and maintained her in a career that lasted 60 years until her death in 1981. Born in 1910 into intense racial hostility and debilitating patriarchy in the United States, she suffered discrimination because of her race and because of her gender. Mary Lou Williams' handwritten autobiography, from her childhood to young adulthood, offers a valuable perspective on how she utilized her creative genius to overcome enough of the negative impact of racism and patriarchy, to keep brilliantly performing, composing and arranging. She used music as a shield and as a form of creative resistance.

Suffering Racism and Colourism

Williams experienced racism in multiple forms. She encountered racism externally from others due to the fact of her ethnicity as an African American. She encountered racism, internally, from intimate family members, due to her darker skin colour. She wrote in her autobiography, about numerous disturbing incidents with racial discrimination that started when she was young, little,

and defenceless. Even as a young African American child, she was routinely threatened, harassed and attacked by neighbourhood immigrant white children, as well as chased and beaten by grown adult white men, too.¹ There were horrible examples of bigotry based on skin colour that were also present in her family relationships. Williams encountered racism professionally, both as an African American and an African American with a very black coloured complexion. Mary Lou Williams was victimized by this external and internal “double barrel” racism.²

The colour hierarchy, that values light complexions over dark, is called colourism. Colourism disadvantages dark-skinned people while privileging those with lighter skin. Research has linked colourism to smaller incomes, lower marriage rates, longer prison terms, and fewer job prospects for darker-skinned people. Women with light skin experience greater success in relationship, education, and employment. Furthermore, they report higher levels of confidence.³

Colourism has roots in slavery when slave owners forced slave women into sexual intercourse and light-skinned offspring were the tell-tale signs of these sexual assaults. Light skin was initially a badge of shame, until slave owners, while not officially recognizing their mixed-race children, gave preferential treatment to slaves with fairer complexions. Dark-skinned slaves worked outdoors, while light-skinned slaves worked indoors. As slavery continued, light skin came to be viewed as an asset in the slave community, another degrading form of discrimination.⁴

Like most African American families, due to the history of rape during enslavement, and intermingling with Native Americans, Williams had relatives with widely different skin colours. There were those who could physically pass for white, those with various shades of brown and those who were deep black in skin colour. Her maternal great-grandparents could pass for white; her maternal grandparents were light-skinned, her mother was brown and Mary was dark black.⁵

Due to her dark skin, physical violence also began early in Williams’ home as a child who was beaten quicker, longer and harder by adult family women. She acknowledged that her great-grandmother Matilda especially beat her harder and more often than the other children because she was dark-skinned.⁶

To add insult to injury, middle class, light-skinned African Americans looked down upon darker members of their race, too. The closer they were, in colour to white skin, the more they ridiculed and segregated themselves from darker-skinned African Americans. This meant that African American children whose parents judged her far too dark to play childhood games with their lighter coloured children also ostracized Mary Lou Williams.⁷

Outside of her personal life, she also experienced racism in her professional life. It was especially difficult for Williams to get decent jobs and earn the same equitable pay as lighter skinned women or men jazz artists. She stated categorically that she was no exception to the fact that “*white men in the music industry stole, misappropriated copyrights, and swindled black*

¹ Linda, *Morning Glory: A Biography of Mary Lou Williams*, University of California Press, 1999, 6.

²Book 1, Folder 2 Mary Lou Williams Autobiography, The Jazz Institute, Rutgers University, 2012.

³ Tayler J. Mathews. *The Relationship between Skin Complexion and Social Outcomes: How Colourism Affects the Lives of African American Women*, Master’s Thesis, Clark Atlanta University, 2013, 1.

⁴ Kevin Everod Quashie. *Black Women, Identity and Cultural Theory*. Rutgers University Press, 2004.

⁵Linda Dahl, *Morning Glory*,10-11

⁶ Book 1, Folder 2 *Mary Lou Williams Autobiography*, The Jazz Institute, Rutgers University, 2012.

⁷ Dahl. *Ibid*, 22

artists.”⁸ In a letter to white manager, Joe Glaser, in a futile attempt to get payment from him for money owed for a performance, she complained “...Now if I ask for one thin dime, I’m either ‘Nigger Rich’ or have a swell head. What kind of shit is this?”⁹

Writer Frank Kofsky, in *Illuminating the History and Political Economy of Jazz* (1998), offers an account of the history and political economy of jazz and how African-American jazz artists were both creatively and financially exploited. He documented what Mary Lou Williams always complained about: the theft of performance payments and royalties on her arrangements, compositions and recordings.

Attacks of racism increased as Williams grew older. When she was 19, a white man from Mississippi paid the cook at the club to kidnap her and take her to his plantation. She had to stop playing her music there to stop his advances.¹⁰ There was also an incident on a streetcar, where tired from her jazz schedule, she fell asleep and did not move to the back of the bus when the front filled up. She was threatened with arrest by the conductor who asked if she “...was one of those Northern niggers...”¹¹

While performing down South, she recalled, “Never in my life had I ever heard so many ‘nigger, nigger, niggers.”¹² She endured the same indignities as other African Americans in that era. Despite her talent, she ate in the kitchen with the help, and club owners who refused to honour their contracts often did not pay her. One club owner told her, “I can get all the niggers I want on Beale Street for two dollars a dozen”¹³ Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee was where artists lived, performed and could be hired to work.

Once, while being driven to a club by a white driver, the driver saw an elderly man on a bridge and yelled, “There’s a nigger, run over him, he’s too old to live anyway!”¹⁴ Williams remembered that she was with too many white people in the car, too far out in the woods, so she “kept quiet, counted to ten very fast, and thought of a beautiful composition.”¹⁵ She maintained that writing a composition in her head kept her alive in this racially charged atmosphere.

Mary Lou Williams and the Civil Rights Movement

While she identified herself as a ‘Negro’, which was the racial terminology used during her lifetime, Williams stated numerous times that she was definitely not ‘pro-black’ politically or culturally. She believed that it was not good for movements or for artists when artists tried to be political. Her position was “I think all musicians or people like me would get mixed up in something, looking for some people to help them and help the race. But they can never be anything but a musician”.¹⁶

Based on this stance, she was logically absent from both the Civil Rights and the Black Arts movements, two of the most significant historical movements for African Americans in the 20th

⁸Dahl, Ibid, 10

⁹ Kernodle, Ibid, 145.

¹⁰Dahl, Ibid, 61.

¹¹Book One Folder Two, MLW archives, Jazz Institute.

¹²Dahl, Ibid, 60.

¹³Dahl, Ibid, 60.

¹⁴Dahl, Ibid, 60.

¹⁵Dahl, Ibid, 60.

¹⁶Dahl, Ibid, 138.

century. Most historians begin the Civil Rights Movement in 1954 with the Supreme Court's decision, in *Brown versus The Board of Education* that ruled against the concept of separate but equal education. The end of the Civil Rights Movement was the 1968 Voter's Registration Law. There is, however, evidence that the struggle for Civil Rights in the United States actually began back in 1919 with the first organized resistance to the system of segregation and the call for reform of racist American institutions.¹⁷

The Civil Rights Movement was a movement by African Americans to achieve basic civil rights equal to those of white American citizens, which included equal opportunity in employment, housing, and education; the right to vote; the right of equal access to public facilities; and the right to be free of racial discrimination. No social or political movement of the twentieth century had as profound an effect on the legal and political institutions of the United States. This movement sought to restore to African Americans the rights of citizenship guaranteed by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, which were eroded by the segregationist Jim Crow Laws in the South.¹⁸ Jim Crow Laws, enacted after the end of slavery, began when the southern states were upset at losing the Civil War and slave labour. Jim Crow Laws were designed to separate the races by punishing African Americans and keeping them under racial control. These unfair laws were finally dismantled by the Civil Rights Movement.¹⁹

Williams' position, in terms of involvement in the Civil Rights Movement, was that even though in her autobiography she related many racist events that happened to her, as both a child and an adult, personally and professionally she kept a low profile in assisting in the Civil Rights struggle. She did not participate in marches, she did not protest verbally or publicly, and her singular contribution was that she played in some fundraising concerts to raise money for the movement.²⁰ The Civil Rights Movement led into the Black Arts Movement.

Mary Lou Williams and the Black Arts Movement

Williams publicly and privately ridiculed the Black Arts Movement. This was another historical, artistic period that Mary Lou William lived in, but did not contribute to, except in minimal ways. The Black Arts Movements was from 1965 to 1975 and was "*considered the artistic branch of the black power movement.*"²¹ The Black Power Movement had a worldview that put black people as the centre of everything. Willie Ricks, a Civil Rights activist, introduced the Black Power slogan during a Civil Rights march in 1966. In 1968, one of the younger leaders in the Civil Rights Movement, Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael) defined Black Power as "*the ability of Black people to politically get together and organize themselves so that they can speak from a position of strength rather than a position of weakness.*"²²

While I never found a quote where Williams indicated she was proud of being black, privately she did write to a priest in Rome, ridiculing the new Black Nationalism, "*I'm black and beautiful. This is the new slogan and I'm not Negro, I'm African or Blackman. Hurry back and help me.*"²³ She also distrusted this term that she called 'Afro'. She complained "... *Afro had nothing to do*

¹⁷ Ladner, Joyce A. *Black Power in Mississippi*, Issue 33 of Occasional Paper, Pruitt-Igoe Project, Northwestern University, Illinois, 1967, 60.

¹⁸<https://www.britannica.com/list/timeline-of-the-american-civil-rights-movement>.

¹⁹Brian Purnell and Jeanne Theloharis, with Komoze Woodard, editors, *The Strange Careers of the Jim Crow North*, New York University Press, 2019, back cover.

²⁰ Dahl Ibid, 138.

²¹ David Robson, *The Black Arts Movement*, Laurent Books, MI, 9.

²² Joyce A. Ladner *Black Power in Mississippi*, Issue 33 of Occasional Paper, Pruitt-Igoe Project, Northwestern University, Illinois, 1967.

²³ Kernodle, *Soul on Soul*, 223.

with jazz. Jazz grew up on its own here in America.”²⁴

Williams found no point of connection with the Black Arts Movement. According to Linda Dahl’s biography of Williams, *Morning Glory*, “*naturals, dashikis, Black Power, all of which Mary viewed with suspicion.*”²⁵ At the height of the Black Arts Movement in the sixties, when Williams had been playing professionally for more than forty years, some African Americans criticized her when she did not jump on the nationalist bandwagon. Mary replied that she did not want to go back to Africa.²⁶

The enigma is that she always identified jazz as black and was proud that jazz had its roots in black people. She spent the last years of her life, admonishing African Americans to remember, promote and be proud of the jazz legacy. Williams believed wholeheartedly in jazz as an authentic creation from African Americans, and the need to preserve the legacy of jazz. This should have meant jazz fit well into the concept of the black arts movement as authentic African American art.

The Black Arts proponents such as the writer Amiri Baraka, also proudly claimed jazz as originated by African Americans. Nonetheless, Williams complained, “*... Afro had nothing to do with jazz. Jazz grew up on its own here in America.*”²⁷ She insisted, “*Black Americans don’t have to go back to Africa...*”²⁸ Even in a life dedicated to jazz, Williams failed to realize the connection between jazz and African Americans to the continent and culture of Africa. She seemed forever unable to understand that Africa was the origins of her race and the music she loved.

The reality of being both African American and woman born in the early twentieth century seemed to have been historically difficult, racially, sexually and musically for Mary Lou Williams. Even in the jazz world, the term musician predominantly meant black man. While woman musician meant those who were inferior artists, certainly not as capable or not taken as seriously as male musicians were. For her entire career, Williams refused to identify herself as a “woman musician” and demanded that she be referred to as a jazz musician, full stop.

The Woman Musician

Sherrie Tucker, a musicologist, music historian, book author, professor, and journal editor, said that Williams’ characterization of her musicality as masculine is a black feminist reading of black masculinity as an available space for black genius: that there was no corollary for black women and black femininity in jazz, or anywhere else in culture.²⁹ Tucker reminded that Williams admired Melba Liston with Dizzy Gillespie’s band with the statement, “*She rehearses the band like she’s one of the boys, but she is feminine all right.*”³⁰

For Williams to call herself a ‘woman musician’ would translate, through the existing patriarchal system and extreme gender bias, that she was saying:

✚ she was inferior to men;

²⁴ Dahl, *Ibid*, 271.

²⁵ Dahl, *Ibid*, 331.

²⁶ Dahl, *Ibid*, 5

²⁷ Dahl, *Ibid*, 271.

²⁸ Dahl, *Ibid* 274.

²⁹ Tucker, Sherrie, *The Future of Jazz*, Paper presented at the Madison Mary Lou Williams Centennial Celebration, 2010, 5.

³⁰ Tucker, *Ibid*, 5.

- ✚ she couldn't be a jazz genius; and
- ✚ she was accepting a subordinate position in the jazz world.

Mary Lou Williams was a creative genius in jazz who knowingly curated her career based on her understanding of herself as a jazz artist in a specific historical time. She was savvy enough to know how women musicians were viewed in the jazz world. The jazz critic Barry Ulanov in an article about Mary Lou Williams wrote, “*Mary has made it...So fully has she made it, that in discussing her work one almost forgets that she is a woman.*”³¹

In the context of race and gender, my research uncovered multiple contradictions, between what Williams said privately or publicly and how she lived her life. She made statements that were directly opposite to each other, such as maintaining that jazz was original music created by blacks from the spirituals and blues, but ridiculing the Black Arts Movement. She stated that she likes being a woman, only to insist for her entire career, that she was a musician, never to be referred to as a woman musician. Her statements showed little willingness to talk honestly about racial or gender realities in the U.S.

Mary Lou Williams' Relationships

Mary Lou Williams' life choices in adult relationships, including her marriages, reveal a woman victimized by black men who abused and dominated her intimately. There were also the white men who abused and dominated her professionally. Men physically abused her. One example is that in her first marriage to John Williams, her married lover saw her walking with another man and slapped her around and threatened the other man. “*My married lover couldn't understand me and one day he said he felt like killing me...*”³² Men as husbands, lovers and boyfriends constantly physically beat Williams. Along with domestic abuse and sexual violence, came emotional violence. Williams' childhood was fraught with violence and it continued into her adulthood. She excused the men who said they loved her, but also beat her, gave her black eyes, broke her nose, tore up her apartment and worse. Her ex-husband, John Williams commented years later, “*Other guys treated her like so many men treat women. Fight 'em...cuss 'em and run them off. She hadn't been used to that...*”³³

Multiple Jeopardy

Williams appeared outwardly to have limited understanding of multiple jeopardy. Multiple jeopardy is the construct of race, gender, class, and sexuality that is important in understanding a black woman, as well as understanding black women musicians in the United States.³⁴ The intersectionality of how these barriers are also connected in the social categorizations such as race and gender as they apply to a given individual or group³⁵ is another construct that Williams seemed never to consider in defining or describing the dilemmas that race and gender caused in her life. Bell Hooks' *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Centre*, asserts that sexism – which

³¹Barry Ulanov, *Mary Lou Williams*, Metronome Magazine, July 1949, 23-24.

³²Dahl, *Ibid*, 91.

³³ Kernodle, *Ibid*.

³⁴Deborah K. King, *Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology*, Signs 14, no. 1, Autumn 1988): 42-72

³⁵ Collings, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought*, Routledge, New York, N.Y., 2000, 33.

mostly affects women – is a form of oppression, perpetrated by institutional and social structures, by "individuals who dominate, exploit, or oppress; and by the victims themselves who are socialized to behave in ways that make them act in complicity with the status quo."³⁶ This analysis speaks to the life of Mary Lou Williams who only saw her talents in masculine terms and her value in relation to, or in competing with men in jazz. Only with regards to male references did Williams believe she was successful in the male-oriented jazz world.

A child prodigy who began playing music as a toddler, she also began to use her music as a shield ever since she was a young child. First, she used music as a shield to escape the dysfunction in her family around colourism.³⁷ Her musical talent provided much needed money for her family's wellbeing,³⁸ so she became valuable due to her ability to earn more than the adults in her family. It was also during her childhood, that Mary Lou Williams discovered for the first time, that her talent mitigated the racism she externally experienced, when she became known for her musical prowess as the 'little piano girl'. As the 'little piano girl', she was invited into neighbourhood homes to play piano for them and to be paid by them. In this specific way, her creative talent, early in life, lessened the trauma of being black, with those who were aware of her growing fame.³⁹ Certainly, it did not completely do away with the impact of racial prejudice in her life, but white children and white adults no longer physically assaulted her.

For her entire professional life, she refused an identity as a woman musician, believing that focusing on, or including her gender, was personally denigrating and professionally limiting. She also had a contradictory and very basic definition of womanhood, combining the feminine with the masculine, "I'm very feminine, but I think like a man."⁴⁰ She acknowledged being born in poverty, but she never believed that she was poor because of systematic oppression and patriarchy. Rather she felt that it was a personal wrong being done to her when white managers, agents and record producers stole her music, royalties and fees.

Williams appeared outwardly to have limited understanding of multiple jeopardy, the construct of race, gender, class, and sexuality, which is important in understanding the black woman, as well as understanding black women musicians.⁴¹ The inter sectionality of how these barriers are also connected in the social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group⁴² is another construct that Williams seemed never to consider. She did not apply either of these constructs in defining or describing the dilemmas that race and gender caused in her life and in the lives of other black women. She used her musical creativity in limited ways to resist both racism and patriarchy and all of what she considered "*miserable blocks...and bad sounds...*" in her career.⁴³ She did not see being black and female as a source of strength or resistance to the racism and patriarchy that she experienced. In her published statements, she

³⁶ Bell Hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*, Cambridge: South End Press, 2000, 1.

³⁷ Tayler J. Mathews, *The Relationship between Skin Complexion and Social Outcomes: How Colourism Affects the Lives of African American Women*, Master's Thesis, Clark Atlanta University, 2013, 1.

³⁸ Dahl, *Ibid*, 33.

³⁹ Dahl *Ibid*, 25.

⁴⁰ Dahl, *Ibid* 349.

⁴¹ Deborah K. King, *Multiple Jeopardy, Multiple Consciousness: The Context of a Black Feminist Ideology*, *Signs* 14, no. 1, Autumn 1988): 42-72

⁴² Collings, Patricia Hill, *Black Feminist Thought*, 33.

⁴³ Mary Lou Williams, *Handwritten Autobiography*, The Jazz Institute, Rutgers

never appeared to see herself globally, in terms of race or gender, nor any connections to those outside of her personal or family space. For Mary Lou Williams everything in life hinged on music and what she wanted from her race was for every black person to know and love jazz. “*Our people don’t know anything about their own music.*”⁴⁴ Her convoluted way of exhibiting her black pride was to be the best jazz musician that she could be as evidenced by her statement, “*I’ve always been a leader of men.*”⁴⁵ Williams’ statement that she was a leader of men, in her estimation moved her to the top of the jazz world.

Mary Lou Williams, in interviews over a period of decades, answered what it meant to be a woman in jazz. Her answer was always the same with slight variations. In a 1957 article, Marian McPartland, asked her again, woman to woman, “*How does it feel to be a woman in a man’s world?*”⁴⁶ Williams gave her the answer she had consistently given,

You’ve got to play, that’s all. They don’t think of you as a woman if you can really play. I think some girls have an inferiority complex about it, and this may hold them back, but they shouldn’t feel that way. If they have talent, the men will be glad to help them along. Working with men, you get to think like a man when you play. You automatically become strong, though this doesn’t mean you’re not feminine.⁴⁷

Williams was a reluctant pioneer who opened up the way for women pianists that followed her, even if that was not her intention or that she did it grudgingly,

As for being a woman, I never thought much about that one way or the other. All I’ve ever thought about is music. I’m very feminine, but I think like a man. I’ve been working around them all my life. I can deal better with men than women.⁴⁸

Black musician Howard McGhee, a jazz trumpeter from the Bebop generation, had a familiar biased male perspective about women musicians and included Williams with,

When a woman is on the scene, it’s different. Even with the grandmother of all the lady musicians, jazz pianist Mary Lou Williams, you really have to be extra respectful. She expects it. So, if you hire women, it’s just going to mean hassles,⁴⁹

His remarks are incredibly sexist that he would rather miss her extraordinary playing, than deal with his preconceived notions of whether he would be able to curse or not around her.

Although Mary Lou Williams did not have a framework for understanding the reasons behind these biases or for working to dismantle them in her life, she gave ample evidence of how she personally felt the harmful effects of the intersection and multiple jeopardy of race, and gender. She had jazz music and an insistence on artistic freedom despite the deleterious manipulations of race and gender on her whole self. Williams insisted in her autobiographical notes, “*My music*

⁴⁴Dahl Ibid, 288.

⁴⁵Book 2, *MLW Archives*, Institute of Jazz, Rutgers.

⁴⁶ Marian McPartland, *Mary Lou: Marian McPartland Salutes One Pianist Who Remains Modern and Communicative*, *Downbeat* 24, no. 2, 17 October 1957, 12.

⁴⁷ McPartland *ibid*.

⁴⁸ Dahl, *Ibid* 341.

⁴⁹ Dahl, *Ibid*, 183.

acted as a shield preventing me from being aware of many of the prejudices that must have existed."⁵⁰ The operative words "*must have existed*" imply that her genius was disconnected from her reality. Williams gave numerous examples of racist discrimination from her family, community, immigrant neighbours, employment, and inside the world of jazz. What seems likely is that jazz, until she was 54 years old and had an emotional crisis, was in all actuality the most important aspect of her existence. She left jazz for a number of years and when she returned to performance, composing and arranging, she traded jazz and creativity as a musical shield for her new found relationship with God. God then became the most important in her existence. She remained empowered by her creative genius.

For Mary Lou Williams the issues of race and gender were summed up in simplistic sentiment, "*I've worked all my life on my own merits.*"⁵¹ Her tragedy is that she was never able to be 'wholly' Mary Lou Williams as an African American woman jazz genius. Her legacy is that she was a jazz genius.

Glossary

African American, also Black Americans or Blacks (used interchangeably) are a group of North Americans with ancestry from any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Black Nationalism in the U.S. is advocacy of or support for unity and political self-determination for black people, especially in the form of a separate black nation.

Canon is a body of musical works that society has accepted as influential. Canon has religious connotations, with the Oxford English Dictionary defines it as a "collection or list of sacred books accepted as genuine." In other words, a canon is a group of works deemed timeless and universal.

Colourism is prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a dark skin tone, typically among people of the same ethnic or racial group.

Jazz developed from both the spirituals and the blues. It is a type of music of African American origin that emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, characterized by improvisation, syncopation, and usually a regular or forceful rhythm.

Jim Crow Laws are statues named after a minstrel character called Jim Crow, when southern legislatures passed *laws* of racial segregation directed against blacks at the end of the 19th century.

Multiple Jeopardy is a term used to describe the way in which oppressive barriers that individuals face, contribute to the life of oppression faced due to these factors culminating together to cause further and greater oppression.

Patriarchy is defined as a system of society or government in which men hold the power and women are excluded from it.

Racism is defined as a system of prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone of a different race based on the belief that one's own race is superior.

⁵⁰ Dahl, Ibid, 22
⁵¹Dahl, Ibid, 369.

Sacred Jazz is contemporary jazz and Christian worship.

Segregation was an institutional system of separation of access in the United States that set apart blacks and whites, in supposedly separate but equal access to facilities, services and opportunities.

The Black Arts Movement was the artistic outgrowth of the Black Power Movement.

The Black Power Movement was a political and social movement of racial pride, self-sufficiency, and equality for all people of African descent.

The Civil Rights Movement was a decades-long movement to secure the same legal rights for African Americans that other Americans already held.

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THE IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGION AND CULTURE ON GENDER EQUALITY: OBSERVATIONS FROM THE 2014 ELECTIONS IN MALAWI

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Abstract

The Fifth United Nations Sustainable Development Goal highlights the importance of promoting gender equality and empowering women as the avenue of reducing global poverty and human deprivation. This article discusses ways in which patriarchal discourses embedded in religion and culture in many African societies may be manipulated by politicians to exacerbate gender disparities in power relations. The analysis is drawn from the 2014 Malawi elections in which a major opposition party used a campaign slogan peppered with sexist religious and cultural connotations to ridicule and vote out of office southern Africa's first ever female President – Joyce Banda of Malawi and her People Party (PP). In May 2014, Malawi held national elections and the main contestants were the then incumbent President Joyce Banda representing the PP, Peter Mutharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) and Atupele Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF). Mutharika and the DPP won the elections to wrestle away the presidency from Joyce Banda and her People's Party. The eventual winning party (the DPP) created a campaign slogan – Sesa Joyce Sesa¹ – to attack the femininity of then President Joyce Banda. Eventually, picked up by the social media, the slogan appeared to resonate with the religious and cultural identity of the electorate. It is against this backdrop that this article analyses the DPP campaign mantra and illuminates the implications of deeply entrenched religious societies on women empowerment, specifically in political leadership roles. The article suggests that for Africa to make strides with regard to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal, stakeholders ought to engage and rethink over retrogressive and manipulative beliefs that constrain women's roles in the political arena.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Goals, religion, gender, culture, women empowerment

¹ In Malawi's dominant Chichewa language it means "Sweep Joyce [Banda] away"

Introduction

In September 2015, world leaders gathered at the United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York to adopt an agenda aimed at transforming the world by 2030 through 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (UN, 2015:1). These were built on what had earlier been known as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000 when the UN General Assembly set up eight targets which were meant to be achieved by 2015 but were not fully achieved by the deadline (Sexsmith & McMichael, 2015:581). The MDGs stemmed from agreements made at major UN conferences in the 1990s and were framed as a compact between the global North and the global South and this was reaffirmed at an international conference on financing development held in Monterrey, Mexico in 2002 (Haines & Cassels, 2004:394). According to the UN Development Group (UNDG, 2012:13), consultations involving UN technical experts, governments, civil society groups, among other multiple stakeholders, commenced in 2012 to stimulate an inclusive debate that has been coined as a '*Post-2015 Development Agenda: What Future do you want?*' The consultations led to the reformulation of the MDGs to new global 17 SDGs (UN, 2015:1).

Paramount to this article is the fifth of the 17 SDGs which notes that to transform the world by 2030, UN member states should make efforts to "*achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls*" (UN, 2015:18)). In engaging with this issue, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF) underlines that advancing the rights of women and children advances humanity (UNICEF, 2015). Garcia-Moreno, et al (2005:1282) contend that the fifth Sustainable Development Goal is of great importance because recognising equal rights and opportunities for women and men is critical for social and economic progress.

Measuring women empowerment encompasses multifaceted areas. For Moghadam and Senftova (2005:389), critical areas of concern include women's poverty, educational attainment, reproductive health and rights, employment and economic resources, political participation, violence against women, armed conflict, women and the media. Similarly, Sachs (2005:20) points out that promoting women's "*access to economic and political opportunities*" is among major strategies aimed at mitigating global poverty. Sachs further notes that SDGs provide a powerful opportunity to help give voice to the hopes and aspirations of the world's poorest and "*voiceless*" people. Simwaka, et al (2005:708) are of the view that in Africa, there is an urgent need to take a holistic approach to achieving gender equality and women

empowerment including “increasing women’s participation in political bodies”.

Besides being a member of the UN Sustainable Development Goals project, Malawi is a signatory to the 2008 Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Protocol on Gender and Development that calls for gender parity in all areas of decision making by 2015 (Mdlongwa, 2009:6). The country is also part of the Economic Commission for Africa’s Gender Development Index, launched in 2009 to measure gender disparities and women empowerment (Machinjili, 2012:v). In this regard, presidential, parliamentary and local government elections provide a window of opportunity to evaluate the progress Malawi has made towards gender equality and women empowerment.

On May 20, 2014, Malawi went to the polls to elect the country’s fifth president after twenty years of democracy in which for the first time, one major contestant was a woman – President Joyce Banda. Principal candidates in the elections were: President Banda representing the People’s Party (PP), Lazarus Chakwera of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), Peter Mutharika of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and Atupele Muluzi of the United Democratic Front (UDF). The elections were won by Mutharika of the DPP with 36 per cent of the votes, Chakwera of the MCP amassed 27 per cent votes while the then incumbent President Banda of the PP came a distant third with 20 per cent of the votes; the remaining votes were split between the UDF and other smaller parties (National Democratic Institute, 2014).

Serving the shortest presidency in Malawi’s history, President Joyce Banda ascended to power in April, 2012 by the virtue of being Malawi’s Vice-President, according to Malawi’s constitution, following the sudden death of President Bingu wa Mutharika. This development made her Africa’s second ever female President after Liberia’s Ellen Johnson Sirleaf who was elected into office in 2005. The political campaigns ahead of the 2014 elections provided multiple platforms for candidates to showcase to the electorate their abilities to foster Malawi’s democratic governance since abandoning a 30 year-one party repressive rule for plural politics in 1994. But it was an organised sexist religious analogy created by the eventual winners – the DPP under the leadership of Mutharika – that went viral in social media to resonate with the cultural identity of the majority of the Malawians and their religion and to a great extent, contributed to the defeat of the caretaker President Banda and the PP.

It is against this backdrop that this article analyses Malawi's 2014 elections through the lens of the DPP's *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign mantra, to assess the implications of religion and deeply embedded cultural beliefs on the third Millennium Development Goal. The article observes that issues of religion and cultural beliefs, particularly among the semi-literate and even more so illiterate communities of African societies like Malawi, are of great challenge with respect to the enhancement of gender equality and women empowerment encased in the third MDG. It further suggests that it is incumbent upon stakeholders, including governments, the civil society, religious leaders and the media to make concerted efforts aimed at addressing gender issues literacy within the context of religion and longstanding cultural beliefs.

This article is in five sections. The first section is a brief contextual look at the DPP's *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign slogan. The second section is a historical overview of the link between religion, culture and Malawi politics. The third segment is a review of literature on religion, gender and identity. The fourth section is an analysis on the political campaign slogan under discussion in this article and the fifth section concludes the discussion with policy recommendations.

Sesa Joyce Sesa: The Campaign Slogan of the Dpp in the Malawi 2014 Elections

Sesa Joyce Sesa (Sweep away Joyce), first came into the public domain in November, 2013 when the then DPP Presidential aspirant, Mutharika addressed a political gathering in Thyolo district, southern Malawi. In a prelude to Mutharika's speech, George Saonda, a key member of the DPP, delivered a speech that contained rhetorical questions to the audience which were peppered with misogynistic religious and cultural images about the then President Banda's credibility to lead a country because she was a woman. In response, the audience, which included hundreds of women, joined the orator – Saonda – by heckling Banda's name.

Following the political rally, Saonda uploaded a video recording of the gathering on You Tube with a background of jazz-rhythmic sounds and the thematic slogan instantly went viral in the social media, instantly generating 3,781 views (Saonda, 2013). *Sesa Joyce Sesa* had a nationwide impact preceding the elections, nearly turning into a household song across the country. The campaign mantra was then picked up by two of Malawi's significant online news media – *Nyasatimes* and *Malawivoice* – which further provided multiple platforms such as

Twitter and Facebook to share the *Sesa Joyce Sesa* video (Nyasatimes, 2013; Malawivoice, 2014). The following is an excerpt from the *Sesa Joyce Sesa* YouTube video clip².

Saonda: *Kodi kumpingo wa a katolika, wansembe akachoka, munaona asisteri akudyetsa mgonero?* (In the Roman Catholic Church, in the absence of a priest, does the nun bless the Holy Communion for congregants?)

Audience: *Ayiii!* (Nooh!)

Saonda chorus: *Sesa Joyce Sesa* (Sweep Joyce away!)

Audience chorus: *Sesaaaah!* “Sweep her away!!!”

Saonda: *Nanga ku Chisilamu, ku mzikiti Shehe akachoka, munaona mzimayi akupita kutsogolo?* (For Moslems, when the Sheikh/Imam is away at the Mosque, do you ever see women conduct the prayers?).

Audience: *Ayiii!* (Nooh!).

Saonda chorus: *Sesa Joyce Sesa!* (Sweep Joyce away!).

Audience chorus: *Sesaaaah!* (Sweep her away!).

²The video clip is attached to this article but is also available online as cited above.

Saonda then caps the rhetoric with a local proverb to argue that: *Fisi akalowa mnyumba, mwini ake akamwalira, sindiye kuti mkaziyo ndi wache* (A man hired to sleep with a widow in order to cleanse off evil spirits following the death of her husband is not necessarily expected to take over the household).

As noted above, the slogan contained rhetorical jibes drawn from the Bible and the Qur’an; in other words, Christianity and Islam, which were suggestive to the notion that women are not expected to lead but to be subservient to men. This thus leads to the discussion on the relationship between religion, politics and gender in Malawi.

Religion, Politics and Gender in Malawi: Historical Overview

Malawi has a population of about 16 million people (Government of Malawi, 2012a). Of this population, 76 per cent are Christians, 11 per cent are Muslims and the rest belong to other indigenous faiths (Government of Malawi, 2008a). Of all religions in the country, Christianity has had the most enduring impact on people’s socio-religious life world (Matemba, 2011:329).

Multiple scholarship reveals that the influence of religion in Malawian politics dates back to the colonial times when the country was called Nyasaland under the British Protectorate (cf. MacDonald, 1970:106; McCracken, 2000:59; Power, 2010:8). For instance, McCracken (2000:5) points out that in the late 19th century, the mission of the Church of Scotland to spread Christianity in Malawi and the rest of the east and central African region, was closely interrelated with that of the majority of the British settlers' desire to own and control the region's economy.

Ironically, some locals that had been acculturated into Christianity, led by Reverend John Chilembwe of the Providence Industrial Mission (P.I.M) launched an abortive uprising against the British colonial rule in Malawi in 1915 (McCracken 2012:127; Mtewa, 1977:227). While a few white settlers died in the revolt, Chilembwe and the majority of his followers were killed by the colonial government (Phiri, 2004:271). As the locals continued to press for independence between the 1920s and the early 1960s, both the white settlers and the natives used religion as a platform to air the manifold grievances of the society because it was one aspect of community life in which other socio-economic influences could not be ignored (Pachai, 1973:212). Pachai further underscores that "issues of religion and politics became interwoven".

The church as it were, in many aspects was an avenue for natives to promote political teachings and social movements, according to Pachai. As McCracken (1998:234) observes, Levi Mumba – the first President of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) – a grouping of locals in the nationalist struggle in the 1940s, was trained by the Church of Scotland missionaries and he "linked his political beliefs to the Christian values" he had learnt earlier. This is in line with an argument advanced by Linden and Linden (1971:629) that Christianity, far from being opiate, provided radical apocalyptic themes through which Africans articulated opposition to colonial rule. Natives, Linden and Linden further argue, used Biblical texts to legitimise their struggle for independence.

As Nyasaland geared towards independence between 1960 and 1964, there were three political parties led by natives – the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) under Kamuzu Banda, the Christian Liberation Party led by Thamar Banda, and the Christian Democratic Party led by Chester

Katsonga (Pachai, 1973:243). But according to Pachai the MCP, which commanded the largest following, early on “*harassed the Christian based political parties*” accusing them of spreading “*imperialistic propaganda*”. It was for this reason that by 1964, the MCP under Kamuzu Banda had pulverised all the other opponents and “*it was this party alone that had to decide the destiny of the country*” (Pachai, 1973:243).

Worth a special mention is the fact that in the prelude to independence, specifically in 1961, Kamuzu Banda formed a transitional legislative council “*but no women candidates were chosen*” (McCracken, 2012:383). This, according to McCracken, demonstrated the nature of the MCPs leadership for it advocated for a “*strong-man government*” through the writings of one of its founders and key member of the legislative council – Dunduzu Chisiza (McCracken, 2012:409). In an excerpt from a 1961 publication – ‘*What lies ahead*’ – Chisiza underscores that new African governments must help African women to adjust themselves to their expected roles because “modern African young men want their wives to know how to rear children . . . prepare traditional and western dishes . . . master the art of washing and ironing clothes” (Chisiza, 1961:21).

For McCracken, Chisiza’s views towards women were self-contradictory in that he spelled out in the same publication that under the MCP government, respect for the dignity of the human individual and the sanctity of his personality shall be recognised “and basic human rights shall be guaranteed” (McCracken, 2012:409). As mentioned earlier the role of women in politics during the 30 years of Kamuzu Banda’s dictatorship was that of dancing praise songs at political rallies. Of cumulatively 72 male cabinet ministers appointed by Kamuzu Banda between 1966 and 1992, only three were women (Semu, 2002: 85; Worldwide Guide to Women in Leadership, 2014).

The intertwining of religion and politics in Malawi, however, came to the fore in 1992, when the Roman Catholic Church played a crucial role in galvanising the masses against the dictatorship of President Kamuzu Banda and the MCP (Ross, 2004:91). Although that turbulent year was characterised by industrial action; serious urban riots; student demonstrations; the emergence of new domestic political groupings; and the MCP government’s agreement to hold a national referendum on the future of the one party system in the country, in retrospect perhaps what was most remarkable about these developments was that they were sparked off by the

Roman Catholic church, and that their momentum was sustained at crucial stages by other Christian denominations in Malawi (Newell, 1995:243).

Through a pastoral letter entitled *Living our Faith* on 8th March, 1992 a grouping of Roman Catholic bishops, the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, openly criticised Kamuzu Banda and his autocratic rule (Cullen, 1994:37; Ihonvbere, 1997:226). Although ostensibly addressed to the Catholic faithful, the pastoral letter clearly targeted a wider audience and was written in a language designed to provoke public action and political change (Dulani, 2009:143). The letter, published in Malawi's predominant *Chichewa* and *Tumbuka* languages, was read out and distributed in all Catholic churches nationwide, according to Dulani. Through references to Biblical texts – Ephesians 4:7-16 and Peter 4:10 -11 – and local proverbs, *Living our Faith* identified some of the key weaknesses and failings of the one party regime (Dulani, 2009:144; Ross, 1996:39). One of the concerns that the Catholic Church pointed out was with regard to freedom of expression and association and it noted that: Human persons are honoured - and this honour is due to them - whenever they are allowed to search freely for the truth, to voice their opinions and be heard, to engage in creative service of the community in all liberty within the associations of their own choice. Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisals for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions: intellectual, religious or political. We can only regret that this is not always the case in our country. We can be grateful that freedom of worship is respected; the same freedom does not exist when it comes to translating faith into daily life (Afcast, 1992).

The language of the pastoral letter was rooted in a longstanding Catholic tradition of citing both canonical precedent and examples from the teachings of Christ and his disciples to justify Church involvement in temporal affairs (Mitchell, 2002:7). Mitchell contends that true to this tradition, 20th-century liberation theology legitimizes itself through the New Testament, with Christ the revolutionary as a central pillar of support. The power of the Catholic Church as a key player in the political arena was buoyed by the growth in its membership over time to 3 million out of the country's population of 13 million (Dulani, 2009:154), making it the country's single largest Christian denomination.

As Dulani (2009:151) puts it, the events of 1992 placed religion as one of the few platforms from which criticism of the one-party regime could be made without being silenced. Newell (1995:251) argues that with the pastoral letter, the bishops “*struck a chord in the nation's*

psyche” which was evidenced with clapping and ululation when it was read out to the majority of the Catholic faithful across the country. The significance of the letter was so enormous that it was followed up by protests for political change from University of Malawi students and leading Protestant churches such as the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P) who weighed in with support for the Catholic clergy (Dulani, 2009:145). In Malawi, the C.C.A.P church is the second largest Christian denomination after the Catholics (Newell, 1995:256). To further pile up the pressure on President Kamuzu Banda and his dictatorial regime, the Catholic and Presbyterian clergy were joined in by those of the Anglican Church and Muslim community, and collectively formed Malawi’s first political pressure group since independence called the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) in October 1992 (Newell, 1997:258). This pressure group, which still exists today with the full support and representation of all major denominations, was formed as a vehicle through which meaningful dialogue could be conducted with the government in the interests of the nation, Newell further notes:

Following the formation of PAC, underground political parties emerged and President Kamuzu succumbed to intense pressure that led to a referendum on democracy in June 1993 and the first democratic elections in May 1994, which was won by President Bakili Muluzi of the UDF party (Dulani, 2007:146).

As Newell (1997:260) points out, while President Kamuzu Banda attempted to establish a social uniformity in Malawi’s multi-ethnic landscape with his regular speeches on nation-building, religion which is deeply entrenched in the country’s national identity, led to his downfall and that of the 30 year-repressive regime.

The reverence to religion and religious leaders continues to be evident among Malawian politicians twenty years into democracy. Matemba (2011:331) observes that during national elections, politicians who ignore the Church by not making appearances at services or by not giving churches gifts of money, say for church refurbishment, certainly risk losing the votes of the Christian voting bloc. For instance, in 2008, a year before Malawi went to the polls, the then Minister of Agriculture, Frank Mwenefumbo, donated subsidised fertiliser vouchers which were meant for poor rural households but the politician instead offered them to leaders of the largest Protestant church – the C.C.A.P – as a “*political ploy to garner votes from congregants*” (*Weekend Nation*, Comment, 2008:2). Similarly, a month ahead of the May 2014 elections, both President Joyce Banda and the leader of one of the major contesting political

parties – Lazarus Chakwera of the MCP – participated in the long Good Friday walk called The Way of the Cross in the streets of the capital city – Lilongwe – organised by a Roman Catholic Church in reminiscence of the path that Jesus Christ took on his way to Calvary as described in the Bible (Malawi News Agency, 2014). Interestingly, both Banda and Chakwera are not Catholics but members of the Protestant and Presbyterian and Assemblies of God churches respectively.

Christianity is so intertwined with the social-cultural norms that hardly any public function starts without an opening prayer (Matemba,2011:331), and this is all rooted in the history of Christianity dating back to the 19th century which has been immense in shaping the country's national identity.

The preceding discussion illustrates that historically religion, more specifically Christianity, plays an important role in the socio-political arena of the Malawian public. As Matemba (2011:331) argues, religion is the main matrix of Malawi's national identity.

Religion, Gender and Identity

The impact of religion on Malawi's cultural identity is of profound importance with respect to issues of gender. Ursula King (1995:1) argues that gender issues are significant in contemporary society and culture because throughout human history, there has existed an asymmetry in the relations of power, representation, knowledge and scholarship between men and women. For King, many current issues and debates about women, their experience, and self-understanding, status and role are still influenced by or indirectly related to religious teachings and world views about women and their experiences. In view of the historical-cultural embodiments and institutional structures in religion, it requires an investigation of gender-specific issues in very particular ways (King, 1995:3).

Religion has not only been a matrix of cultures but it structures reality – “*all reality including that of gender*” (King, 1995:4). This is in line with Joy's argument (1995:122) who contends that God-talk itself has remained a captive of the human predilection to conceive of the absolute in masculine imagery and terminology. O'Connor (1995:55) holds the view that much of what is known about religion is based on what has been written, told and taught by western educated

males in the western religious and philosophical traditions. O'Connor postulates that:

Much of what we see, we see because we have been trained, educated and socialised to see in certain ways. This means there are also things we do not see, questions and insights to which we are blind, paths not taken, whole areas that are concealed to us as others are revealed (1995:47).

According to Johnson (2005:759) "*our relation to societies and how to participate in them can have magical effects on how we see things*". Cultures, such as those that are religious, consist of words and ideas that are used to define and interpret humankind experiences, Johnson further notes. Such cultures are patriarchal in that "they promote male privilege by being male dominated, male identified, and male centred" and are also obsessed with the control of women (Johnson, 2005:5). Johnson notes that when a woman finds her way to the top of the hierarchy in a patriarchal society "people tend to be struck by the exception to the rule and wonder how she would measure up against a man in the same position". In the case of Malawi, such social hierarchical structures have become internalised since the advent of Christianity in the 19th century and continue to be reflected in everyday life.

Societal cultural attributes like religion have a huge bearing in the construction of identity which Castells (1997:6) defines as the people's source of meaning and experience. Castells argues that meanings are constructed through the identification of symbols for the purpose of a particular action. Nevertheless, identities can originate from dominant institutions and "*they become dominant when and if social actors internalise them, and construct meaning around this internalisation*" (Castells, 1997:7). In this respect, the dominant institutions that have contributed to the construction of Malawi's identity are the Church and to a certain extent, Islam. In the case of Malawi's 2014 elections, a woman presidential aspirant – specifically Joyce Banda – was associated with attempting to break away from a well-woven religious family structure, where patriarchy is a societal norm.

Religion provides a distinct setting for identity exploration and commitment through offering ideological, social, and spiritual contexts (King, 2003:197). King further contends that religion in an ideological context, intentionally offers beliefs, moral codes, and values from which one can build a personal belief system from an early age. Consequently, the beliefs, worldview,

and values of religious traditions, King argues, provide an ideological context in which a person can generate a sense of meaning, order, and place in the world that is crucial to identity formation. Integrating one's personal ideology to religious beliefs is integral in identity formation (King, 2003:203).

Looking through the political campaigns ahead of Malawi's 2014 elections, there was clear evidence of gendered ideology, more particularly by the DPP against the femininity of former President [Joyce] Banda. For example, in most political gatherings organised by the DPP, especially in the rural areas, the party cadres relentlessly evoked the rhetorical question of whether women could lead in churches or mosques.

For Schlesinger (1991:146), the notion of collective cultural identity is problematic in society because it serves as "*a screen to reality*". By collective identity Schlesinger (1991:153) refers to a national identity in retrospect, such as Christianity in the case of Malawi. Cultural identity easily slips into a nationalist affirmation of the superiority of one group over others (Mattelart *et al.*, in Schlesinger, 1991:146). Understanding the impact of global religious beliefs is imperative in the context of gender relations in that global processes simplistically impose gender values (Ghail & Haywood, 2007:220). Although the church can play a role in social change, it invests its energies in preserving the status quo (Richardson, 1981:99). For Richardson, because the status quo favours the interests of the more powerful, religion helps perpetuate social inequality.

The justification of perpetuating unequal power relations between men and women in patriarchal society with predominant Christian beliefs is rooted in multiple Biblical texts from the Old Testament to the New Testament (Richardson, 1981:103). From the onset, the Old Testament accounts of Creation in Genesis, where the story is that God created man first then woman (The Holy Bible, Genesis 2:7; 18; Richardson, 1981:103). In Exodus, the commandment is given not to "covet your neighbour's house" and in this case, a wife is listed among the possessions along with servants, oxen and other domestic animals (The Holy Bible, Exodus 20:17; Richardson, 1981:103). Myriad Biblical texts including Leviticus 12:1-5,

Deuteronomy 22:18-21 and Job 14:1-4 reflect and perpetuate a patriarchal order (The Holy Bible; Richardson, 1981:103). The New Testament is often used to justify male superiority over the female in multiple texts such as 1 Corinthians 11:3 but it is in Ephesians where the

Holy Bible points out that:

Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything (The Holy Bible, Ephesians 5:22-24).

Nevertheless, some Biblical texts clearly spell out the promotion of gender justice. For example, the Holy Bible (Galatians 3:28) notes that “*there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male or female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus*”. In Judges 4:4, the Holy Bible states that Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, was a prophetess, judge and leader of Israel at the time which implies that a woman had a crucial position of governance.

That notwithstanding, interpretations of Biblical texts, which often vary, have consequences in the social organisational structure of religious institutions and this is ultimately reflected in the performances of the males and females within them. It has been noted over the years; for instance, that the issue of leadership roles in predominantly Christian faiths such as the ordination of priests in the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches is a heavily contested issue (cf. Ecklund, 2006:82; Fabio and Reicher, 2000:95; Chaves, 1996:840). The father figure, a prominent feature of Christianity, is a predominant ingredient in the image of the clergy (Bock, 1967:531). In the Catholic faith for instance, the priest is commonly referred to as ‘Father’ by the Church’s followers which is significant in structuring the hierarchical and gendered power relations and such religious ideologies filter through the society’s everyday life.

It is worth noting that the patriarchal stance embedded in Christianity is similarly reflected in Islam. Islam in Arabic means state of submission and a Muslim is one who has submitted to Allah (Castells, 1997:14). As Castells further postulates, state institutions in the Islamic sense, must be organised around uncontested religious principles formulated in the Qur’an – the Islamic holy book. Just like Christianity, Islam demands that women must “*submit to their guardian men as they are encouraged to fulfil themselves primarily in the framework of the family*” (Castells, 1997:15). A text from the Qur’an (Surah 4:34) notes:

Men are in charge of women by right of what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend for maintenance from their wealth. So

righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in the husband's absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives], from whom you fear arrogance, first advise them, and then if they persist, forsake them in bed; and finally, strike them. But if they obey you once more, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever exalted and grand.

However, in the Qur'an (Surah 3:195) it is pointed out that the Lord will reward the good deeds of both males and females because they are “*of one another*”. But as in Christianity, the Qur'an, texts are also subject to varied interpretations and in the Malawian 2014 elections case, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) manipulated such variances to befit their gendered discourse.

The foregoing debate reinforces the argument advanced by Ecklund (2006:81) that many religions have patriarchal rules and institutional policies that formally limit leadership for women. While religious cultures oftentimes stand for what Firth (1981:588) describes as a “moral and spiritual values”, critical questions in light of gender equality and empowerment of women as enshrined in the third Millennium Development Goal are exposed. This forms the basis of the analytical look which is tackled next.

Sesa Joyce Sesa: Analysis

Given the role played by religion in shaping Malawi's cultural identity, it comes as little surprise that the religious-gender implications were a factor in the 2014 Malawi elections. Malawi, as noted by Moto (2004:346) is a patriarchal society and this is reinforced from an early age. The *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign slogan created by the DPP, resonated with this historical make-up of Malawi's identity – religion – and more particularly with the rural and less literate electorate.

Close to 85 per cent of Malawi's population reside in rural areas (Government of Malawi, 2008b). This landscape is even worsened by the fact that most young females of the rural dwellers, drop out of school and engage in early marriages (Government of Malawi, 2012b:16), which shapes up as a culture that is heavily depended on males (husbands). Against this backdrop, the terrain was vulnerable to manipulation by the DPP with their religious sexist campaign slogan.

The title of the slogan in itself: *Sesa Joyce Sesa* (Sweep Joyce away) was demeaning as it likened Joyce Banda to “*garbage*” or “*trash*” that had to be swept away. This analogy had both cultural and religious connotations. In a cultural context, it is common for rural societies to cast off women deemed to have engaged in immoral malpractices not in tandem with the traditional beliefs. For example, refusing to cook for her husband, even when pregnant, is a taboo. Such women are taken to traditional courts and may be cast off the society; in other words, they befit to be “Swept away”, and for the DPP, President Joyce Banda deserved such treatment.

The *Sesa Joyce Sesa* (Sweep away Joyce {Banda}) slogan also bore a religious connotation of Biblical heritage. In Jewish law, which is noted in the Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 22:18-21, virginity was of profound importance for women to be defined as “clean” and therefore qualifying for marriage (The Holy Bible, Deuteronomy 22:18-21; Richardson, 1977:102), and “those persons considered clean, were granted the right to participate in religious ceremonies”. In the context of *Sesa Joyce Sesa*, the DPP’s campaign mantra typically referred to then President Joyce Banda as ‘unclean’, ‘filthy’, like the women described in the Holy Bible Job 14:4 where Job asks: “*Who can bring what is pure from the unpure?*” (The Holy Bible, Job 14:4; Richardson, 1977:102).

The *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign slogan was well constructed to reverberate with the religious identity of Malawians and mock President Joyce Banda in regards to her capabilities to continue governing the country. This view is informed by Castells (1997:23) who underscores that cultures embedded with deep religious heritage encourage the oppression of women because submission to men guarantees salvation. Castells further notes: “With salvation guaranteed, as long as a Christian strictly observes the Bible, and with a stable patriarchal family as a solid footing for life, business will be good” (1997:23). Although there are some Biblical texts which promote the equality of men and women; for example, in Genesis and Ecclesiastes (The Holy Bible, Genesis 1:27; Ecclesiastes 9:9), the DPP capitalised on those that seem to devalue women.

The DPP campaign was aimed at manipulating the electorate, mostly the rural religious communities by calling upon them to reflect on the traditional organisational structures within

their sense of identity – religion. First, the narrator, Saonda, who delivered keynote speeches during the campaign rallies organised by Peter Mutharika, the then DPP Presidential candidate (incumbent Malawi President), teased the audiences by exemplifying with hierarchical structures within the Roman Catholic Church, which as noted earlier, is the most dominant Christian denomination in Malawi. Then, he would turn to similar analogies in Islam before encasing his rhetoric with a sexist local proverb.

The local proverb blended in by the DPP into their sexist campaign slogan is rooted in traditional cultural belief called *Fisi* (hyena). In this rhetoric, the main campaign slogan orator, Saonda, would tell the audiences in vernacular that: *ngakhale fisi akalowa mnyumba sindiye kuti mkaziyo ndi wache* (A man hired to sleep with a widow is not expected to be the next head of the family). In an old Malawian tradition, when a husband died in some rural settings, to wind up the mourning period, the village community would organise a ritual ceremony in which a man, in most cases a brother to the deceased, would sleep with the widow which was believed to cast away evil spirits from the family. Such a person was called metaphorically as *Fisi* (hyena) likening the act to the actual elusive behavioural hunting nature of a hyena during the night.

This was striking because just like the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church blended traditional proverbs and Biblical texts in their 1992 Pastoral letter to criticise the one-party repressive regime of Hastings Kamuzu Banda, it was similarly noted that the DPP fused a traditional patriarchal proverb into religious beliefs that underline the role of women in society as being subservient to men. The *Fisi* (hyena) proverb symbolised that former President [Joyce] Banda was then just a caretaker President following the death of Bingu wa Mutharika in 2012 but it did not necessarily mean that she [Joyce Banda] had to be given a full mandate to govern.

It was further observed that the fusion of gendered religious analogies and the cultural beliefs was easily identified by the electorate, particularly in the rural less literate communities. The electorate were vulnerable to the sexist manipulation regarding male/female religious roles because it was entrenched in their minds from history. This is in line with the argument that religious experiences of African women must be seen as embedded in particular historical, social and cultural contexts (Hackett, 1995:258).

Given that the fifth Sustainable Development Goal recognises equal rights and opportunities for women, then the context of the DPP campaign slogan contained rhetoric that was at variance with the SDGs. In fact, the DPP, which defines itself as a ‘progressive’ party, ironically diffused a mantra that was rather ‘retrogressive’ with regard to gender equality, women empowerment and political participation. As Moghadam and Senftova (2005:391) posit, women empowerment is conceptualised in terms of the achievement of basic capabilities; of legal rights; and of participation in key social, economic and ‘political domains’. But in the case of Malawi, the *Sesa Joyce Sesa* campaign motto was coined to perpetuate social inequalities with respect to gender. As noted in the section on Malawi’s historical overview of religion, politics and gender in Malawi, women were among the marginalised, more particularly with respect to key political leadership positions.

During the 2014 Malawi elections campaigns, the DPP, like the rest of the contesting parties, presented a manifesto to the electorate in a public ceremony, covered in multiple media broadcasts. What was interesting to note was that Chapter 22 of the manifesto underlined issues pointed out in the fifth Sustainable Development Goal in that “*the DPP condemn the marginalisation and discrimination of women in the development process*” (DPP Manifesto 2014:47). The paradox of this promise entailed in the manifesto was that as the supporters of the party mobilised themselves at the launch of the manifesto, they chanted “*Sesa Joyce Sesa!*”

This then means that to the DPP, now the governing party in Malawi, the agenda of advancing the fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal is just on paper but not in practice. More ironical was the fact that the majority of those rallying behind the sexist slogan were women. Historically in Malawi politics, women take up the cheerleading roles for the usually male politicians at the top of the hierarchy. In line with an argument advanced by Geisler (1995:546), women’s role in politics in most of Africa is often limited to a particular female space, such as party’s women wing, where its members are given little or no scope to influence policy formulation, not even policies directly relevant to them. This then calls into question as to whether much progress has been made regarding the fifth Sustainable Development Goal in Malawi, especially on the issue of political inclusiveness.

Attributes drawn from religious and cultural beliefs concerning gender roles are social constructs. Religious as well as traditional beliefs in most cultures globally have often been

issued to categorise roles which men and women may be perceived capable of undertaking in society. The social importance given to these constructs to describe women's role in society contribute to inequalities in gender and marginalisation of women in political leadership roles as it was in the case of Malawi's 2014 elections.

Conclusion and Policy Implications

In a quest to wrestle political power away from caretaker President Joyce Banda, the DPP created a campaign slogan that was manipulative of the religious identity of the Malawi citizenry. Although most forms of religion call for love, peace and tolerance, Christianity and Islam are embedded with texts that are patriarchal and sexist and this stifles the very essence of promoting gender equality and women empowerment.

Multiple stakeholders, including the civil society and the news media, expected to safeguard democracy, ignored this role and overlooked the demeaning nature of the DPP campaign mantra – *Sesa Joyce Sesa*. This then meant that they contributed to the reverberation of the gendered discourse of the slogan into the public sphere. This poses a serious problem in light of the fifth UN Sustainable Development Goal. In fact, such patriarchal discourses knock down the positive strides on the Malawi Gender and Development Index (MGDI) launched in 2009 by the Malawi government to measure gender equality and women empowerment in the country as part of the Economic Commission for Africa's Gender Development Index (Machinjili, 2012:v).

Manipulating religious teachings and traditional cultural beliefs to advance patriarchal agendas in power relations has profound influence on societal attitudes towards women and their potential to take-up critical decision making positions, especially in developing democracies such as Malawi. It is thus of utmost importance that multiple stakeholders, such as political leaders, the media and the civil society should consider policies that would civically engage the electorate on the awareness of deeply entrenched religious and cultural beliefs that undermine the advancement of women in crucial decision-making positions. It is critical to address such sensational discourses in the public sphere that are rooted in patriarchy. Effectively, this could be progressive with regards to the fifth Sustainable Development Goal and the *Beyond 2015* agenda aimed at eliminating global poverty and human deprivation, especially in the poorest of countries across the globe. As Amadiume (1997:181) rightly argues,

the struggle to deconstruct and decolonise the effects of masculine imperialism and patriarchy that came along with colonisation must continue.

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PARENTS' SOCIAL AND FINANCIAL STATUS AS DETERMINANTS OF CHILD GENDER PREFERENCES: A STUDY OF IGBOS IN LAGOS WEST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The phenomenon of child gender preference is not new; it has existed for centuries. In fact, in the last few decades, many studies have been conducted on it, particularly in South Asia and North Africa. In Nigeria child gender preference has seldom been examined with keen emphasis on the social and financial factors. Thus, this study examines the social and financial factors underlying child gender preference among the Igbo people in Lagos West Senatorial District. The study uses the survey method to execute the research agenda. Multi-stage random sampling was used to pick respondents for the survey. The symbolic interactionism theory was used to explain the prevalence of gender preference for children in the study location, while chi-square was used to test the two formulated hypotheses that centre on socio-financial factors and child gender preferences. The paper found that there is a significant relationship between education and parental preference for the gender of their children. The higher the education of the parents, the lower the parental preference was for a particular gender. Also, the study finds that income is significantly related to parental preference for the gender of their children. The lower the income and wealth of the household, the higher the parental preference to have a male child. The study concludes that efforts should be made to raise the educational level of people and to ensure that the government tackles poverty aggressively in the society.

Keywords: Gender Preference, Son, Daughter, Igbo, Wealth and Education

Introduction

One of the most fundamental problems Nigeria is facing is the uncontrolled growth of the population. In spite of the availability of a wide range of contraceptive methods and mass media campaigns, population control remains a distant dream to achieve, especially in the rural areas. This situation can be attributed to the prevalence of parental gender preferences in the country (Milazzo, 2012). Marleau and Saucier (2002) assert that Western societies appear to have experienced a transition from son preference to no gender preference and this has helped greatly in having a controlled population growth rate. Seidl (1995) asserts that when couples have gender preferences, they seem to have more parities than they would have ordinarily had. This is because couples would continue to give birth to children until the desired sex compositions

are satisfied, which is mostly after the delivery of at least one male child.

It is believed that daughters are associated with a loss. The girl child leaves her parents' home upon her marriage and the benefits from investments made in her upbringing accrue to her new family, thus constituting a loss for the natal family. Sons, on the other hand, are considered assets worthy of short and long-term investment (Bumiller, 1991). Sons can continue the family trade, carry the family name, and are expected to provide financial resources for their parents in old age. Sons, therefore, are indispensable in societies as they provide welfare support for frail older people (Sen, 1992; 1999; Qadir, Khan, Medhin & Prince, 2011).

The close relationship between daughters and their fathers and between mothers and their sons among the Igbos is too strong to be overlooked. A father can do anything to protect his daughter and spend a lot of money to celebrate his daughter's marriage. However, the girl-child appears to lose value as she transits from daughter to wife and begins to live life as an appendage to the husband.

Statement of the Problem

Child gender preference largely reflects the underlying socio-economic and cultural patterns of the society. The Igbo society is basically a patriarchal and patrilineal society, one characterized by the dominance of men in virtually all spheres of life. Igbo women were expected to be subservient to their husbands. Women in Igbo society and Nigeria as a whole are disadvantaged as compared to men in terms of both education and earnings, factors that greatly influence the economic status of women and child gender preference (National Population Commission & ICF, 2014). This, therefore, conditions couples to desire to have and nurture a child who has the socially and culturally accepted status and economic potential. This preference influences the parents' behaviour and may result into gender biases and stereotypes that negatively affect the health, welfare, and survival of girls and women (El-Gilany & Shady, 2007).

Various studies (for example, Ushie, Agba, Olumodeji & Attah, 2011; Oyefara, 2010) had explored factors affecting fertility in Nigeria. However, the impact of social and economic factors on child gender preference for children has not been well documented in the region. This gap is what this paper was expected to fill.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

1. The study aims at examining the impact of socio-economic factors on gender preferences for children among Igbos in Lagos -West Senatorial District.
Specifically, the study intends to: Find out the effect of the parents' level of education on child gender preference among the Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District.
2. Investigate the influence of the parents' income on child gender preferences among the Igbos in Lagos West Senatorial District

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between the parents' level of education and child gender preference.
2. There is no significant relationship between the income of the parents and their preference for the gender of their children.

Definition of Concepts

Gender preference can be described as the parents' preference to have a child of a particular gender. In other words, it is the quest for having a particular gender (male or female) as offspring(s).

Literature Review

The prevalence of child gender preferences has been well documented mostly in South Asian countries (Rossi & Rouanet, 2014; Haldar, Dasgupta, Sen & Laskar, 2011; Das-Gupta, Zhenghua, Zhenming & Hwa-Ok, 2003). However, the phenomenon of child gender preference is not peculiar to the South Asian countries alone; a considerable level of preference for a male child has also been reported in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa (Ndu & Uzochukwu, 2011; Adeleye & Okonkwo, 2010; Kana, 2010).

A number of broad social, cultural and economic factors have been identified as the causes of child gender preferences. A study by Bhattacharjya, Das and Mog (2014) on the factors affecting child gender preferences among mothers attending an antenatal clinic at the Agartala Government Medical College, Agartala, India shows that 40.8% of the respondents preferred a son, 29.7% preferred a daughter, while only 29.5% had no gender preference. The reasons given for the son preference were that sons provide better security in old age, status symbol, and generation continuation. Furthermore, the study also shows that there is a significant

relationship between the socio-economic condition of the respondents and their child gender preference as a higher male child preference was observed among the rural, poor and illiterate women. Hence, the poorer the socio-economic condition of the women, the higher the preference for a son.

Fuse (2008) carried out a multi-country study of gender preference for children. He reported that a son preference is more prominent in Senegal and Burkina Faso where over 30% of women preferred a male child. This phenomenon also exists in West and South Asia as well as in North Africa. He used the multinomial regression to examine the link between socio-economic variables and son preference. The result shows that education, wealth and place of residence are significantly related to a son preference. Specifically, he found that the lower the household wealth is, the higher the odds of having a son preference are. This shows that women in households with lower income are more likely to have a male child preference. This finding is not uncommon as it is consistent with the popular belief mostly by the poor people that male children have a higher potential to support the family economically than the girls (Fuse, 2008).

A study by Reeve, Desai and Vikram (2012) also confirmed that there is a significant relationship between gender preference and the socio-economic factors. The researchers found that women who say they want more sons than daughters are less likely to be employed; they are more disempowered; more likely to be in an exogamous marriage where they met their husband on the wedding day; and less likely to share meals or outings with their husbands.

A study by Gaudin (2011) on the influence of wealth on a son preference in Indian families also shows that higher standards of living at the macroeconomic and households levels are associated with lower son preference. More specifically, Gaudin reported that *“higher absolute wealth is strongly associated with lower son preference, and the effect is 20% - 40% stronger when the household's community-specific wealth score is included in the regression. Coefficients on relative wealth are positive and significant, although lower in magnitude”*. This implies that economic development reduces the preference for a male child.

However, a study by Pande and Malhotra (2006) on a son preference in India shows there is no significant relationship between wealth and a son preference. The study reported that village-level economic development does not have a significant relationship with a son preference.

Also, ownership of assets does not have any relationship with a son preference, suggesting that economic development does not increase a son preference.

It is crucial to observe that the relationship between the place of residence and child gender preference has been examined by some studies. For example, Fuse (2008) examined the effect of place of residence on child gender preference. He discovered that rural dwellers were more likely to have gender preference for a son when compared to the urban dwellers. The reason for this might be that rural residents may not be well exposed to modern ideas and new opportunities. Also, rural dwellers are more likely to own land; hence there would be a need for sons to inherit it (Fuse, 2008).

It is believed that education shapes people's attitudes and values. It is not unexpected to see well educated people not to have child gender preference. A study by EL-Gilany and Shady (2007) on the causes and determinants of male child preference among women in Mansoura, Egypt, shows that education is one of the fundamental determinants of child gender preference. The higher the educational qualification of people is, the lower the gender preference becomes. Specifically, the study found that mothers with illiterate husbands were 10 times more likely to prefer a male child than those married to educated husbands.

Fuse (2008) shows that education is a key predictor regarding child gender preference. The researcher unveiled that attaining primary school education reduces the odds of having a preference for a male child by 20%, while above secondary level education reduces the odds for male child preference by 32%. In the same vein, Pande and Malhotra (2006) show that education is the most significant factor that can reduce a son preference. They found that uneducated women are more likely to have a son preference compared to educated women. Specifically, they reported that attaining at least a primary school level of education reduces parental preference for having a son, while exposure to secondary or higher level of education is even more significant.

In addition to the educational level of the parents, it is expected that their access to information will further reduce male child preference. Pande and Malhotra (2006) established a relationship between access to information and a son preference. They revealed that exposure to various sources of media (print and electronic) is significantly associated with weaker male child

preference. This is so because access to the mass media exposes people to information on the modern way of lifestyle and contributes to making people's preferences more egalitarian.

A study by Fuse (2008), however, discovered no relationship between mass media and a son preference. The contradiction between Fuse (2008) and Pande and Malhotra's (2006) research on the effect of media on a son preference could be partly as a result of different methodologies used. While Fuse (2008) examined the effect at the macro level, Pande and Malhotra (2006) examined the effect at the micro level.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the social action theory. Social action is central to the Weberian school of thought. Weber conceived Sociology as a science of social action (Cuff, Sharock & Francis, 2005). Weber (1949) opines that one of the fundamental objectives of sociological analyses should involve the understanding and analysis of action in terms of its subjective meaning. Social action, according to Weber, can be defined as the actions of an actor done in a social context. Social action is an actor's behaviour that is intended to influence and is influenced by the actions of others in the society (Cuff, Sharock & Francis, 2005). For social action to occur there must be meaning attached to it by the actors. It is this meaning that will give rise to social action. Hence, there is an intimate link between action and the subjective meaning given to it by the actor. These subjective meanings are usually influenced by the socio-cultural factors (Ritzer, 2008; Turner, 1993).

The Social Action Theory believes a different background and attachments will result in different behaviour. That is, there is a nexus between the actor's behaviour and his or her peculiar socio-cultural situation. For instance, dancing and drinking at a party is acceptable, however, the same behaviour is not acceptable at a funeral. The Social Action Theory does not completely neglect the impact of social structure on the action of an individual. It posits that the individual behaviour shapes the social structure; in the same vein the social structure also influences the individual behaviour.

Child gender preference is based on a set of values and norms that are produced and reproduced in a complex interaction between people. Couples, parents (and grandparents) have an essentialist understanding of what sons and daughters can be or do, and this understanding is

socially constructed. Therefore, daughters and sons are ascribed different symbolic values related to the perceived economic and social contributions they make to their families. The custom in Igbo society is that male children are valued for their role in retaining or perpetuating the family name to remain in the family so as to keep the lineage of the family growth, while women will be married out. In addition, male children also serve as a provision to old-age security and a source of defence and social prestige to the parents. Croll (2000) notes that daughters may contribute much in terms of performing household chores and caring for family members, but that this work is not valued as highly as sons' labour, which typically takes place outside the household and generates income thus enhancing the economic status of the family. These symbolic values are derived from interaction and modified through an interpretative process.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Lagos West Senatorial District, Lagos, Nigeria. Lagos West district is one of the three senatorial districts that make up Lagos State. The district has 10 local government areas. These are: Agege, Ifako-Ijaiye, Alimosho, Badagry, Ojo, Ajeromi/Ifelodun, Amuwo-Odofin, Oshodi/Isolo, Ikeja and Mushin. The district occupies an area of 1077 km² and has a population of 5,574,680 people (National Population Commission, 2010).

The research design used for the study was survey. The adoption of this research design helped greatly in the generation of quantitative data for the study. The study population was male and female Igbo residents of Lagos West district.

A multi-stage random sampling was used to select the eligible respondents in which the sampling went through five stages. The first stage involved dividing the district into local government areas. All the ten local government areas within the district were selected at this stage. The second stage involved dividing the local government areas into wards out of which two wards were randomly selected from each local government area. Thus, 20 geo-political wards were selected. The third stage involved a random selection of one street in each geo-political ward. Thus, a total of 20 streets were selected. The fourth stage involved using purposive sampling to select 12 Igbo households from each street. Thus, a total of 240 households were selected. The final stage involved a random selection of an eligible respondent in each sampled household. An eligible respondent is either a male or female Igbo between 16

and 75 years old.

The questionnaire schedule was used to obtain data from the respondents, while SPSS was used to analyse the quantitative data. The percentages, mode and chi-square were the statistical methods used for the analysis.

Sample Characteristics

Table 1 shows that 50.8% (99) of the respondents were female, while 49.2% (96) were male. As for the age of the respondents, 35.4% (69) were in the age group 36 - 45years; 28.7% (56) were in the age group 26 - 35; 26.2% (51) were in the age group 46 - 55 years; 6.2% (12) were in the age group 16 - 25 years; 2.1% (4) were in the age group 66 and above, while 1.5% (3) were in the age group 56-65 The majority of the respondents - 73.3% (143) - were married; 8.2% (16) were single; 8.2% (16) were separated; 6.2% (12) were divorced, while 4.1% (8) were widowed. Furthermore, the table shows that 61% (119) had 1 - 4 children; 23% (45) had 5 - 8 children; 12.3% (24) had no child, while 3.6% (7) had 9 - 12 children. At 89.7% (175) Christians were a huge majority; 5.6% (11) were Muslims, while 4.6% (9) were traditional worshippers.

Table 1: Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Socio-Economic Characteristics

Socio-Economic Characteristics	No	%
Sex		
Male	96	49.2
Female	99	50.8
Total	195	100
Age		
16-25	12	6.2
26-35	56	28.7
36-45	69	35.4
46-55	51	26.2
56-65	3	1.5
66 and Above	4	2.1
Total	195	100
Marital Status		
Single	16	8.2
Married	143	73.3
Separated	16	8.2
Divorced	12	6.2
Widowed	8	4.1

Total	195	100
No of children		
0	24	12
1-4	119	61
5-8	45	23
9-12	7	4
Total	195	100
Religion		
Christianity	175	89.7
Islam	11	5.6
Traditional	9	4.6
Total	195	100
Education Qualification		
No formal Education	27	13.8
Primary Education	71	36.4
Secondary	52	26.7
Higher	45	23
Total	195	100
Occupation		
Trading	47	24
Artisan	28	14
Farming	4	2
Private Sector employee	23	11.8
Civil/Public Servant	44	22.6
Professional	19	9.7
Student	4	2.1
Retiree	3	1.5
Housewife	23	11.8
Total	195	100
Economic Status		
Low income	82	42
Medium income	84	43
High income	29	14.9
Total	195	100
Level of interaction with the male child		
Very often	108	55
Often	40	21
Not quite often	19	10
Don't know/declined	28	14
Total	195	100
Level of interaction with the female child		
Very often	107	55
Often	52	27
Not quite often	16	8
Don't know/Declined	20	10
Total	195	100

Relationship with the male child		
Warm and friendly	127	65
Not so friendly	40	21
Cold	12	6
Don't know/Declined	16	8
Total	195	100

Furthermore, regarding the respondents' education Table 1 shows that 36.4% (71) had primary education; 26.7% (52) had secondary education; 23% (45) had higher education, while 13.8% (27) were illiterates. By occupation, 24% (47) of the respondents were traders; 22.6% (44) were civil servants; 14.4% (28) were artisans; 11.8% (23) were private sector employees; 11.8% (23) were full housewives; 9.7% (19) were professionals; 2.1% (4) were farmers; 2.1% (4) were students, while 1.5% (3) were retirees. As for the economic status of the respondents, 43.1% (84) were medium income earners; 42.1% (82) were low income earners, while only 14.9% (29) were high income earners. When asked how often they interact with their male children, 55.4% (108) of the respondents answered that they interact very often; 20.5% (40) often interact with their male children; 14.4% (28) declined the question, while 9.8% (19) said "not quite often". On the other hand, 54.9% (107) of the respondents very often interact with their female children; 26.7% (52) often interact with their female children; 10.3% (20) declined the question, while 8.2% (16) said not quite often. The answers to the question on the relationship of the respondents with their male children indicate that 65.1% (127) had warm and friendly relationship with their male children; 20.5% (40) said their relationship with their male children was not so friendly; 8.2% (16) declined the question, while 6.2% (12) had a (128) cold relationship. A similar question on the respondents' relationship with their female children shows that 63% (123) had warm and friendly relationship with their female children; 18.5% (36) relationships with their female children were not so friendly; 14.4% (28) declined the question, while 4% (8) had a cold relationship.

It is important to note that 66.2% (129) of the respondents preferred to have a male child rather than a female child; 24.6% (48) had no preference, while only 9.2% (21) preferred a female child. Most respondents, that is, 71.3% (139) believed that boys are more important than girls; 24.6% (48) discarded the assertion that boys are more important than girls, while 4% (8)

declined the question. On why the male child is more important than the female child, 40% (78) believed that the male child would provide more economic support to them when they are old than the female child; 32.8%

(64) said it was because the male child has more inheritance rights than the female child; 15.4% (30) believed it is only the male child who can carry on the family tree, while 11.8% (23) believed more values are accorded to the male child than the female child in the society.

Findings

Table 2 depicts the co-relationship between the sex of the respondents and child gender preference. Among the male respondents, 59.4% had preference for the male child; 29.2% had preference for any gender, while 11.5% had preference for the female child. As for the female respondents, 72.7% had preference for the male child; 20.2% had preference for any gender, while 7.1% had preference for the female child.

Table 2: Sex and Child Gender Preference

Sex	gender						Total	
	Male		female		anyone			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Male respondents	57	59.4	11	11.5	28	29.2	96	100
Female respondents	72	72.7	7	7.1	20	20.2	99	100
Total	129	66.2	18	9.2	48	24.6	195	100

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 3 illustrates the co-relationship between the number of children and age of the respondents.

Of those who had 9 - 12 children, 42.9% were in the age group 46-55 years and another 42.9% were above 65 years old, while 14.3% were 56 - 65 years. As for those who had 5 - 8 children, 86.7% were 46 - 55 years; 4.4% were 36 - 45 years old; 4.4% were 56 - 65 years old; 2.2% were 26 - 35 years, while 2.2% were above 65 years old. Of those who had 1 - 4 children, 56.3% were 36 - 45 years old; 33.6% were 26 - 35 years old; 7.6% were 46 - 55 years old, while 2.5% were 16 - 25 years old. Lastly, 62.5% of those who had no children, where 26 - 35 years, while 37.5% were 16-25 years old.

Table 3: No of Children and Age

No of Children	Age												Total	
	16-25		26-35		36-45		46-55		56-65		Above 65		No	%
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%		
0	9	37.5	15	62.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	100
1-4	3	2.5	40	33.6	67	56.3	9	7.6	0	0	0	0	119	100
5-8	0	0	1	2.2	2	4.4	39	86.7	2	4.4	1	2.2	45	100
9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	42.9	1	14.3	3	42.9	7	100
Total	12	6.2	56	28.7	69	35.4	51	26.2	3	1.5	4	2.1	195	100

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 4 shows the co-relationship between the number of children in the household and their sex. It shows that all respondents who had 9-12 children had only female children. Among those who had 5-8 children, 71.1% had only female children, while 28.9% had only male children. For those who had 1- 4 children, 60.5% had both male and female children, while 39.5% had only male children.

Table 4: No of Children and Sex of Children

No of Children	Children								Total	
	No child		Both male and female		Only male		Only female			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	24	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	100
1-4	0	0	72	60.5	47	39.5	0	0	119	100
5-8	0	0	0	0	13	28.9	32	71.1	45	100
9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	100	7	100
Total	24	12.3	72	36.9	60	30.8	39	20	195	100

Source: Researcher’s Survey (2016)

Table 5 shows the co-relationship between the number of children and income of the respondents. All the respondents who had 9 - 12 children were high income earners. Out of those who had 5 - 8 children, 51.1% were medium income earners, while 48.9% were high income earners. Of those who had 1- 4 children, 51.3% were medium income earners, while 48.7% were low income earners. Lastly, all the respondents who had no child were low income earners.

Table 5: No of Children and Income

No of Children	income						Total	
	low		medium		high			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	24	100	0	0	0	0	24	100
1-4	58	48.7	61	51.3	0	0	119	100
5-8	0	0	23	51.1	22	48.9	45	100
9-12	0	0	0	0	7	100	7	100
Total	82	42.1	84	43.1	29	14.9	195	100

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 6 shows the co-relationship between the respondents' number of children and educational qualification. All respondents who had 9 - 12 children had attained higher education. Of those who had 5 - 8 children, 84.4% had attained higher education, while 15.6% had attained secondary education. Out of those who had 1 - 4 children, 59.7% had attained primary education; 37.8% had attained secondary education, while 2.5% had no formal education. Lastly, all respondents who had no children were illiterates.

Table 6: No of children and Education

No of Children	Education								Total	
	no formal education		primary		secondary		higher			
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
0	24	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	24	100
1-4	3	2.5	71	59.7	45	37.8	0	0	119	100

5-8	0	0	0	0	7	15.6	38	84.4	45	100
9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	100	7	100
Total	27	13.8	71	36.4	52	26.7	45	23.1	195	100

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 7 shows the co-relationship between the respondents' number of children and their gender preference. The table unveils that among those who had 9 - 12 children, 71.4% had preference for any gender, while 28.6% had preference for the male child. Of those who had 5 - 8 children, 73.3% preferred any gender, 17.8% had preference for female child, while 8.9% had preference for a male child. As for those who had 1 - 4 children, 83.2% had preference for a male child, 8.4% had preference for a female child, while another 8.4% had preference for any gender.

Table 7: No. of Children and Child Gender Preference

No of Children	Gender						Total	
	male		female		any one		No	%
	No	%	No	%	No	%		
0	24	100	0	0	0	0	24	100
1-4	99	83.2	10	8.4	10	8.4	119	100
5-8	4	8.9	8	17.8	33	73.3	45	100
9-12	2	28.6	0	0	5	71.4	7	100
Total	129	66.2	18	9.2	48	24.6	195	100

Source: Researcher's Survey (2016)

Table 8 shows the output of the cross-tabulation of the two variables (education and gender preference). The chi-square value of the relationship is 105.945^a, the degree of freedom is 6, while the P = 0.000. The contingency coefficient is 0.593. $X^2=105.945^a$ d.f. =6, P = 0.000, C= 0.593.

Table 8: Education and Child Gender Preference

Education	Gender Preference					
	Male		Female		Any one	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
No formal education	26	96.3	0	0	1	3.7
Primary	63	88.7	4	5.6	4	5.6
Secondary	34	65.4	10	19	8	15.4
Higher	6	13.3	4	8.8	35	77.8
Total	129	66.2	18	9.2	48	24.6

Table 9 shows the output of the cross-tabulation of the two variables (income and gender preference). The chi-square value of the relationship is 69.600^a, the degree of freedom is 4, while the P = 0.000. The contingency coefficient is 0.513.

Table 9: Income and Child Gender Preference

Income	Gender Preference					
	Male		Female		Anyone	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Low Income	73	89	4	4.9	5	6.1
Medium income	52	61.9	12	14.3	20	23.8
High income	4	13.8	2	6.9	23	79.3
Total	129	66.2	18	9.2	48	24.6
$X^2=69.600^a$						

d.f. =4, P = 0.000, C= 0.513						
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Discussion of Findings

This study seems to reveal that the sex of the respondents affects their child gender preference. For instance, 72.7% of the female respondents, as against 59.4% of the male, had preference for a male child. Also, it seems that the sex of the child affects the number of children the respondents had. For instance, all the respondents with 9 - 12 children had only female children. This finding is in line with what was discovered by Agbor (2011). He found that in Calabar, Nigeria having more female than male children leads to an increase in the family size as people kept giving birth hoping that they would eventually have a male child to satisfy their desire to have sons rather than daughters.

This study seems to indicate that a higher number of high income earners were more likely to prefer a larger family size of five children and above than the low income earners. This is contrary to what was discovered by Agbor (2013). He reported that respondents with lower income were more likely to have large family size compared to their counterparts with higher income. Also, we were taken aback by the finding on education and family size. We found that those with higher educational qualification were more likely to have large family size. This is contrary to the findings of most studies on education and family size. For example, Agbor (2013) discovered that the level of educational attainment was found to have an inverse relationship with large family size as respondents with higher educational attainment were more likely to have smaller family size as compared to respondents with no formal and primary education.

Furthermore, the relationship between level of education and gender preference for children was examined. The data reveal that the higher the educational qualification of the respondents, the lower the gender preference for the male child. For example, 96.3% of the respondents who had no formal education preferred a male child. This relationship is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between education and gender preference for children was rejected. Therefore, the study accepted the hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between education and gender preference. This finding is contrary to the work of Igwenagu (2013) who found no significant relationship

between parental education and gender preferences for children.

Lastly, we examined the relationship between income and gender preference for children. The data reveal that respondents who had low income were more likely to have preference for a male child when compared to respondents who were medium and high income earners. For example, 89% of respondents who were low income earners preferred to have a male child. This proportion was higher than that of those who were medium and high income earners; hence, the higher the income of the respondents, the lower the gender preference for sons. This relationship is statistically significant at $P < 0.05$. The null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between income and gender preference for children was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between income and gender preference for children. This finding corroborates the work of Agbor (2011) who discovered that gender preference for children is a function of parental income.

From our findings, it is established that education and income contribute significantly to the gender preferences for their children among the Igbos in Lagos West district of Lagos State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

With reference to our findings, and in order to eradicate the phenomenon of gender preference in our society we recommend that the Government of Nigeria at all levels should pursue with vigour poverty reduction and eradication programmes. Furthermore, the Government should focus on creating sustainable jobs for both the unemployed men and women in the country so that they can as well become responsible parents who will cater and cherish both their sons and daughters. There must be concerted efforts in ensuring that the standard of living of the citizenry is raised.

The government should intensify efforts on revalidating the Universal Basic Education (UBE) in a manner that will enable children of low income parents to have access to formal education at a critical formative stage of education delivery. This should be tuition-free at the primary, secondary and higher school levels.

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PERSISTENT GENDER INEQUITY IN ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY: IS THERE A GENDERED AGENDA?

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Abstract

The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically establish, on one hand, what explains and maintains gender inequity and, on the other hand, what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University. Secondary and primary data were used. The results were presented descriptively and analytically, supported by tables and simple statistics. Findings indicated that gender inequity in academic employment was not a gendered agenda but rather, it was influenced by the individual's social background; the trend and numbers of females and males who graduate; the institutional structures and environment; the mental models and stereotypes staff formulate about themselves and about the profession/titles; and the commitment of the institution to addressing gender inequity in academic employment. It was recommended that individuals, especially women need to prioritize their time for academic advancement by utilizing the existing opportunities at the University and participating in the work of University committees that address gender inequity. The University should regularly monitor and evaluate their committees' mandates, structures and policies with a view of improving their efficacy. The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist and persist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

Key words: Gender and academic tenure-ship; Family formation and academic employment gap; Gender inequity in academic employment

Background and Statement of the Problem

The Uganda Government is committed to gender equality and gender equity in all aspects of life. The Government has progressively enacted policies, programmes and interventions towards gender equality and gender equity. These policies and programmes are within the broader context and discussions of the international social development goals on gender

equality. The Uganda Constitution of 1995, as amended, mandates the government to realize gender equality and equal access of all people to opportunities in the political, economic and social sectors of society. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the line ministry charged with the responsibility of operationalizing the Uganda Gender Policy (UGP). The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) carries out the State's constitutional mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group persons on the grounds of sex, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, and to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them; and to provide for other related matters (The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007). To operationalize this function, all line ministries have gender desks to oversee the mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programmes in line with their mandate. In a situation characterized by resource inadequacies in the implementation of gender equality and equity, gender budgeting has been an integral part in the national budgeting processing. Sector budgets are approved by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on presentation of a certificate of gender compliance from the EOC. The Uganda Employment Act (2006) provides provisions for employment of some specific categories of persons, in particular, women, people with disability and children. Section 39 of the Employment Act (2006) provides for maternity leave, sick leave and paternity leave. In the education sector, programmes such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and affirmative action at admission to public institutions, including universities, are some of the special initiatives towards gender equality and gender equity. All these initiatives were intended to reduce the gender gap in access to education, a prerequisite for academic employment. At national level affirmative initiatives include enhancement of political representation of women in the Uganda Parliament, with a provision that 1/3 of the members have to be women, even though women constitute 52 per cent of the population (UBOS, 2014).

Makerere University was the first public institution in Uganda to embrace the affirmative action initiative in 1991, with the award of 1.5 points to high school girls with a view of making them more eligible for entry to various academic programmes of study at the Makerere University. The aim was to make Makerere University a gender responsive

institution in both the academic and administration sections. This initiative was enhanced by the establishment of the School of Women and Gender Studies in 1991 and the Gender Mainstreaming Department in 2001. The aim was to ensure that gender issues were an integral part in teaching, learning, research and outreach as well as in influencing public policy and administration. It is now over two decades since the gender agenda was fast tracked. In 2016 Makerere University graduated a total of 14,193 students, 64 of whom were doctoral students. Female enrolment hit the 44 per cent mark in the same year (Makerere University Fact Book, 2015). The numbers of women graduating with PhDs, including the tenured and non-tenure track in higher education, have been steadily rising. The above notwithstanding, gender inequities in academic employment still persist, with women still underrepresented in many departments and colleges (Makerere University, Fact book, 2015). There doesn't seem to be any sign that the gender inequity gap in employment and, especially in academia, is about to close in the near future. Therefore, the state and perceptions of staff towards gender inequity in academic employment; what explains gender inequity; and what maintains the gender inequity gap need to be investigated so as to provide evidence-based knowledge to address gender inequity.

Literature Review on Gender Inequity in Academic Employment

Traditionally the work of faculty members of universities consists of teaching, research and scholarship, and various forms of community service (UBOS, 2014; Makerere University Fact Book, 2015; Knapp, et al., 2011). Note that women make up the majority of students in American colleges and universities. The increase in the proportion of degrees earned by women has been especially dramatic, from only 3 per cent in 1960-61 to a projected 51 per cent in 2011 (Misra et. al., 2011). The shift to a predominantly female student body has been dramatic and yet by and large, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.

Misra et. al. (2011) further observed the disproportionate time the male and female academic staff spent in teaching and service and noted that this was a significant obstacle for women associate professors to attain full professorial rank. It was observed that although associate

professors of both sexes taught lectures for a similar amount of time (four to six hours a week), the distribution of work tasks varied considerably. Men spent seven and a half hours more a week on their research than women did. Curtis (2010) points out that faculty members employed full time already represented a somewhat privileged category with a significant gap between women and men being observed in favour of men. The same trend was observed for faculty members employed part time. Although the proportion of full-time faculty members with non-tenure-track appointments had steadily increased, the proportion of women in that contingent situation remained larger and the gap was not closing. As more faculty members were appointed to non-tenure-track positions, the proportion of tenured women faculty was smaller. The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) confirmed that women were less likely to be promoted than men, and when they were promoted, the process took much longer time. Progression to the level of full professor remained an elusive goal for women. Women faculty members spent a greater proportion of their time on teaching at undergraduate level and student mentoring than men did. They spent more time on service, either as members of departmental or institutional committees or with outside organizations (Porter, 2007; Bradburn and Sikora, 2002; Toutkoushian and Bellas, 1999; Park, 1996; Blackburn, et al., 1991).

Mason and Marc (2004) analysed the life trajectories of PhD recipients, including their decisions about marriage and fertility. It was found that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. Only one in three women who took a fast-track university job before having a child ever became a mother. Women who achieved tenure were more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to be single twelve years after earning their PhD. Women who were married when they began their faculty careers were much more likely than men in the same position to become divorced or separated from their spouses. It was noted that women could not simply have it all: both tenure and a family.

Cobb-Clark, (1999) observed that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers of ages 18 – 25years. The gender differences in experience were most prominent among men and women aged 26 – 39 years, suggesting that these differences arose mainly during the child bearing years. Mason and Goulden (2004) referred to this as the baby gap. Women aged between thirty and fifty who have children clock over a hundred hours each week on care giving, housework, and professional responsibilities as compared to a little more than

eighty-five hours for men with children. It was further noted that women changed their family formation patterns to pursue the elusive goal of equality in the workplace. Women aiming for high positions in the professional, corporate, and academic worlds did not get married nor did they have children in their early twenties the way their mothers, who had no similar ambitions, did. It was noted that the culture had shifted to a delay mode, where a good climb up the career ladder was considered the prudent preface to starting families. While focusing only on professional outcomes as the measure of gender equality, we fail to recognize the widening gap between men and women in forming their families as measured by marriage and children. Gender equity measures should consider not only how many women were professors and deans relative to their male counterparts; but to ask how many women with children were in high places compared to men with children. This kind of evidence could reveal that women have much further to go than men do.

Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007), argued that while many men provide care to family members, women often handle the larger part of family responsibilities, implying that policies which offer flexible work arrangements are important for attracting and supporting female faculty (<http://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work>). It was noted that many faculty members sacrifice time with family to demonstrate that they are committed to their work. A number of female graduate students affirmed that they would not become faculty members because they did not see how they could combine work and family in a way that was reasonable for them and their families. It was pointed out that achieving gender equity in terms of careers and families in the academy requires restructuring of the workplace. Structural changes ought to be put in place to tackle some of the greatest obstacles to success for women, preferably during the probationary period. These changes include but are not limited to stopping the tenure clock for childbirth. Childbirth needs generously modified duties and on-the-site child care. It was observed that passive and active resistance on the part of men and women pose a serious roadblock to cultural change. It was noted that the average age of obtaining a PhD degree is 33 years, placing the tenure year at age 40. Women were more likely to receive the PhD at a slightly older median age, that is, at 34.1 years as compared to 32.8 years for men. This period of intensive work to establish academic career coincided with prime child-rearing years. Because women were more likely to carry the burden of child-rearing duties, they were often forced to make a choice between an all – time consuming professional career or having children - a choice men were unlikely to be forced to have to make.

The Mapping Project Survey conducted by Professor Robert Drago and colleagues at Penn State University emphasized that work/family problems among faculty arise partly from "bias avoidance" behaviour on the part of faculty members that leads them to avoid family commitments they would otherwise make, fail to fulfil family commitments, or spend time on strategies to hide parenthood and care-giving from others at work. This was more likely to be common in men as compared to women (<https://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work>). From the literature cited, it appears that the most significant predators of gender inequity are time, family formation, the individual her/himself, the institution gender equality stance and the 'gap'.

Theoretical Framework

Gregory Mankiw (2007) explains the concept of scarcity as the state when there are not enough resources available to satisfy everyone's wants in terms of income, time, and leisure among other resources. In terms of academic growth, these resources are essential for aspiring academics to make a break through to tenure-ship. It is argued that one can never have it all, hence the concept of opportunity cost – the alternative foregone because of that resource being deployed elsewhere, meaning that resources that are deployed for one activity are simply not available for other activities. Williams (2010) and Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics, put it blatantly that there is nothing such as free lunch, pointing to the issues of sacrifice.

The application of the opportunity cost to this study is that time is a critical resource with many competing demands on it such as the academic development and family formation, where gender roles, more particularly, reproductive, community and productive are different for men and women. One has to weigh the costs and benefits of allocating time to the various productive and reproductive alternatives and take on the "best alternative". One has to make rational choices to make the best use of resources between competing needs by allocating them where they bring maximum benefits. Williams (2010) notes in one study that women who took one year off work sacrificed 20% of their lifetime earnings, while women who took two or three years off sacrificed 30%. Friedman, Rimsky and Johnson, (1996) point out that an organization may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this is subject to the demand to maximize organizational efficiency that may be at odds with gender equity

initiatives. While this could be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, it is highly unlikely in a private institution. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staff who were less encumbered by their family issues. Williams (2010) discusses the masculine culture in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs and observes basic patterns of gender bias. First, the “maternal wall”— a bias that prevents women from getting jobs as well as keeping jobs once they got a child. Second, the “prove it again!” problem — women finding that they have to work twice as hard to prove that they are as competent as their male co-workers. Women are expected to act with traditional masculine characteristics to gain respect but at the same time to maintain feminine characteristics so as not to be perceived as too macho.

In light of the above, the theoretical framework has been guided by the concepts of scarcity, rationality, choice theory and opportunity cost as regards individuals and the theory of efficiency with regard to institutions and institutional structures. These seem to work in favour of masculine structures with organizational rules and regulations that emphasize productivity, efficiency and achievement with less regard to individual difference and how these differences are catered for within the organizational environment.

Methodology

This was a case study of Makerere University. Both primary and time series secondary data on academic staff were used. Secondary data was obtained from the Makerere University Fact Books. The secondary data set runs from 2008 when data about the University academic staff became available in a gender disaggregated form on key performance indicators in line with the mandate of the University, that is, teaching, learning, research and outreach.

Primary data was sought from male and female academic staff through interviews and a structured questionnaire. Respondents were from different colleges of the University, including the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, (CHUSS), the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES), the College of Computing and Information Sciences (COCIS), the University Library, the College of Health Sciences (CHS), the College of Education and External Studies, and the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-Security (COVAB). The questionnaire was completed by willing respondents, both female and male academic staff. Accordingly, data was analysed by objectives using MS Excel software, estimating simple line graphs and simple statistics. The descriptive approach added a deeper understanding of the results.

Sixty four (64) academic staff completed the questionnaire, including 35 male and 29 female staff. Of those, 49 both male and female were married and only one reported to be single while the rest did not respond to this question. The minimum qualification for first recruitment in academic tenure ship was a master's degree and the entry point in that academic structure was assistant lecturer. The sample included staffs that held at least a master's degree or PhD. Academic staffs that matched these criteria were randomly selected depending on their willingness to participate.

Findings

Social Background and its Effect on Academic Tenure-ship

The social background of the academic staff revealed that the male respondent's age ranged from 29 to 66 years, while that of female respondents ranged from 32 to 61 years of age. Fifty one (51) respondents were married and ten (10) were single. Thirteen out of 29 female academic staff got their first children before they graduated, implying that they were already encumbered with family issues before they were graduated and tenured. The age difference between the time when the female staffs got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (-28 years).

Only eight out of 29 of the female staff had their first born children when they were already tenured. The lowest number of dependants in female staff households was 2 people. This was observed in two out of the 29 households. For the male academic staff, the age difference between when they got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (-25 years). Eleven out of 35 male academic staff got their first children before they gained their highest qualifications, a smaller percentage compared to the female academic staff. It was observed that less male than female staff got encumbered with family issues way before they were tenured than their female counter part.

The biggest household size for both male and female academic staff was 10 people including the biological and other dependants. The smallest household size was one individual and it was observed in three out of 35 male households. The results implied female households carried a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts and therefore female staff had a heavier burden in terms of support. It also indicated that the female staffs indulge in family issues earlier than the male.

Figure 1 shows the trend of students who graduate with PhD and Master’s programmes at Makerere University by year from 2008 to 2016.

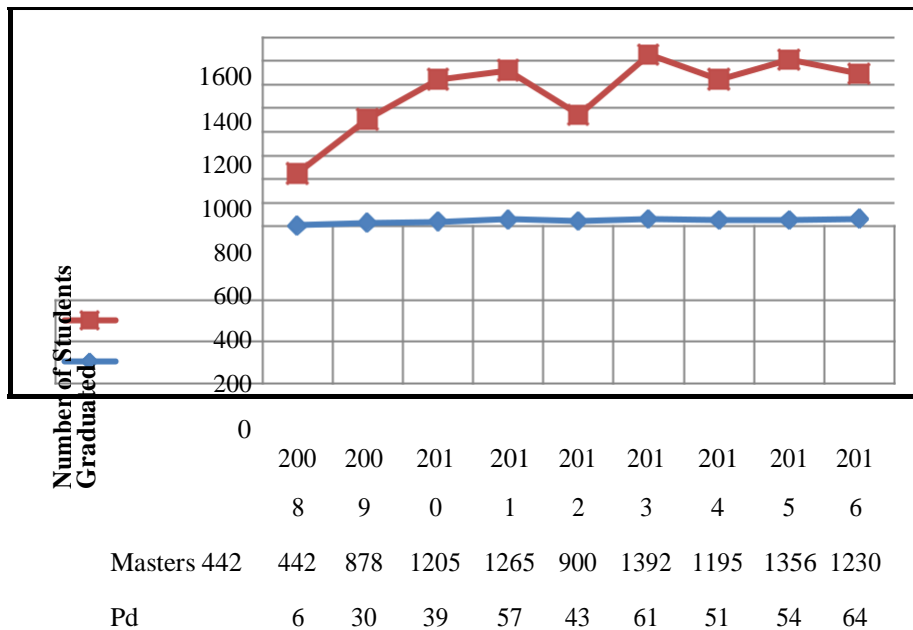


Figure 1 Trend of Students Graduated by Level and Year of Graduation.

Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

The graduate trend for Master’s level graduates steadily rose from 442 in 2008 to 1265 in 2011 before it dipped to 900 in 2012 and peaked off at 1392 in 2013 when it took a downward trend. The PhD gradation figures over the period show a low growth trend, rising from 6 PhDs in 2008 to 64 PhDs in 2016. One must have a PhD qualification to qualify for tenure-ship as a lecturer. It was observed that Makerere University graduated more master’s students than doctoral student.

Trends and Number of Male and Female Full-time Academic Staff by Year at Makerere University

Figure 2 shows that the trends of male and female fulltime academic staff by numbers and year. In general, the male statistics increased from 993 in 2008 to 1044 in 2016, representing an increase of male staff by 51. The female trend remained almost static from 369 in 2008 falling to 312 in 2009 and picking up in 2010 at 342 until 2015 when it peaked at 400 before it dropped to 388 the following year. This is an increase of 19 staff for the females during the same period.

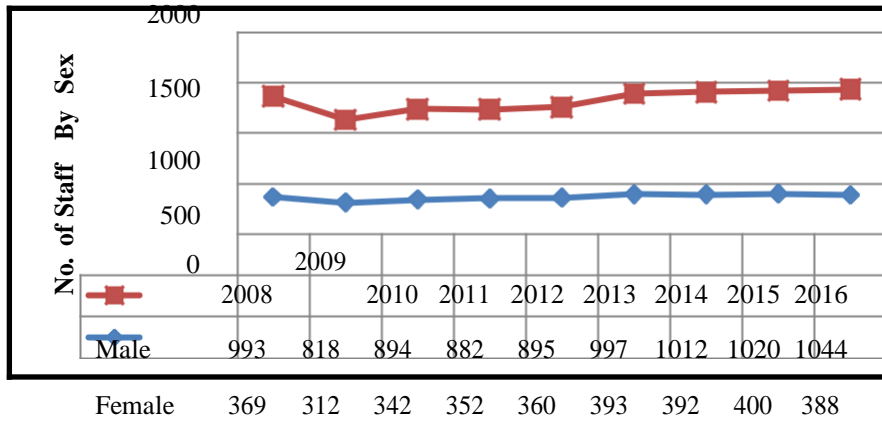


Figure 2 Trend of Full time Academic Staff by Gender and Year

Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

Trend of Graduation of Staff by Sex and Percentage of Female and Senior Academic Staff

Figure 3 shows total male and female academic staff, percentage of female and senior academic staff by year at Makerere University.

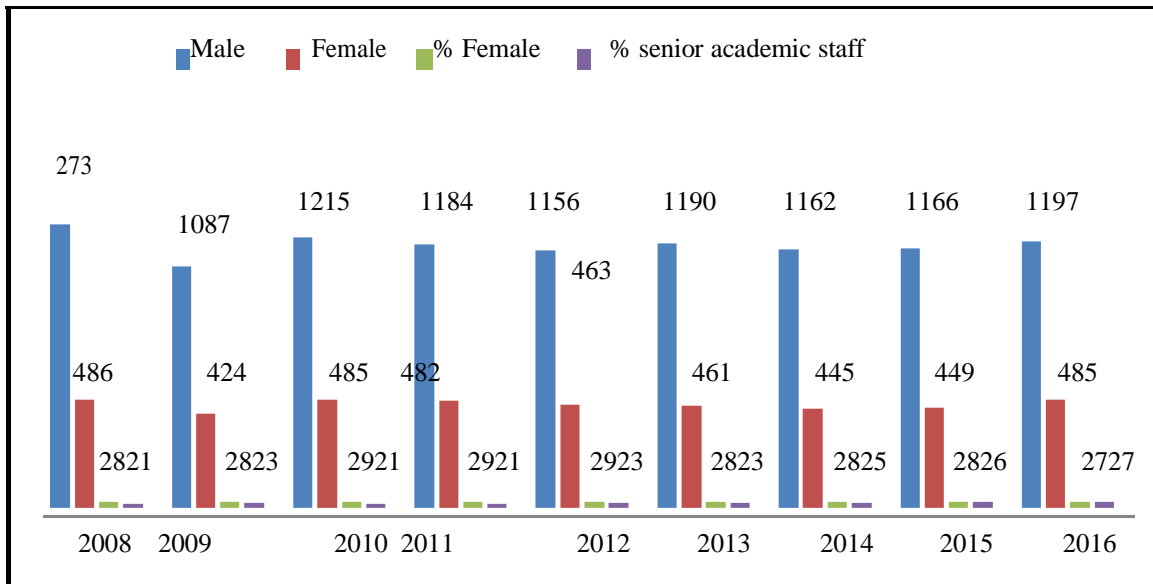


Figure 3 Trend of Total Male and Female Academic Staff, Percentage of female and senior academic staff by Year.

Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

The percentage of female academic staff to total academic staff ranged between 27 and 29 per cent during the period 2008-2016. This was less than 1/3 of the academe at the University. The percentage of senior female academic staff to senior academic staff showed a similar trend. Senior academic staff at Makerere University constituted the professors, associate professors, senior lecturers and lecturers. This was a dismal performance on the part of female academic staff.

Working Environmental Factors that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University

Table 1 shows the results of the academic staff perceptions of the working environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, and sex by level of significance. From this table the following attributes significantly point out to gender inequity in academic employment: the existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than women; the age at which staff gain access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study; the teaching load for both male and female staff; the existence of more male role models than female role models; a lower number of females seeking academic tenure ship. The results further indicate the family formation by academics before being tenured in academic service; the nurturing nature of women compared to men; the independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men compared to women; gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice were insignificant pointers to gender inequity in academic employment.

Table 1: Environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere university

Attributes Tested	No. of Respondent	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than females	61	35	26	10	9	15	7			4	8	
The age staff access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study is the same for male and female staff.	59	34	25	7	6	13	3	3	5	5	1	7	8	Significant
The teaching load for both male and female staff is the same.	62	36	26	13	5	16	12	1	1	1	5	4	4	Significant
There are more male role models than female role models.	62	36	26	5	6	15	12	6	2	4	1	5	6	Significant

There are fewer females seeking academic tenure ship.	62	35	27	1	5	10	7	4	1	6	5	14	7	Indeterminate
There are enough female role models in academic tenure ship.	58	33	25	1	2	7	5	8	2	5	4	14	10	Significant
Female engagement in family formation by academic before being tenured in academic service.	60	35	25	0	2	3	1	12	3	12	10	6	8	Insignificant
The nurturing nature of women compared to men.	60	34	26	1	5	7	9	8	7	8	3	11	2	Insignificant
The independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men.	61	34	27	1	4	5	7	8	2	9	4	13	9	Insignificant
Gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice.	63	35	28		3	1	6	9	3	17	5	9	9	Insignificant
Gender inequity in academic employment as a male agenda	63	35	28	2	3	4	13	8	2	14	2	7	6	Indeterminate

However, the fact that there were fewer women seeking academic employment and gender inequity in academic employment being a male agenda were indeterminate. This implied that individual based factors disadvantage women compared to men some of them very difficult to explain without considering the family in the background.

Factors that Maintain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment from an Institutional Viewpoint

Table 2 shows the result of the academic staff perceptions of the factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, sex and level of significance from the institutional point of view.

Table 2: Factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment from an Institutional Viewpoint

Attributes Tested	No. of Resp.	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Universities preference to employ male to female academic staff.	64	37	27	2	5	6	5	10	5	9	4	7	8	Indeterminate
Cost of Employing Female compared to male academic staff was high.	64	35	29	5	4	17	17	7	0	2	3	3	3	Significant
Cost of employing male compared to female academic														Significant

staff is not different.	64	37	27	1	1	2	2	7	5	10	9	17	8	
Existence of deliberate Gender efforts at the Makerere University.	63	36	27	3	0	6	8	12	8	5	4	8	6	Indeterminate
Existence of deliberate Gender Equity measures and guideline at the Makerere University.	64	37	27	7	1	13	14	9	6	2	1	6	1	Significant
Implementation of Gender Equity Regulations	64	37	27	3	3	7	5	12	9	9	4	7	4	Indeterminate
Female representation at university top management is observed.	62	35	27	4	1	7	5	10	4	7	6	10	8	Significant
Absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board / committees.	63	35	28	4	2	17	11	11	6	1	3	2	5	Significant
Commitment of University Management towards Gender Responsive Recruitment.	64	37	27	4	0	14	11	13	6	2		3	7	Significant
Need for more affirmative action towards gender inequity.	63	36	27	13	15	16	10	4	0	1	1	2	0	Significant
Implementation of affirmative action in academic employment.	63	37	26	3	1	10	4	12	2	3	6	9	13	Indeterminate
Existence of a female friendly academic environment at the University.	64	36	28	2	1	7	3	8	2	7	1	11	9	Significant
Support for a policy of optional delayed retirement for women.	63	35	28	7	11	9	10	6	2	4	2	7	2	Significant

The institutionally based perceptions that significantly maintain gender inequity in academic employment included: high cost of employing female staff; existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guideline; female representation at top management; absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board/committees; inadequate commitment of University management towards gender responsive recruitment; lack of more affirmative action towards gender inequity; absence of a female friendly environment at the University; support for a policy of optional delayed retirement for women. One could deduce that institutionally based factors were significant pointers to gender inequity, highlighting the lukewarm nature of the institution towards gender

mainstream or policy evaporation. On the other hand, the university preference to employing male compared to female academic staff; existence of deliberate gender efforts at the Makerere University; implementation of gender equity regulations were indeterminate in explaining the persistent gender inequity. This could be interpreted as a lukewarm attitude/reception of the institution towards implementing the gender agenda, and that gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

Individually Based Perceptions that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University

Table 3 shows the individually based perceptions of the factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University from an institutional point of view, by attribute, sex and level of significance.

Table 3: Individual perceptions of factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere university

Attributes Tested	No of Resp	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Women prefer to have children first before they embark on academic career	63	34	29	3	6	12	11	6	2	4	3	9	8	Significant
Men prefer to have children first before they embark on academic career	62	34	28	1	4	3	3	9	7	9	4	10	13	Insignificant
Men try to avoid family issues before they are tenured in employment	60	32	28	7	6	9	6	5	7	8	1	4	7	Significant
Women try to avoid family issues before they are tenured in employment.	61	33	28	0	4	10	4	5	3	6	10	11	7	Insignificant
It is prudent for women to embark on academic career before they get families.	61	33	28	10	7	11	14	5	2	5	1	2	5	Significant
Family commitments hinder one's ability to do research.	63	34	29	5	13	18	11	2	1	5	2	4	2	Significant
The title "Professor" is more represented by men than women	61	34	27	7	15	13	5	5	1	4	2	6	4	Significant
Conflict amongst women is responsible for the gender inequity.	62	34	28	1	1	6	7	9	5	5	5	14	10	Insignificant
Women are irrational in decision making	61	34	27	2	2	3	3	5	3	13	12	10	7	Insignificant

Men make more rational decisions than women in academia	62	34	28	2	5	4	3	6	3	11	9	11	7	Insignificant
It is all about self-created virtual walls by the female staff	61	33	28	3	1	7	7	10	1	6	10	6	9	Insignificant

From Table 3 the following individual perceptions were significant in explaining gender inequity at Makerere University: women’s preference to have children first before they embarked on an academic career; men’s avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment. It was prudent for women to embark on an academic career before they got families. Family commitments hinder a woman’s ability to do research as an important factor in academic engagement and the individual perception that the title “Professor” was more represented by men than women models. On the other hand, individual based perception including men’s preference to have children first before they embark on academic career; women avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment; conflict amongst women; the perception that women were irrational in decision making and men were more rational decisions than women; and the perception that it was all about one’s choice were insignificant. This meant the family related factors, mental models of one’s self and of the job titles explained gender inequity in academic employment but these factors.

Discussion of Results

This study investigated the gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University, Uganda. It aimed to establish if gender inequity in academic employment was a gendered agenda. It investigated the effect of individual, working environment and institutional based perceptions and how they impacted on gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University. The general result indicated that individual based factors disadvantage women more compared to men. Some of these factors are very difficult to explain without knowing the family background. There was a lukewarm attitude/reception towards implementing the gender agenda and gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

Household characteristics revealed that on average, female households have a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts. This puts more stress on female as compared to

male staff. Female staffs have to handle family formation issues earlier than their male counterparts. Women graduate at the age of between 23 - 27 years which is the female prime reproductive age. This could explain their late entry into academic tenure-ship. This result concurred with what Mason and Goulden (2004) called the baby gap, and Cobb-Clark's (1999) observation that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers aged 18–25years. Cobb-Clark contends that the baby gap predisposes women to family responsibility before they were tenured in any employment, robbing them of time for academic development. Misra et. al. (2011) posit that family responsibility and academic career growth compete for time that would otherwise be for academic development and hence tenure-ship. This could explain the gender inequity in academic employment.

The results further showed that the teaching load for female and male academic staff was not different but women spend more time on other services at the university while men spend more time on research. This finding concurs with the argument of Misra et. al. (2011) that the disproportionate time male and female staff spent in teaching and service was a significant obstacle for women associate professors and therefore a predator to tenure-ship of female staff. Mason and Marc (2004) acknowledge this in a related argument that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. This implies that Makerere University did not recognize the gender differential responsibilities of staff when allotting the teaching load. The opportunity cost of this was a slow academic growth of women and their tenure-ship, a result that was similar to the findings of other scholars including Bradburn and Sikora, (2002); Toutkoushian and Bellas, (1999); Park, (1996); Blackburn, et al., (1991). These scholars underscored the significance of the family and balancing of time among the three basic components of faculty tasks: teaching, research and services to community and family as predators to academic tenure-ship.

Evidence showed that there are fewer female senior academic staff as compared to the male staff at Makerere University. In addition, although there is a very slow growth of PhD graduates from Makerere University, the female rate of growth was far lower than that of the male academe. The slow growth rate of PhD graduates and the small number of females compared to the male academic staff was likely to be a recipe for gender inequity in academic employment as this provided small space for recruitment. These results concur with the observation by Knapp, et al., (2011) that although by 2011 women were in the

majority of students in American colleges and universities, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.

At Makerere University this is reinforced by fewer women seeking academic employment, a factor that could explain gender inequity against females. These fewer numbers of females seeking academic tenure-ship was likely to translate into less female representation on strategic committees. These small numbers of females on the strategic committees is likely to lead to an inability of the female staff to push the gender inequity agenda, for instance to ensure that women will receive the 40% proportion of opportunities for women's slots when awarding grants for academic development and/or advocate for an even higher proportion. This is in agreement with what The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) posited, that is, that women are less likely to be promoted than men, and when they are promoted, the process takes longer, probably due to their age when they qualify. By that age they are likely to be competing with young and energetic men and hence less likely to get tenure-ship. Besides, the big numbers of junior male academic staff employed on contract as mentees, which is unlikely for female academic staff, puts them in a position to take advantage of any opportunity before the opportunities are advertised.

The cost of employing female staff was perceived to be higher than that of male staff. This could be attributed to the intermittent breaks women may from time to time demand such as maternity leave, caring for their families and any other social roles they may need to perform which will force the institution to incur extra costs for temporary staff when female academics are away. This appears to rhyme with Rinsky and Johnson's (1996) position that organizations may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this may not be possible since the organization needs to maximize its organizational efficiency and functions that may be at odds with gender equity initiatives. It is observed that this could only be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, unlike in private institutions. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staffs who are less encumbered by their family issues.

Staff observed that the existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guidelines at the Makerere University was in itself a pointer for gender inequity in academic employment. A case in point was the practice that when the female staff constituency failed to raise the

required number of candidates to take up the 40% proportion of funds for academic development, the female slot was given away to the male candidate, but the reverse was not true when there were more females vying for other positions, they were not compensated. However, the result that gender inequity was a male agenda was indeterminate. The male academic staff took advantage of their numbers on strategic committees of the University. Men were better represented on most committees of the University, except for the Gender Mainstreaming Committee. Men use their numbers to participate in policy development and implementation, and award themselves grants for research for PhD training, flouting policy and regulations in their favour. Through policies and regulations, male staff was likely to push their masculine agenda in academic employment although not directly. This was contrary to the argument held by Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007) that the rationale for policies pertaining to work arrangements was that recruitment, retention, and succession of women was enhanced when formal policies accommodate both personal and professional responsibilities.

Results showed no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of competitiveness, ambition and independence of mind when it comes to academic ability. This suggests that gender inequity in academic employment lies in other factors. Nurturing was neither a significant predator of gender inequity suggesting that both men and women could play the nurturing role. Besides, there was no conclusive evidence that implementation of the gender equity measure was a predator to gender inequity in academic employment; rather it was observed that the gender mainstreaming committee's activities were lukewarm about implementing the gender policies and guidelines for gender equity. Establishing the status of gender policies and guidelines and their effectiveness in both academic and administrative functions was rarely done and when it was, rarely was any feedback given. Female academic staffs are not fairly represented at top management committees, suggesting the lack of commitment and moral will of University management to guide the process towards gender equity.

Results further showed that the Makerere University academic environment was not friendly to female academic employees as it prioritized academic excellence without providing a platform for an equally conducive social environment for academic excellence to thrive for both gender. This was reinforced by the evidence of mental models that individuals built

and the perception towards certain positions – the title “professor”, for example, is seen as a male image, highlighting the issues of stereotyping of positions in the employment structure. There was no evidence that conflict among women was a predator to gender inequity, neither was there evidence that men were more rational or competitive in decision making than women or that women were irrational in decision making. Lastly, and most importantly, there was evidence that both male and female academic staffs were supportive of a policy for delayed retirement of female academic staff. This could be a reflection that the University community is realising the benefit of gender equity within employment in general and academic employment in particular.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically establish what explains and maintains gender inequity and what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University in Uganda. Secondary and primary data were used. Analysis was descriptive and analytical with support of tables and simple statistics. The general finding was that the individual’s social background; the number of females who graduate with PhD degrees; institutional structures; and individual factors such as mental models and stereotypes that the staff formulate about themselves and about the profession as well as the institutional structures, environment and commitment to addressing gender inequity in academic employment were all pointers to gender inequity.

In light of the above, there is need for education and training to change the mind-set of individuals about the mental models and stereotypes about professions that are appropriate or inappropriate for women and to recognize that women and men are equal partners and are equally accountable for the gender inequity. Female staff should be proactive to adapt to masculine trends that govern academic tenure-ship by creating time for research, being more assertive and taking on opportunities on strategic committees when such opportunities come. Male staffs should encourage and support their spouses to upgrade themselves academically if the gender inequity gap at the work place and the academic tenure-ship is to close.

Affirmative action in recruitment policies should only be a temporary measure as more capacity for gender mainstreaming is built at secondary and primary schools. Female staff should create working teams, lobbying groups to put the gender agenda, mentor and support

fellow women to apply for available positions and engage the University on the gender equity agenda. From an institutional point of view, deliberate policy on equal 50/50 per cent female/ male employment should be pursued, implemented and frequently monitored and reviewed to assess progress. The University should encourage mentorship programmes for both men and women with a view to building the capacity of women to gain confidence and a belief that they are equally capable to take on different roles in both their academic areas and administration and proactively present themselves for career development opportunities as well as engage in policy making processes at the University. The University should create an enabling environment for equality for all, by providing facilities that encourage both men and women in family formation stages to progress academically. The University should adhere, implement and monitor the University gender policies and guidelines and listen to their feedback. Lastly, the University should consider reviewing the policy on retirement with a view to allow optional retirement for women, as these provide a critical mass of role models which other women can emulate. Beyond the University, The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

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GENDER CONCERNS ON CLIMATE RISKS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR LIVELIHOOD SUSTAINABILITY

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Abstract

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men, women, girls and boys, which vary over time and space. Climate risk, on the other hand, refers to the probability of harmful consequence or expected loss resulting from the interaction between natural - or human –induced climatic hazards and vulnerable conditions. Climatic risks such as droughts and floods have gender-related impacts with disproportionate effects on women on the basis of their gender roles within a household. Yet women’s indigenous knowledge and practice of environmental management have the potential to mitigate some of the adverse environmental impacts of climate change using innovations and adaptations embedded on their daily lives. Climate change would shift farms from high to low agro-ecological areas and would reduce crop net revenues, resulting in food insecurity and poverty with greater effects on women than on men. There is also high congruence between the occurrence of droughts and floods which create challenges of access to potable water and energy and consequently of epidemics which adversely affect women and livelihood systems. Understanding gender and climate risks could provide insights as to how to address some of these livelihood challenges as a step towards sustainable development. Literature gaps exist in information relating to gender, climate risks and livelihoods, with particular focus on women, as well as development strategies which recognize that women have different adaptive capacities to climate risks. This is a review paper, using secondary data and the discussion revolves around making climate risk reduction gender-responsive for livelihood sustainability. The role of women as change agents in climate risk reduction is underlined.

Keywords: *Gender, climate risks, women, environment, livelihoods*

Introduction

The paper commences with discussions on climate variability and climate change which lead to climate risks (Oluoko-Odingo et al, 2016; IPCC, 2014 and 2007, and Critchfield, 2004). Africa is highly vulnerable to climate risk which is manifested in a decline in agriculture, biodiversity and food security; water and energy resources; as well as in health, all of which have related effects on gender (IPCC, 2007). Despite the important role women play in environmental management and sustainability, women are predisposed to a higher number of climate risks than men (Mai, 2015). In the business-as-usual scenario, sustainable development

goals may be unattainable unless the various communities are able to spearhead adaptation within the existing developmental challenges on the continent (IPCC, 2014 and 2007).

Though women may control only a small proportion of decision-making policies and practices regarding environmental issues, their participation remains key in addressing social injustices, poverty, and knowledge exchange, while in the processes they ensure the sustainability of livelihood projects (Ihalainen, 2017; Pratiwi, 2016; Fisher and Mohun, 2015 and Mainlay and Tan, 2012). Regarding coping strategies, gender inequality in access to and control over resources and participation in decision-making place women and men in differentiated positions regarding their ability to respond, cope and adapt to climate risks (Butali and Oluoko-Odingo, 2018; Akoyoko, 2014 and Gurung, 2000).

This is a review paper using secondary data sources. Two main knowledge gaps: failure of strategies to recognize and ensure different adaptive capacities for women and men and gender concerns that should be addressed for gender equality and livelihood sustainability are highlighted. Fullan's (2001) Theory of Change and Human Resource Management Function has been applied (Butali and Oluoko-Odingo, 2018 and Ogunrin et al., 2010). The paper proposes a positive mitigation to climate risks in society and livelihood sustainability. Discussions highlight ways of enhancing gender-responsive development, the application of theories versus practice towards gender equality and the challenge of gender contours in gender equality and climate risk reduction. Conclusions are drawn on the basis of these discussions.

Climate Variability, Climate Change and Risks

Weather is the state of the atmosphere at a local level, in a short time-scale of minutes to months. The weather emphasizes the aspects of atmosphere that affect human activity (sunshine, wind, precipitation, rainfall, humidity and temperature). Accumulation over time of the changes form climate, that is, the long-term behaviour of the atmosphere in space and represented by weather information used to calculate daily, weekly and annual averages (Crutchfield, 1983). The annual fluctuations in the pattern of climate at any location around the long-term mean is referred to as climate variability. Climate change, on the other hand, is the permanent shift in the weather and climate patterns over a 30-year period at any given location (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) defines climate change as, *“a change in the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural variability observed over comparable periods”*. Detection as an attribution of climate variability and change is derived from the variation in space and time in the patterns of the climate indices defined from rainfall, temperature,

humidity, glacial retreat and expansion, winds as well as patterns of extremes, among others. Climate variability refers to commonly observed departures of everyday weather and climate from the usual experiences that are often manifested as droughts, severe storms (hailstorms and floods, among others), occurring naturally and annually. Research has shown that natural and anthropogenic climate change has occurred from environmental pollution (associated with greenhouse gas emissions) since the Industrial Revolution (IPCC, 2007).

Climate risk is the probability of harmful consequence or expected loss (deaths, injuries, property, livelihoods, economic activity disrupted or environmental damage) resulting from the interaction between natural or human-induced climatic hazards and vulnerable conditions (IPCC, 2007 and UN ISDR, 2006). The risks are associated with climatic variability and change (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016). Climate risks (floods, tropical cyclones, and droughts) devastate socio-economic developments with gendered impacts. Floods, which normally come after drought periods, lead to destruction of property, infrastructure, settlements; environmental degradation; migration of humans and animals as well as outbreak of diseases (mostly malaria and cholera). Climate risks will be a threat to all future developments due to vulnerability of the local communities, particularly women and their low adaptive capacity to climate change. African countries, being highly dependent on natural resources and agriculture for food, employment, incomes, revenues and exports, are highly vulnerable to climate risks. Besides, the assets and wealth of poor countries and communities are tied to natural resources and environmental assets while the agriculture is mostly rain-fed with nearly one-third of the continent is classified as drylands. There is existing water scarcity as well as inadequate safety nets. Some of the African governments are weak and poorly resourced and, therefore, the people would have to individually adapt to changes, on their own. As a result, climate risks impact biodiversity, water, energy resources, agriculture and food security as well as health, with related effects on gender (IPCC, 2007 and Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016). The climate risks discussed above affect women more than men as they form the majority of the poor, who depend on natural resources and agriculture and are responsible for sourcing water for their households.

Climate Risks and Gender Concerns

Gender refers to socially constructed roles and responsibilities of men, women, girls and boys, which vary over time and space. Gender equality refers to equal visibility, empowerment and participation of both sexes in all spheres of public and private life, while gender mainstreaming is the process of assessing implications for women of any planned action, including legislation,

policies and programmes in all areas and at all levels. Gender mainstreaming has been seen as an important tool to achieve gender equality (the opposite of gender inequality (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016 and Butali and Oluoko-Odingo, 2018).

Climate risks are global and mostly affect women in developing countries such as those in Africa as they have little capacity to defend themselves against climate risks (Mai, 2015). Some of the reasons for this vulnerability of women to climate risks include: illiteracy, low socio-economic skills, low income and livelihood opportunities, inadequate access to assets, social isolation, gender norms and discrimination, all of which can be improved by empowerment. Climatic risks such as droughts and floods have gender-related impacts with disproportionate effects on women on the basis of their gender roles within a household. Yet women's indigenous knowledge and practice of environmental management have the potential to mitigate some of the adverse impacts of climate change, using innovations and adaptations embedded in their daily lives (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016). Climate resilient strategies are needed that would assist women to adapt to new weather patterns or climate systems. For instance, climate change would shift farms from high to low agro-ecological areas and reduce crop net revenues, resulting on food insecurity and poverty with greater effects on women. There is also high congruence between the occurrence of droughts and floods which create challenges of access to potable water and energy and consequently of epidemics which adversely affect women and livelihood systems. For instance, in some pastoral communities women must walk even up to five kilometres a day to provide water for their families to wash themselves several times a day before prayers. In such circumstances, the women may compromise on their own personal hygiene to meet these obligations, which could degenerate into marriage-based gender discrimination and violence. The burden worsens with droughts which increase the distance that women walk every day to access water. During floods, most water sources are contaminated with storm water (characterized by human and animal waste, as well as agricultural wastes such as fertilizers and pesticides) as well as human solid waste, making households susceptible to waterborne diseases such as cholera and typhoid. Stagnant water may also contribute to the incidence of malaria. Similarly, deforestation and poverty has degraded the natural forests where rural communities access wood fuel. They now have to walk longer distances to access energy or balance the energy budget with food needs, thus negatively impacting on family health. Besides the challenge of global warming due to over use of wood fuel, low quality wood fuel continuously exposes women and girls to indoor air pollution, thus increasing the household health burden. Understanding gender and climate risks

could provide insight on how to address some of these challenges.

Gender concerns of climate risks could be caused by the fact that women constitute one-half of the human population and nearly 80 percent of the agricultural labour, yet about 70 percent of the 1.3 billion people living on less than one US Dollar a day are women. Women have, therefore, not benefited from agriculture over the years, a situation which could be attributable to gender inequalities in farming. Climate risks in agriculture are also gender-based, for instance, a person's access to land and farm inputs are partly determined by their gender (Mainlay and Tan, 2012). Besides providing labour, women play a critical role in the prevention and management of climate risks and related hazards, yet they experience and bear the greatest load of climate risks (Oluoko-Odingo, 2019 and Fisher and Mohun, 2015). The absence of women in decision-making regarding climate risks has contributed to exclusion or under-representation of their needs on climate risk reduction forums, part of the 'gender contours' discussed later in the paper. As a result, the development policies and programmes which recognize that women and men have different adaptive capacities are inadequately addressed. Furthermore, this dependence of women on natural resources, particularly on agriculture, makes them more vulnerable to climate risks, yet they have the least access to information and skills on how to manage impacts of climate risks. The situation is worsened by cultural, social, and economic policies and legal structures which often restrict women's ability to secure access to resources such as information on education, land, potable water, and health for their families. Such gender relations, when not managed properly, have potential for creating conflicts among households and communities, with those at the subordinate positions bearing the greatest burden (Oluoko-Odingo, 2019). Gender inequality in the context of climate risks can induce adverse changes in gender relations, while patriarchal societies limit women's voices in the formulation of laws and policies as they rely mainly on privileged members of the society and where only few women participate.

While in many societies women are mainly responsible for managing livelihoods in rural areas, climate risks (floods, droughts and access to and affordability of health facilities and services) continue to confine them to stay at home, thus further adversely affecting their livelihoods. In such scenarios, gender-biased climate action could lead to inequalities with a potential of undermining women's rights as well as the efficacy and sustainability of climate action (Pratiwi, 2016 and Ihalainen, 2017). Besides, some strategies applied in addressing climate risks, can perpetuate gender inequalities when not applied with gender-responsive principles (Fisher and Mohun, 2015).

Gender, Climate Risks and Women

There is a clear gender division of roles when dealing with climate risks. Men tend to continue as leaders or coordinators of activities and planning processes. Women contribute solutions while taking responsibility by caring for children and the elderly. Women also tend to spend more time at home, thus increasing the levels of daily social interaction as compared to men. Pratiwi (2016) views this as an important variable that can be seized on to strengthen a collective approach. But wouldn't this perpetuate gender inequalities in responsibilities? Women have a strong understanding of local environmental conditions and can be heard as key informants in discussing and addressing problems at village level. Gender, therefore, is an important analytical lens as it highlights the different ways that women and men manage risks, including those linked to climate, access opportunities and their implications of this differential access for reducing vulnerability to climate change.

Owing to the different gender roles within families, communities and societies, there are also differences in access to information, resources and networks, experiences, capacities and vulnerabilities that are affected differently by climate risks (Pratiwi, 2016 and Mainlay and Tan, 2012). Climate risks compel people to shift from their everyday busy life activities for adaptation and will worsen existing gender inequalities, particularly among women in such low-income communities as those in Africa (Fisher and Mohun, 2015). Climate change in Africa is expected to disproportionately affect communities as a result of increasing climate risks. Low levels of income among women make them unprepared to deal with climate risks. As social change agents, women play an important role in disaster management. Women have been able to organize themselves and others around livelihood issues and sustainable development, hence the need for policies and programmes that address climate risks to harness women's unique knowledge and ability to act as powerful agents of change.

Women constitute the majority of the poor and are more vulnerable to climate risks. They are more dependent on natural resources for securing their livelihoods through their responsibilities for family farming, water collection and biomass energy sourcing (Mainlay and Tan, 2012). Dealing with gender inequality requires more time and increases the workload of women to fulfil all their duties. Such burdens limit women's ability to challenge the status quo and further entrench their roles and responsibilities. Gender inequality, manifested as limited access to resources and information and exclusion from decision making, limits women's capacity to cope with increasing climate risks.

Sea-level rise, high temperatures, coastal flooding as well as long-term droughts are climate

risks that magnify the vulnerability of societies to climate change (Pratiwi 2016, and Mai, 2015). Climate risks are expected to impact and engender unique and threatened systems: substantial species extinction as well as large risks on global and regional food security, creating poverty in already deprived gender and societies. Gender inequality in education, livelihoods, culture and government policy affects the individual's adaptive capacity to climate risks, thus increasing vulnerability to climate change. As the majority of women work in the informal sector as traders and domestic workers, they are disproportionately affected by climate risks and their low earning reduces their capacity to adapt to climate change. Other impacts of climate risks and disasters are shown in table 1.

Table 1: Climate risk impacts on Women

No	Climate Risks	Impacts on Women
1	Increasing climate risks, marginal environmental conditions or climate risk adaptation interventions	More workload for women and Gender-based violence
2	Erosion of people's assets	Gender insecurity
3	Large scale climate-related disaster	Likelihood of death, loss of health and well-being, increase in gender-based violence, early marriage, family disintegration, increased child mortality, and loss of education

Source: Fisher and Mohun, 2015

Gender, Climate Risks, and Livelihood Sustainability

Most socio-economic systems, livelihoods and development in Africa rely on climate and as a result, climate risks and hazards pose a real threat to the continent (IPCC, 2007 and 2014). In such a scenario, sustainable development will only be possible by adaptive capacity of various communities to climate risks. The existing developmental challenges: ecosystem degradation, increasing disasters, conflicts, poverty, disease, limited access to capital markets, infrastructure and technology and other socio-economic constraints, among others, contribute to low adaptive capacity of the continent.

Africa is mainly characterized by arid and semi-arid conditions making the livestock sector the most important in supporting livelihoods (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016). Rain-fed farming is a challenge as climate change can reduce the amount of precipitation, shift the seasons and introduce new diseases, leading to reduced agricultural productivity, thereby compromising food security and livelihoods. Climate risks will aggravate water stress and contribute to resource degradation: energy, health, infrastructure, tourism, and industry, among other biophysical and socio-economic systems. Climate risks affect food availability and livelihoods, thus affecting the maternal and nutritional status of populations. Besides, climate change

influences disease causing vectors and parasites, with greater effect on women, children aged under five, the elderly and low-income groups, due to their biological and living conditions as well as their ability to afford medical services (Oluoko-Odingo et al., 2016).

In some communities men make nearly 80 percent of the decisions on the use of land, livestock and cash important for livelihood sustainability. They also have the upper hand in the ownership of these resources, thus perpetuating the continued confinement of women and girls to inferior roles in resource ownership and management, which leads to continuous gender-based violence, discrimination, inequality and under-development in different sectors. Conversely, a study carried out in peri-urban areas of Nairobi city indicated that women were beginning to own land for agriculture. They provide two-thirds of the labour and make decisions with their spouses on what to sell or consume (Oluoko-Odingo, 2019). This is a positive move towards gender equality that should be encouraged. The study also emphasized that the secret to attaining the sustainable development goals (SDGs) lies in embracing gender equality and the women empowerment goals which are at the intersection of almost all the other SDGs. As a result, gender mainstreaming in urban and peri-urban areas and enhancing women's ownership of land and other financial resources would not only reduce gender discrimination and gender-based violence in private and public spheres, but also nurture the leadership skills of women beyond the farm; protect young girls from early marriage and reduce their vulnerability to climate risks.

Women participation in livelihood programmes and projects is important in addressing social injustices and poverty faced by women as well as the sustainability of such projects. Involvement of women ensures sustainability of knowledge acquired with respect to livelihood systems management (Akoyoko 2014). Women also play a key role in supporting their households and communities in achieving food and nutrition security, generating incomes and improving rural livelihoods and overall well-being (Butali and Oluoko-Odingo 2018). Further, women control environmental resources that are of low monetary value and are freely available, while men dominate resources with high monetary value. Pressures from climate change, among other environmental challenges and large-scale interventions, have possibility of aggravating gender inequalities. Studies have shown that improved women participation in decision-making bodies contributes to the enhancement and sustainability of good governance (Butali and Oluoko-Odingo, 2018).

Coping Strategies

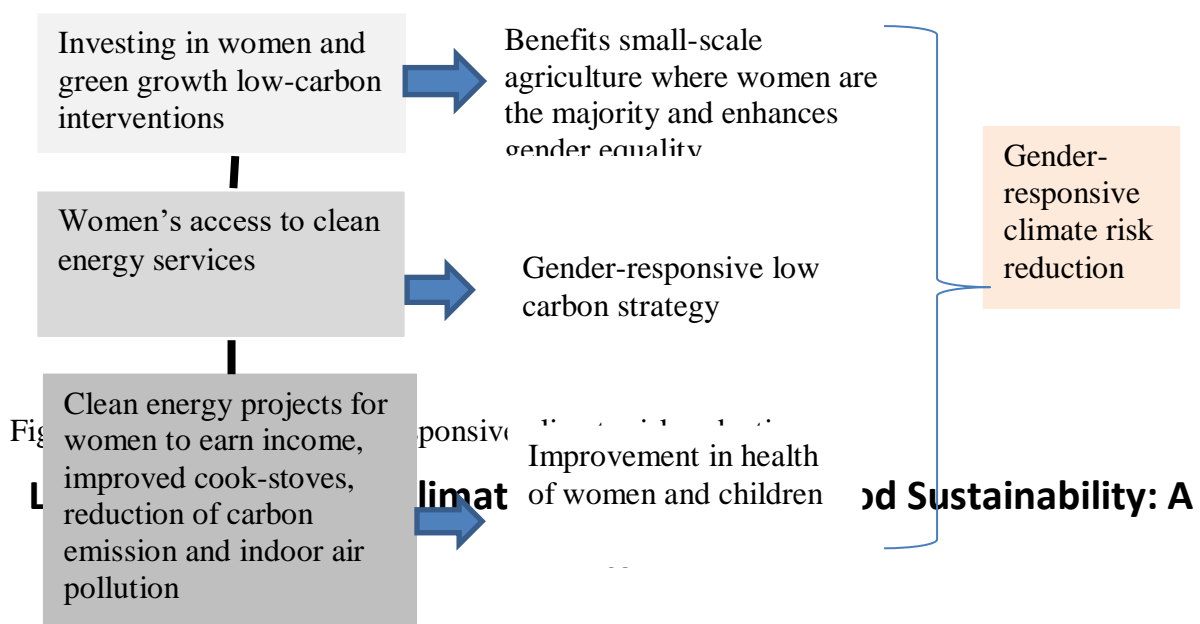
Gender is a key factor that shapes people's use of livelihood resources due to the following

reasons:

- i) Women and men do not have same rights to use and manage livelihood resources
- ii) Different gender roles between women and men lead to different priorities and benefits regarding the use of livelihood resources
- iii) Women and men have different realities, leading to variation in use of livelihood resources (Gurung et al., 2000).

Gender sensitivity is commonly understood as being mindful of gender differences. Not only does gender responsive climate action go beyond gender gaps in response to climate risks but it also helps to overcome historical gender biases. Some of the factors dictating women's response coping strategies and adaptive capacity to climate risks include: gender inequalities in access to and control over productive resources, division of productive and reproductive labour, and participation in decision-making. Intersecting social categories (ethnicity, class and age) worsen gender inequalities. As part of mitigation, it is important to make early warning information gender responsive due to variations in the use of climate and weather risk information. In small holder agriculture, additional opportunities would be created by tapping on women's knowledge and experience. Figure 1 shows the relationship between investing in women and gender responsive climate risk reduction.

Additional targeted programmes or interventions may be required to support climate risk reduction, thus the need to mainstream all gender concerns into climate action, health, and education (Fisher and Mohun, 2015). Increasing advocacy for the inclusion of gender justice in climate risk debates is also important (Kameri-Mbote, 2013).



Conceptual Framework

There are many theories regarding gender inequality (Krajewski, 2004) but few directly relate to livelihood resource management. According to Ogunrin et al (2010), two sets of theories on gender stratification are available: those that deal with the genesis of the phenomenon and those that elaborate on the mechanisms through which individuals acquire the beliefs and behavioural patterns that perpetuate gender stratification. The two sets of theories imply that gender inequality is either functional and should be continued or dysfunctional and should be stopped. Regarding climate risks, it is possible to borrow from Fullan's (2001) Theory of Change (Butali and Oluoko-Odingo, 2018). The theory proposes that for change to take place, it is important to focus on the human participants taking part in the change process, as a true change agent must build coalitions with other like-minded people within one's group and across all groups. Such a process demands working with polar opposites, dynamic interdependence of state accountability and local autonomy, contribution of individuals and societal agencies, internal connection with oneself and within one's organization, as well as external connection to others. As climate risk reduction engages people from diverse backgrounds and links global/international to local level activities, creating a web of interactions, gender-responsive climate risk reduction does not need to be isolated but should work within this web to bring results that are favourable to women and all other stakeholders. Fullan's theory can be supported by Ogunrin et al (2010) Human Resource Management (HRM) framework/function. According to this theory, HRM is personnel management, consisting of five elements:

- recruitment and selecting people for jobs;
- administration of reward systems;
- employee training and development;
- employee retention through administration of work place, safety, health and welfare policies; and
- industrial relations.

Ogunrin et al (2010) emphasize that gender-related discrimination is a thread that runs throughout the Human Resource Management function. This theory addresses the within problems of Fullan's (2001) theory: the conduct of stakeholders in spearheading change for climate risk reduction. The five elements are important in climate risks reduction as jobs range from informal work at local level, to executive categories at the higher echelons of power.

If the stakeholders continue to perpetuate stratification, discrimination and other gender biases,

this would sabotage the web at various levels, leading to flawed climate risk reduction, thus aggravating environmental degradation, creating more suffering for women and girls. Though debatable, it has been said that women who want to succeed to the top have to take the same route as men, that is, aim for higher positions, take risks and show their capability, among others (Luthans, 1992). Women must, therefore, aim at top positions where they can call the shots in climate risk reduction.

To achieve livelihood sustainability, positive mitigation to climate risks should be adopted. This calls for gender-responsive climate risk reduction whereby the needs of each gender in relation to climate risk is to examine and put in place gender-responsive strategies aiming to mitigate gender inequality within the organizational web and at all levels. Conversely, a negative adaptation can take place within the existing climate risks which will continue to perpetuate gender inequality and compromise livelihood sustainability, a detrimental situation for women and girls. It should be noted that urgent climate risk reduction measures are required to avert the adverse impacts of climate risks on the Biophysical and socio-economic and cultural/ human environment, manifested on dwindling prospects for agriculture and food security, challenges of human settlement and other land uses, loss of biodiversity, water scarcity, energy insecurity, as well as epidemics, something that can be referred to as a Gender and Climate risk reduction framework. (See Fig.2)

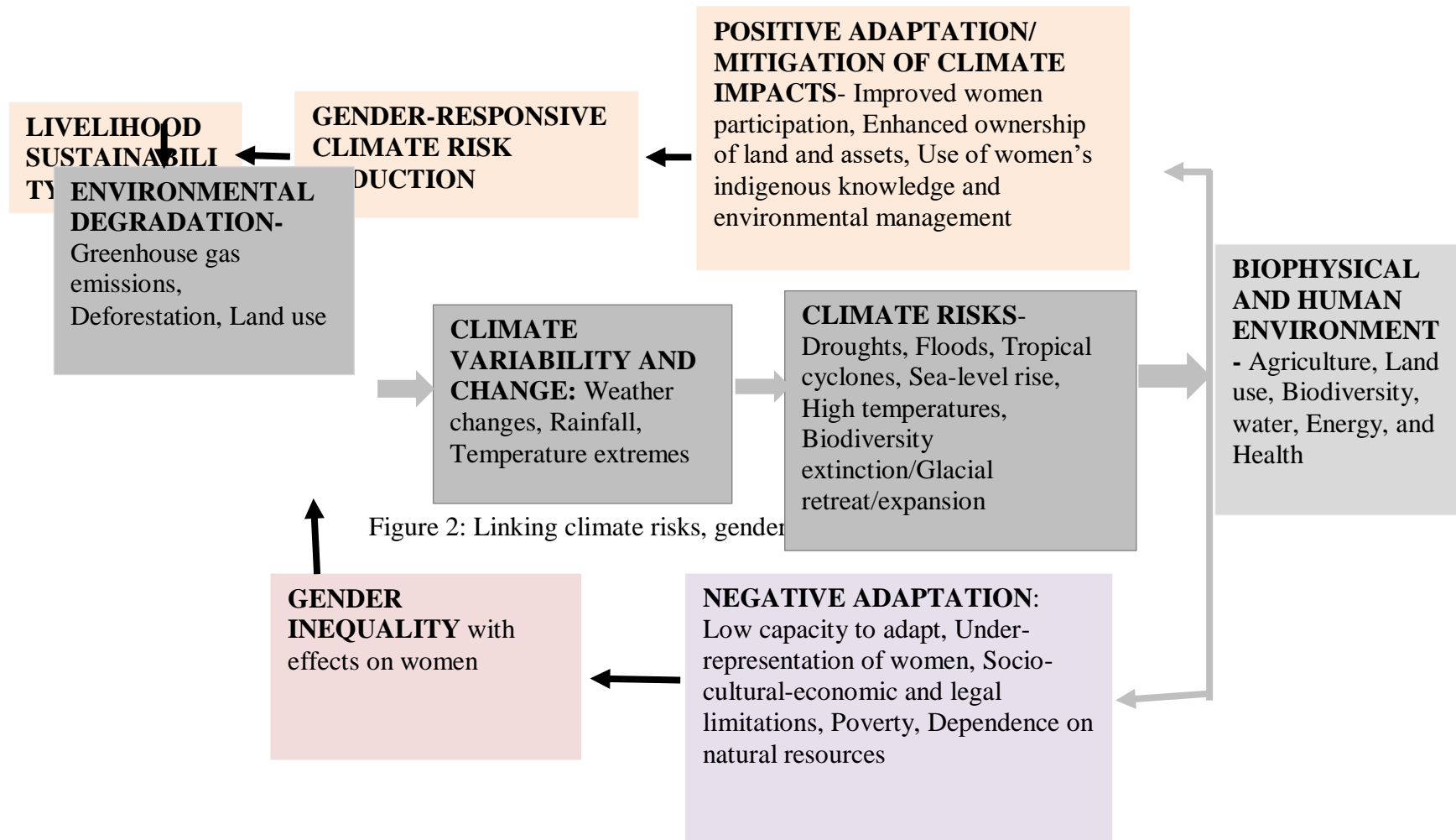


Figure 2: Linking climate risks, gender

Enhancing Gender-Responsive Development

Gender-sensitive or gender-responsive policy making and/or the goal of seeking gender equality are seen as both goals in themselves as well as precursors to achieving the desired development gains and resilience to climate risks. According to Fisher and Mohun (2015), women and men need different support to build new resilience and they experience adaptation and mitigation interventions in different ways. Gender responsive climate risk reduction goes beyond gender sensitiveness to systematically address gender gaps in response to climate risks and substantially overcome historical gender biases. The following are some of the possible women-friendly adaptive strategies.

Community level meetings where the majority of the participants are women. Women's participation determines their ability to deal with climate risks. Women's participation provides a space for sharing their ideas, innovation and solutions to overcome health, livelihood and economic problems caused by climate change.

Conservation and diversification of crop varieties to respond to changing conditions (CIFOR and CGIAR, 2015)

Designing of policies that equally empower women and men to become resilient to climate change impacts. Policy makers should take gender seriously in outlining city or county development visions and goals by using gender responsive policy programmes. Increased advocacy for the inclusion of gender justice in climate risk reduction debates should be prioritized.

Prioritization of technical capacity building within key government institutions to be able to mainstream climate risk reduction and gender equality measures is necessary.

Building climate data infrastructure to inform gender equality and climate change policies and plans.

Theory versus Practice towards Gender Equality

The paper has highlighted issues of gender, climate risks and livelihood sustainability and related theories. In the Ogunrin (2010) theory, besides the five elements, it would be important to have a section on organizational improvement and innovation. The section would enable employees to understand their organization and focus on future trends, while also developing the needs for future training and related codes of conduct. Women should be at the centre of these activities, which currently are the preserve mostly of men who continue to relegate women to subordinate positions. Women need to create their own industries and opportunities for employment, not only in climate

risk but even in other sectors where they could dictate the fair terms they so much advocate for. The change agent should be smart enough to study the system of institutional operations, identify its challenges, point out areas for innovation and improvement and advocate for those improvements. Climate risk reduction calls for women that would not only be leaders in policy making, financial control and project implementation to ensure that the benefits reach the target recipients at various levels, but also develop the skills of other women, enhance their knowledge capacity and promote the bottom-up approach to climate risk reduction. For instance, COVID-19 has taught the world that it is possible to mix parental and professional responsibilities by working from home. More women would be able to take up executive positions if working hours are flexible and child care facilities are provided.

Gender equality goals should be cascaded from the global level (United Nations) to member states and to the grassroots for climate risks to be minimized and for gender equality to be achieved. Gender equality also cannot be attained by just allocating resources to women. Affirmative action should be operational within the prevailing systems so that women and men can learn from each other regarding past mistakes to correct future operations.

Challenge of Gender Contours in Gender Equality and Climate Risk Reduction

Contours are lines drawn based on the level of underlying geomorphology or topography. Although the gender contour is not much talked about, it presents a situation whereby either of the genders tries to imitate or mimic the other gender for either personal gain, societal acceptance or, according to Luthans (1992), to obtain false mileage in the competition. This is a situation that can be counterproductive in climate risk reduction. For instance, at the individual level, some women leaders have imitated the arrogance and abusive expressions of the male gender, with derogatory consequences on young girls and boys and which could perpetuate gender-based violence. Secondly, some women, elected on the basis of advocating for fairness and equality have continued to engage in corrupt practices, thus worsening the situation for other aspiring women leaders. At the national level, women without voice have been promoted to high positions with little impact on the women empowerment agenda, thus dimming the flame of the equality and empowerment goal. Some causes of gender contouring include lack of personal principles that govern individual actions; greed; lack of leadership skills; or inadequate innovative and visionary skills. Gender contour leadership in climate risk reduction and other development sectors must be avoided at all

costs for the advancement of gender equality and empowerment not only in climate risk reduction but in all other spheres. Otherwise, funds dedicated to climate risk reduction and climate change would be misused. With increasing climate risks, gender contours that perpetuate gender-based violence should also be avoided.

Conclusion

According to this paper, climate variability and change, manifested through climate risks, with disproportionate effects on women is real. Due to the adverse effects in Africa, efforts should be made to adapt to climate change through gender-responsive development, women participation as well as mainstreaming climate risk reduction measures in all institutions. Secondly, as change agents, women should strive to create their own employment opportunities where they directly determine future innovations and conduct of employees not only in climate risk reduction but also in various other development sectors. Lastly, gender contour leadership should be avoided at all costs in climate risk reduction for livelihood sustainability.

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AN EXPANSIVE REALIZATION PERSPECTIVE: ACCESS AND USE OF ICTS BY YOUNG WOMEN OF MATHARE'S INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS

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Abstract

The world has witnessed unprecedented growth in the access and use of ICTs. Simultaneously, the digital divide has widened, with a few young women in informal settlements enjoying the same opportunities as men in the access and use of ICTs. It is in this regard that this study sought to establish the access and use of ICTs by young women of informal settlements in Mathare, Kenya. The study utilized a thematic analysis of the qualitative data derived from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The findings validate the Expansive Realization Theory by indicating how traditional and digital ICTs (mobile phones, the internet) have made it possible for young women to realize their potential by offering useful information such as job opportunities and how to boost their businesses. For the few women with ICT skills, the utilization of these skills has made them realize they could design posters and offer ICT training to those with limited digital literacy. In that way, access and use of ICTs have facilitated expansive realization among young women of the Mathare informal settlements.

Keywords: Young Women, Access to ICTS, Use of ICTs, Expansive Realization

Introduction

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) such as mobile phones, the internet, television, radio and print media are essential tools with the potential of emancipating the underserved young women in informal settlements. The expansive realization perspective proposed by Daniel Miller & Don Slater offers vital insights into how ICTs can enable young women within informal settlements to realize their maximum potential. Miller & Slater (2000, p.10) argue that the internet offers an expanded scale whereby individuals can realize their idealized identities. In line with this

perspective, the focus is on ascertaining if the access and use of ICTs within informal settlements have made it possible for young women to realize their potential.

Globally few women enjoy the same opportunities as men concerning the access and use of ICTs. For instance, in the context of India, the socio-economic conditions of young women make it difficult for them to access and utilize ICTs fully (Sonne, 2020, p.13). In the majority of the cases related to women and ICTs, the focus is on addressing physical access barriers by ensuring that the right infrastructure is in place to facilitate communication and access to the internet with little or no efforts towards narrowing the intellectual and social divides (van Deursen & van Dijk (2011, p.16). Nonetheless, despite having ICT infrastructure, young women in informal settlements are still disadvantaged due to their limited literacy levels and disadvantaged position within the society.

Besides, women have limited access to such ICTs as mobile phones that are predominantly used by men in traditional societies (Blumenstock & Eagle, 2012, p.6). Further, despite ICTs being interwoven into the different dimensions of life, factors such as low literacy, limited digital skills and affordability of ICTs are barriers to women's digital participation (Pokpas, 2019, p.285). It appears, therefore, that women, especially in the informal settlement, experience barriers in their access and utilization of ICTs. This study investigated access and use of ICTs among young women of Mathare Pioneer Youth group with the view of establishing whether ICTs have brought about an expansive realization among the young women.

Problem Statement

Significant divides are evident in the access and use of ICTs across the globe. Statistics from the International Telecommunication (ITU) indicate that there is a 17 percent internet user gap with more male individuals accessing the internet compared to their female counterparts (ITU, 2019, p.4). In developing countries, there has been lower participation of women in the information society because of the entrenched socio-cultural beliefs within the society (Antonio & Tuffley, 2014, p.674). In Kenya, Gustafsson & Nielsen (2017, p.291) found the gender inequalities in access to ICTs to be more significant in rural areas than in urban areas. Within the urban context, there is

limited digital literacy and inadequate ICT infrastructure (Wamuyu, 2017, p.1709). Notably, there is evidence on the access and use of ICTs in rural and urban settlements in Kenya. The scarcity of knowledge on access and use of ICTs among young women of informal settlements justifies the study.

Literature and Theoretical Review

This section touches on the theoretical framework and the literature review.

Expansive Realization Theory

Daniel Miller & Don Slater (2000, p.10) proposed the Expansive Realization Theory which posits that the adoption of new technologies is driven by historically established desires that are yet to be met due to the inadequacies in earlier technologies. The terms expansive and realization reflect on the internet's ability to resolve on contradictions about an individual's ability by offering an expanded scale whereby they can realize their idealized identities (Miller and Slater, 2000, p.10). The implication is that the "realization" of this consciousness can be 'expansive' or extensive. Accordingly, the different ICTs utilized are appreciated to the extent of how useful they are, and how they manifest in people's lives.

To demonstrate how this is operationalized, Miller and Slater (2000, p.11) provide an example of Trinidad, where the internet, particularly E-mail, enabled the Trinidadians in the Diaspora to be actively involved in parenting and offering mutual support. In addition, the internet facilitated the flow of information and resources from all over the globe, thereby enabling Trinidadians at home to feel closer to the business practices they assumed they already followed (Miller, 1997, p.12). Trinidadians in the Diaspora felt like they belonged to the larger Trinidadian society as the internet facilitated this feeling (Miller and Slater, 2000).

In that sense, the internet was seen to have brought the potential of being a 'Trini' back to Trinidad. It made this possible for Trinidadians at home and those abroad. Notably, for 'Trinis' at home, they had access to world-class skills, international markets and cultural flows. For those abroad, they were able to connect with their family and friends as well as maintain their national identity. Moreover, the internet had expanded communication, thereby repairing discrepancies that were eminent within the Trinidad society and helped to bring the communities closer to their idealized identities (Miller and Slater, 2000, p.13). The local communities were therefore re-established into

the global society in terms of cultural flows, information and markets.

For the Mathare informal settlement in Nairobi, the Expansive Realization Theory serves as an example of the process of access and utilization of ICTs among the young women. Aspects such as income-generating activities among them, even though not happening fully, are impacting the young women positively through what the internet offers in terms of e-commerce and advertisements. Accordingly, it can be said that the use of ICTs offers some sense of expansive realization among young women.

Women's Access to ICTs

In developing nations, internet connectivity is mostly available within the cities while weak ICT infrastructure is predominant in the informal settlements. A study on ICT access and usage conducted in nine African countries indicated that in informal businesses mostly mobile phones were used while the use of internet and computers was negligible (Deen-Swarray et al., 2013, p.64). Though mobile phones and mobile internet have the potential to facilitate the growth of businesses in the informal sector, business owners in informal settlements lack the skills and ambition to make this a reality (Deen-Swarray et al., p.65). However, in Kenya, there is scarce evidence on access to ICTs, specifically for young women doing business in informal settlements. In a similar study in Kibera, it was observed that limited knowledge of existing ICTs, high cost of ICTs, lack of internet access and language barriers made it difficult for Kibera slum dwellers to access and use communication information services (Bandari, 2018). There is a possibility that the realities for slum dwellers of Kibera are similar to those of the young women of Mathare. Similarly, Jebet et al. (2018, p.255) observed that due to limited access to ICTs, informal sources such as friends, were avenues of accessing information among the rural women in Keiyo South. To also draw on Wyche & Olson (2018, p.33), financial and gendered time distribution to do tasks constrained women, and coupled with the misconceptions on social media, restricted women's access to mobile internet.

Utilization of ICTs by Women

The availability of ICT infrastructure, their affordability and digital literacy of users determine the scope and magnitude of ICT utilization. Sonner (2020, p.13) established that low-income women

in India lag behind in access and usage of mobile phones. In the majority of cases, some shared a mobile phone while others owned mobile phones with fewer features. Moreover, socially constructed gender norms within Indian society discouraged mobile phone usage by women.

On the South African scene, Onyango and Galvin (2019, p.81) observed that the mobile phone had been appropriated through instrumentalization to serve their needs. Mobile phones were used mainly for making calls and text messaging. To circumvent the costs on calls, the residents utilized the 'Please call me' function to those seen as having airtime.

Another example of utilization was by Kabeer (2016, p.11) who concluded that the youth in Kibera utilize mobile phones to network with their peers and build on the relationship among them, thus strengthening the social ties among the youth, and making communication easier. Nevertheless, the networking was only limited to those in similar lower-income strata because of the youths' class and place of residence. Mobile phones made communication among the youth in the slum easier. However, they lacked a feeling of belonging to the larger Kenyan society.

Wyche et al. (2013, p.2830) delved into the use of the Facebook platform in the informal settlements of Nairobi. The result revealed that Viwandani residents within Nairobi made use of Facebook to search for job opportunities, market their businesses and seek remittances from both family and friends abroad. The social network is used as an avenue for income generation among the urban poor. This study adopts a similar approach though the focus is on young women in the informal settlements of Mathare.

This study looked into such issues as to whether the young women of the Mathare informal settlement have challenges in accessing digital technologies due to language barriers, the high cost of access, limited ICT literacy and whether there are any socially constructed gender norms that limit the utilization of ICTs.

Methodology

The research adopted a qualitative approach because it enabled more significant interaction between the researcher and the participants. The approach seeks to understand a phenomenon. The

research design was a case study of Mathare Pioneer Youth group. Focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews were utilized in data collection. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample young women with information about the study problem.

Study Population and Sample Size

The population of the study consisted of young women of the Mathare Pioneer Youth group drawn from 13 villages within the Mathare informal settlement. This group was formed to coordinate efforts of taking care of the welfare of vulnerable children and orphans in this informal settlement. Mathare residents lack access to ICTs, such as the internet and smart phones (Wamuyu (2017, p.1557) which limits their participation in the digital world. The young women who are members of the group are in their early 20s and almost all of them have a primary school level of education. Due to the poor socio-economic background only a few have achieved high school level of education. These young women were chosen to give their accounts of access to and use of ICTs. From a population of 33 members who participated in the Focus Group Discussions (FGD), six young women were picked to give In-depth Interviews (ID).

Data Collection

The study is qualitative, hence in-depth interviews and FGDs were used to gather information. The FGDs were used because of their ability to generate a rich understanding of the participants' knowledge and convictions about an issue (Woodyatt, Finneran & Stephenson, 2016, p.745). Key informant interviews were also used in data collection to get expert knowledge and perspectives on the thematic areas of access and uses of ICTs. The key informant technique enhanced free flow of information and ideas from the young women.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data collected from the in-depth interviews and FGDs included such issues as platforms available for communication and means of communication utilized. The research utilized thematic analysis because it is highly flexible and it provides a rich and detailed account of data (Braun, & Clarke, 2006, p.88). Data was also collected on physical, intellectual and economic factors influencing access to ICTs. Views on the use of traditional ICTs such as radio, television, and digital ones such as cell phones, computers and the internet, were also gathered.

Data from the focus group discussions was transcribed, analysed and interpreted according to themes. In addition, the data derived from the in-depth interviews was analysed under thematic analysis with emphasis on access and use of ICTs. The FGDs showed how the young women of the Mathare Pioneer Youth Group reached a consensus and shared a common voice on aspects of ICT access and use in the informal settlement.

Results and Discussions

The results are discussed along the access and utilization themes.

Access of ICTs by Young Women of Informal Settlements

The study relied on Thompson and Heinström (2015) levels of access to ICTs in interrogating young women's access to ICTs. The first level on physical access delved into how economic and political factors influence access to ICTs. The second level focuses on intellectual access and how it is influenced by the level of education and ICT literacy. Finally, universal access incorporated social and cultural aspects that either facilitate or are a barrier to the access of ICTs.

Access to Mobile Phones

The young women of Mathare Pioneer Youth group, noted that mobile phones are widely accessible within Mathare. During the interviews, they said, "*we own a mobile phone because we can easily access the internet where we socialize with our friends on platforms such as Facebook. It has greatly helped us since we do not have to visit cyber cafes which we find costly.*" (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group).⁵² Mobile phones have facilitated communication and socialization among young women. They can also access electronic newspapers that hold information touching on women's issues. To echo the voice of the young women: "Through the mobile phones, we can access e-papers for as little as Ksh10 daily and acquaint ourselves with information on job opportunities available in different sectors and even matters to do with sexuality." (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group).⁵³ Access to mobile phones has facilitated young women's access to newspapers, mainly because newspaper prices are usually relatively high, taking into consideration the young women's disposable incomes. This is indicative of the fact that technologies do offer immediate benefits to the young women. Also, to facilitate access to the internet, make calls and send text messages, the young women highly utilize

⁵²Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011

⁵³Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011

the Okoa Jahazi⁵⁴ option (offered by the Safaricom mobile provider), which offers airtime on loan. This service is clearly expanding access but at a cost, as it attracts a 10 percent service charge fee that is deducted the next time the young women purchase and load airtime on their phones.

Furthermore, young women have multiple sim cards to allow them utilize the offers by the different telecommunication operators. For instance, most of them use their Airtel lines in making calls and accessing the internet since it is relatively cheaper. Despite Telkom and Airtel service providers having a similar option as Okoa Jahazi that have fairer rates, the young women heavily rely on Safaricom's Okoa Jahazi option. The young women request advanced airtime of as low as Ksh20 which they are charged Ksh2 as a service fee. To them, the service fee makes the service costlier than regular purchasing of airtime. The same notion was shared by Onyango and Galvin (2019) who concluded that the cost of making calls and text messaging was a hindrance to the full utilization of mobile phones among informal settlers of Gauteng, South Africa.

Access to Radio

Access to traditional media such as radio was evident among the young women. The uptake of radio is high compared to other forms of media since it is relatively cheaper and does not require advanced knowledge to operate. Undoubtedly, it is instrumental in expanding informal settlers' access to information compared to computers whose uptake is slow. To quote one of the young women, *"I usually request one of my neighbours' not to switch off his radio so that I can stay informed"*. Those who do not own a radio use their mobile phones to listen to their stations of choice.

Radio stations such as Ghetto Radio 89.5 FM⁵⁵. has brought about a feeling of belonging among the young women. The station broadcasts in Sheng⁵⁶ which is the lingua franca of the majority of the youth in informal settlements. This station usually plays music that is loved by the youth and incorporates topics that are relevant to them. One of the programs aired by the radio station goes

⁵⁴ Okoa jahazi literary translated would mean 'save a capsizing ship.' In the context of being advanced airtime when desperate it means 'save my day' and users have to pay an interest once they buy airtime.

⁵⁵ <http://www.ghettoradio.co.ke/>

⁵⁶ A Kenyan urban language that is continuously developing out of a mix of English, Kiswahili and mother tongue.

by the name '*Air Goteana*' which means 'greetings' in Sheng. The program at the time of conducting the focus group discussions was hosted by "DJ Mbusi" and "BonokoDeh" considered favourites among these youth, as they were deemed as coming from similar background, with DJ Mbusi hailing from Korogocho, another informal settlement.

During the FGDs, it was noted that young women enjoy listening to DJ Mbusi and Bonoko Deh, as the two can relate to the struggles in the informal settlements. The young women actively engage with this station, through text messages and their social media handles. The women are able to highlight wrong-doings and wrongdoers within Mathare or in society in a segment popularly known as '*nyahuny*' (whip). They are happy that whenever they call, text or even post on the social media handles of Ghetto Radio, their messages are read out, highlighting the wrongdoings that occur in the informal settlements. This way, there is an action on the wrongdoing that takes place in the community through the help of the show. Also, the show applauds good deeds; hence considered a voice for the voiceless (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group).⁵⁷

From the preceding it transpires that access to the radio has made it possible for young women to have knowledge of what is happening within and outside their community. In so doing, the radio has facilitated expansive realization among young women. The reason for this is that young women not only provide information through the radio but also interact with the radio hosts. In these interactions, they learn about job opportunities they did not know were available. Also, since reporting crime is usually a challenge in the informal settlements because of the fear of being targeted, the '*Air Goteana*' show offers a platform where young women can anonymously report crime without facing any repercussions for their action. Accordingly, despite being a traditional media, the radio is instrumental to the young women of Mathare as the internet through use of cell phones, is refashioning radio by allowing more people to participate.

Access to Television

The majority of the young women interviewed enjoy watching television programmes, though only a few of them own a television set. In most of the cases, they watch it either at a friend's or neighbour's place. However, an observation of television aerials within Mathare suggests that the

⁵⁷Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011

area is not in short supply of television sets. The television programmes that the young women interact with are musical ones particularly Nigerian music, football and Mexican soap operas. Young women's interest in Mexican soaps was evident. They have an emotional connection with the characters in these soap operas to the extent that some of them have the desire to be swept off their feet by a prince charming "*exactly the way it is in the soaps*" (ID 1). There was a preference towards watching soap operas as opposed to news and therefore, the young women were not well informed on current affairs. They watched television programmes that offered them entertainment which offers temporary relief to the young women rather than watch programs that might assist them in the long term. One young woman alluded,

The news segment is only relevant to us as women during the electioneering period. Some of the members of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group were victims of the post-election violence in 2007-2008; therefore, we have to remain vigilant. We hardly watch news because it is full of politics which we find male-dominated. There are, however, a few women who watch the news and update the rest of us on current affairs (ID 5).

However, young women make use of other news platforms within Mathare. For example, the *Kukuru kakara mtaani* magazine, owned by the young women, provide the youth within Mathare with information on the happenings in and outside of the informal settlement. In a sense, the Mathare Pioneer youth group has capitalized on the opportunity to offer alternative news to the residents of Mathare.

Access to Computers

Young women have access to computers mainly in cyber cafes. Since the cost of accessing the computers in cyber cafes is prohibitive to them, only a few of them utilize the computers. Besides, their limited digital literacy is a barrier to access to computers and for example, they find the key board complicated. The findings tally with that of Bandari (2018) which established that limited knowledge of the existing ICTs, high costs of ICTs and lack of internet access made it difficult for Kibera slum dwellers to access and use communication information services. Nevertheless, ID4 was among the few women that managed to go for ICT training offered by '*Nairobi*'⁵⁸. She was

⁵⁸Nairobi Trust is a youth-based organization that uses ICT multimedia creatively to improve the lives of less privileged children and youth from the non-formal settlement. <http://www.nairobis.com/>

offered training on web design as well as entrepreneurial skills. She noted,

I consider myself privileged to have learnt ICT skills at 'Nairobi' and at the same time, utilized the skills. After undertaking the training, I had the opportunity to work as a secretary in one of the youth groups in Mathare. My role was to prepare reports for both members and sponsors. In this task, I would utilize my typing skills using Microsoft office software. Other than just typing the report, I also e-mailed them to different recipients seamlessly. My web design skills came in handy during the World Tuberculosis Day. During this occasion, I was tasked with the design of the posters. Unfortunately, the laptop that I had borrowed to do this work broke down; but I was grateful for the opportunity (ID 4).

It appears that young women have limited access to computers due to their high cost, acquisition of digital literacy skills and the utilization of computers in cyber cafes. However, for the few that had an opportunity to learn these skills, they have utilized them in different endeavours, leading to a sense of expansive realization among a select few young women. ICT training of one of the young women made them realize that they could do more than just typing work, they could also engage in other tasks such as designing of posters. Young women realized that they have innate potential that could be manifested through the acquisition of digital literacy.

Use of ICTs by Young Women of Informal Settlements

The ICTs are predominantly used by young women to access information, socialize and meet their economic needs. The mobile phone and computers are mostly utilized to address these needs as follows.

Utilization of Mobile Phones

Communication in Mathare has been revolutionized by the use of mobile phones. The young women are able to call and/or chat with their family and friends. Those that are more advanced in their digital literacy can access e-mails and utilize the different social media networks. It can be deduced that the uptake of mobile phones among young women has facilitated the use of the internet. One of the young women had this to say,

The charges of making calls are the same, whether one is calling their kin in the village or communicating with individuals within Nairobi. There is convenience in that when an individual does not answer your call, they will get a notification of a missed call. If your text messages or calls are not responded to, you can deduce that

the intended recipient is not interested in communicating with you. (ID 2).

Moreover, young women have been able to maintain their social relationship with their family members and friends that do not reside in Mathare. In line with the findings, Kibere (2016) elucidated that youth in Kibera use mobile phones to network with their peers and build on the relationship among them. Similarly, young women with internet-enabled phones can access information on the internet more easily by purchasing bundles for as low Ksh10. ID 1 observed,

Being an active Facebook user, my phone has made it easier for me to access the site at any time I want. Am continually engaging with my friends on Facebook and am even an administrator in one of the Facebook groups. The site consumes my leisure time and distracts me from life challenges in Mathare. For my friends and family members that are not on Facebook, we communicate on text messages (ID 1).

However, the majority of young women use mobile phones that are not internet-enabled. To counter this challenge, they would send a text message to internet service providers to share with them internet settings. Such women comprise those who had not undertaken any ICT training and did not have a high school level of education. For instance, ID5 had no formal training on the use of ICTs. She had been assisted to open an e-mail account, but since she had limited knowledge of its use, it remained dormant most of the time. She was only actively involved in text messaging and making calls.

For ID1 and ID2, they were conversant with the use of the internet. They had gone to the extent of searching for information on how to boost their hair and beauty business. Other than that, they used their phones to call customers, and some had even created a WhatsApp group to facilitate communication with their clients. Besides, social media platforms are not only used for socialization, but also as channels for conveying news updates. The different television and radio stations have social media handles where they update their audiences on the happenings within the country. For young women of Mathare, they mostly get news updates from their friends who share via social media platforms.

Young women utilize their social networks to not only socialize, but also to get news updates, similar to what Jebet et al. (2018) established that informal sources, such as friends were avenues of accessing information among the rural women in Keiyo South. The young women are also in

the category of individuals that earn meagre incomes and would have to save for months for them to operate a bank account. However, mobile money has addressed this challenge and they can now save as low as Ksh50 via mobile money. During one of the FGDs, one member pointed out that since she supports her siblings and had managed to save money via mobile money for a year. She saved enough school fees for the young brother who was set to join Form One. Moreover, the 'chamas' (groups) are operating well since each member can send money to the treasurer who safeguards the money via mobile money. There are records of the amounts of money sent by each member, which makes accounting easier (FGD Participants, Mathare Pioneer Youth Group).⁵⁹

It is clear that mobile phones have facilitated mobile money transactions, and therefore, financial inclusion of young women of Mathare that have no bank accounts. They can now transact the same way as those individuals with a bank account. Despite the importance of mobile phones to the lives of young women in Mathare, there are socio-cultural beliefs that are a hindrance to their full utilization of mobile phones. Some of the women stated that they are referred to as "Wajuaji" (know it all) because of the use of mobile phones. Others had the notion that their use of phones would break up their families. As such, their utilization of mobile phones was only limited to text messaging and calling.

The socio-cultural beliefs within Mathare informal settlements are a hindrance to the utilization of ICTs such as mobile phones. However, such beliefs are not only limited to Mathare but are held in such places as India, whereby socially constructed gender norms discourage mobile phone usage by women (Sonne, 2020). Also, there are instances where parents or guardians in Mathare prohibit their girls from owning a mobile phone because of the notion that "the gadget will promote promiscuity." (ID 5). In similar fashion Wyche & Olson (2018), concluded that financial constraints and misconceptions on the use of ICTs limited women's access to mobile internet.

Utilization of Pen Drives

Young women who were ICT literate utilized pen drives to store data and could easily use computers to transfer information to the pen drive. ID3 had the following to say,

After completing my internship, I had to write a report on my experience where I was stationed. The moment I had completed writing the report, I saved in my pen drive that also contained my curriculum vitae. The pen drive is portable, so I usually

⁵⁹ Voices from FGD Participants of Mathare Pioneer Youth Group, July 15, 2011

carry it wherever I go. As such, when I come across any job opportunity that requires me to apply immediately, information such as curriculum vitae can easily be retrieved from the pen drive. In such circumstances, I can plug in the pen drive into the USB port of the computer I come across and e-mail the needed details. Besides, whenever I visit the cybercafé, I can download music and store them on my pen drive. My pen drive is my reliable storage for information (ID3).

Utilization of Computers

The young women rarely used computers, despite the fact that well-wishers had donated some. However, some of the computers had broken down and the members found it difficult to repair them. Besides, the costs of accessing cyber cafes were relatively high for young women. For those that visited cybers, their typing speed was a hindrance to their utilization. In that regard, computers were less utilized compared to the other forms of ICTs such as mobile phones.

Conclusion

The study draws the following conclusions.

Access to ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements

The study has established that the young women have access to mobile telephony and the internet, which constitute digital forms of ICTs. Mobile phones are widely accessible and utilized as a means of communication in Mathare. Specifically, young women switch from one internet service provider to the other to capitalize on the offers of different networks. However, the cost of access is relatively high for them. As such, they have to rely on costly ‘okoa jahazi’ (loaned) airtime options to facilitate text messaging, making calls and accessing the internet. Further, in the past, it was difficult for young women to have access to newspapers, but the internet has made it possible to access electronic newspapers for as little as Ksh10.

Use of ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements

The study reveals how young women of Mathare Pioneer Group are utilizing ICTs. Both traditional and digital ICTs are used to address social and economic needs. Mainly, mobile money has made it possible for young women to save money as well as borrow mobile money loans. Also, the use of search engines to find work-related information has helped to access better business ideas,

ultimately contributing to a better customer base. Besides, they can interact freely through ICTs and make personal use for entertainment, peer interaction, information seeking among many other uses.

Theoretical Contribution

The study validated the Expansive Realization Theory in the sense that access and use of ICTs have made it possible for young women of Mathare to realize their potential. Notably, traditional ICTs, specifically the radio, have expanded young women's access to information and made it possible for them to highlight the issues affecting the informal settlements. Moreover, listening to the radio hosts who hail from the informal settlements is an inspiration to them that an improvement in their skills and knowledge can bring more opportunities their way.

Mobile phones have complemented the traditional ICTs since young women can acquire information on job opportunities over the radio and make the applications using their mobile phones or a computer. In this regard, access to the different ICTs has brought about the realization among the young women that they are capable of doing much more than just typing. Some of them have realized such potential in activities such as the design of posters. However, there are socio-cultural barriers that hinder most of the young women from exploring more than just the basic functionalities of their mobile phones. Accordingly, it becomes difficult for young women to attain fully an expansive realization.

Recommendations

The research offers insights on access and use of ICTs among young women of Mathare within an expansive realization perspective. There is, therefore, need to focus on the strategies outlined below to address challenges in the access and use of ICTs.

Access to ICTs by Young Women in Informal Settlements

Owing to the findings on the access of ICTs by young women, there is need for internet service providers to tailor their internet bundles, text messages bundles and call rates in such a way that their costs are not a hindrance to access. In particular, telecommunication operators could do away with the service fees in their advanced airtime since it will, in the long run, enhance the use of their services. Further, since young women have limited digital literacy, the government could collaborate with development partners and establish training centres to offer ICT training for the

youth in informal settlements. These training centres would need to have internet in order to facilitate young women's access to the digital content. By facilitating women's access to information, knowledge and skills, and the means to communicate and to participate in knowledge generation, many developmental problems may end up being solved.

Use of ICTs By Young Women in Informal Settlements

The technology literacy of young women has negatively impacted on their use of ICTs. The situation is not made any easier by misconceptions surrounding the use of ICTs by women. As such, there is need to avail free ICT centres to sensitize young women from the larger Mathare area on how to use ICTs and their benefits. In these training sessions, it is important to dispel misconceptions that ICTs would break the families of young women. Particular emphasis needs to be laid on establishing and equipping the centres with sufficient ICT infrastructure in terms of computers and the internet.

Moreover, since mobile phones are facilitating access to the internet, telecommunication operators could offer their clients the option of buying internet-enabled phones in instalments. In so doing, young women with no access to a radio or television would own a mobile device that incorporates all these functions. With these measures in place, the utilization of ICTs would be enhanced, bringing about an expansive realization among young women.

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