# EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF THE CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN'S CAREER GROWTH IN TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION SECRETARIAT, KENYA

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA), SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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# DECLARATION

This management project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other University.

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This management project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

# DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to all honest, hardworking and uncompromising women workers of Kenya.

# ABSTRACT

A paradigm shift does exist in the job market in terms of the nature and extent of the challenges that afflict women career growth in the current work environment as compared to previous decades. This research endeavor sought to establish employee perception of the challenges that face women career growth at the Teachers Service Commission secretariat. The motivation behind this research effort was the interest in seeking to establish the actual manifestation and extent of the challenges that derail the smooth career growth of female employees at the Teachers Service Commission secretariat to top management. A descriptive survey was used for the study so as to give a holistic picture of the perception of women-specific challenges at the Teachers Service Commission. To achieve this, a semi-structured self administered questionnaire was used to seek the opinion of the various respondents identified. Two sections were used in the questionnaire and section A dealt with demographic data while section B focused on the peculiar challenges that afflict women career growth at the Teachers Service Commission as informed by their perceptions and their experiences (both personal experiences as well as experiences of others within the workforce).The findings of the study found out/ established that work-life balance, favoritism, the leadership style within the commission and organizational politics are the major challenges that moderate the career growth of most female employees. The study concluded that there does exist both unique challenges that afflict female employees within the commission secretariat across all the three levels of management cadres as well as gender skewness across various service areas or departments with the skewness favoring members of either gender in the respective departments or directorates. The study recommended a careful attention to balanced progression and deployment of employees of both genders by the commission as a strategic move to manage the perception of employees on the commission as far as gender fairness is concerned. It also recommended enhancement of the sensitization of all employees on gender policy as well as any other legislative framework on gender so as to empower employees on matters that touch on their rights and welfare.

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# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background of the Study

There has been an imbalance in the number of leadership positions held by women as compared to those held by men across the board in economic, political and social spheres. Women are recognized in the Kenyan society as procreators of the coming generation as well as producers of goods and services. According to Kanake (1997) in many Kenyan communities, traditional perceptions of women as inferior to men continue to prevail as many people invoke the preservation of African culture to justify the subordination of women. As a result, men usually dominate women in the political, religious, economic, academic and domestic spheres. Women's academic and professional achievements and roles in society are hardly acknowledged or recognized. This situation has necessitated the call for the empowerment of women by according them their due status, rights and responsibilities and enabling them to participate actively in decision making activities.

Previous studies and observations have confirmed that women have increasingly occupied professional or career positions within organizations and even their numbers have continued to increase within organizations (Muthamia, 2009; Munjuri, 2011; Madegwa, 2011). The results of these studies and observations indicate an increasing number of the women workforce in the market as a proportion to their market share as compared to that of men in various careers. In the recent years, there has been a paradigm shift in terms of an expanded social, political and professional space for the women in our society, not only in Kenya, but also in the wider continent with some women being elected as presidents, therefore breaking the jinx that women should always take

subordinate positions in the society or organizations. These exceptional performances by women both in the corporate as well as the workplace and their acknowledgement however, may largely be accepted as isolated cases.

Gender inequality in the work place whether it affects women or men is problematic and needs attention. An examination of the perception about the existing gender inequalities in Human Resource policies, practices and various career growth challenges for women may make it possible to identify those aspects of employment that thwart the growth opportunities to top management for women at work place.

### 1.1.1 Concept of Perception

Perception entails the general impression appreciated by people regarding a certain subject first as an individual and then secondly as a group. It may be considered to be the overall meaning ascribed to a process, an action, an activity or to people around those who perceive. Perception may be viewed as the general understanding of the world and its manifestation(s) by people.  According to Turnbull et al (2010) perception is an idea, a belief or an image you have as a result of how you see or understand something. According to their definition, perception may be understood to entail the way one may construe a situation, people, and/or things on a circumstance(s).

According to Heery and Noon (2008) perception is a single unified awareness derived from sensory processes while a stimulus is present. It may also be construed to mean the interpretation of the environment, or happenings around someone or a group of people.

To that extent, perception is usually contextualized to the experience and the viewpoint of the one or those perceiving. This may therefore mean that perception is subject to the constructs of the person perceiving whatever stimuli or happening(s) that exists around them. In line with this understanding, perception may fairly be seen as the "tool" through which people gain an appreciation of the reality around them.

### 1.1.2 Concept of Career Growth

Torrington *et al* (2008) define career growth as upward movement and advancement in work roles. They assert that a career is a pattern or sequence of work roles of an individual. Torrington et al (*ibid*) further observe that career growth or development is no longer a stand alone issue and needs to be viewed in the context of life and development of the whole person and not just the person as an employee. They view career development as something experienced by the individual (something referred to as the internal career) and therefore not necessarily bounded by one organization. This means that the responsibility for managing a career growth is with the individual, although the organization may play a key facilitating and supporting role.

According to Kelley (2012) career growth may be understood as the advancement in a specified occupation or profession. It may entail one achieving certain satisfactory requirements, conditions or experience at every tier of the ladder in the career structure. Various careers have been observed to have progressive levels that rise upwards to signify authority, experience, knowledge, skills and command that has been assigned to specific positions. Career growth in most organizations is shaped by the employee's

attainment of the necessary qualifications, organizational structure or establishment and also the availability of vacant positions. It may be observed that in addition to these standardized conditions across the organizations, organizational politics, an employee's network, inherent organizational culture and personality of an individual employee's personality do play a critical role towards the career growth of an individual. These latter factors may have a greater influence on one's career growth provided that the employee has satisfied the former basic conditions.

Kisire (2009) observes that there are several factors that influence not only the choice of a career by an individual, but also influence on one's career growth and development. Personality of an individual, he points out as one of the motivators to an employee's career growth. Kisire (*ibid*) argues that different personalities have different orientations and inclinations and thus they contribute to a large extent to an employee's level of motivation to progress in their career. Kanake (1997) observes that despite various factors that influence one's career growth, all employees and persons in different professions have an inherent desire for a vertical progression or career growth. Her observation points to the importance of career growth for employees of both genders within any organization.

Morris (1978 cited by Cole, 2002) sees career growth or development as a continuing improvement of effectiveness within a particular system (or career). He argues that career development is part of the process of organizational renewal, with the implication that a variety of approaches are possible.  According to Morris (*ibid*), career growth or

development should not only be seen in the context of an individual's improvement, but also in the context of the organization in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness that accrue to the benefit of the organization whenever employees grow in their careers. He underscores the importance of the correlation between an employee's career growth and the overall efficiency or performance of the organization.

### 1.1.3 Women and Career Growth

Sujatha (2008) observes that the number of women in administrative and managerial occupations has increased over decades, but the proportion of women employed and moved as top level managers still remains small. This indicates that there may be some inherent as well as external factors that "lock out" or disadvantage women from growing their careers to top management positions.

Women may be seen to have additional qualifications to the basic conditions or qualifications for their career growth up the ladder in their careers. For instance, a study by Mwangi (2012) found out that in the media industry female journalists have largely been perceived to have 'beauty' or looks (which may not be literary documented as one of the qualifications) for them to be promoted to news anchoring positions, in addition to having the basic academic, professional and experience qualifications. Muthamia (2009) in her study of the role of women in the growth of media in Kenya observed that there is a consistent growth of the number of women venturing various careers. This observation, she attributed it to the increasing numbers of not only educated women, but also women who have ventured into non-traditional women careers, namely, the technical careers.

### 1.1.4 Challenges Facing Women in Career Growth

Women at the work place do have qualifications and experiences similar to those of their male colleagues. A general observation however indicates that women have to satisfy other subtle requirements or conditions for their organizational career progress over and above the stipulated policy requirements for career progression. Some of the challenges facing women include; one having to be on the right side of organizational politics, the need to have the right networks or connections with top management officers, Personal attributes of resilience and outstanding aggressiveness, outstanding performance in previous tasks, among others.

Mugwe (2012) in her study of the challenges facing women media practitioners in Kenya identified that majority of women face gender related challenges to career advancement such as sexual harassment, lack of a clear career path; women are rarely given decision making roles; there's lack of child care policy in the media houses and there is unequal division of labor. The findings of her study also indicated that management's commitment to gender balance and sensitivity are still below average and the corporate culture does not support women's participation and career advancement.

Kaburuku (2011) in her study of factors influencing career advancement of women in the banking industry in Kenya established that gender disparity, organizational culture, gender stereotyping, networking, and work-life challenges significantly influence career advancement of women in the Kenyan banking industry. The above findings by these studies indicate that there are some challenges to career growth that afflict women in a

unique way based on their gender at their work places irrespective of the organization or industry.

## 1.2 Teachers Service Commission Secretariat

Teachers Service Commission is one of the constitutional institutions established to perform teacher employment and management functions within Kenya. Prior to its entrenchment into the Kenyan constitution in 2010 as an independent body, Teachers Service Commission was a Semi Autonomous Governmental Agency established under the Ministry of Education Teachers Service Commission being the largest employer in East and Central Africa (At least 270,000 teachers and 3,003 secretariat staff) has many stakeholders both internally and externally to the Commission. This means that it has to satisfy many expectations from the various stakeholders. It has to play its role as an employer, as a corporate citizen, as a legal entity and most importantly, as a provider of services to both its employees (both secretariat as well as teachers) and the larger public. Teachers Service Commission being one of government institutions and having a representation of Kenyan people from all the parts of the country ought to lay out its policies, practices and criteria for career growth that ensures and encourages fair ground for the career growth of both men and women within its establishment. In achieving these goals and satisfying the general expectations, this commission ought to carefully establish and maintain a healthy and equitable mix of its critical aspect of performance (Payroll records, May 2013, Teachers Image Magazine, 2011, Vol. 17).

Teachers Service Commission secretariat comprises of three thousand and three (3,003) employees from all the forty seven (47) counties of Kenya and is headed by the Commission Secretary/ CEO. The CEO is answerable to the commissioners who are at the top of the commission's structure. Below the CEO, there is a deputy CEO and then the various directors followed by their deputy directors (refer to appendix 3).The members of staff are distributed across the country since the commission serves teachers both at the commission headquarters as well as at the district unit offices. In Kenya, there are 208 districts as at July 2009 as per the government website where Teachers Service Commission secretariat officers are posted. At the Teachers Service Commission Headquarters, there are 869 women while the remainders, 880, are distributed at the district unit offices. According to payroll records as at July 01, 2013, the number of women at senior management level (Job Group 'P' and above) is 104 out of the total 462 senior management staff.

According to observations by long serving employees (at least 10 years of continuous service), there is usually a notable influx of employees from the community that is represented by the current CEO of the time, in terms of recruitment and selection, promotions and "favorable" transfers. It is also easy to observe that women at the middle-level management outnumber the men. The commissioners also form a critical component of the composition of the Teachers Service Commission. The Teachers Service Commission Act no. 20 of 2012 provides for the commission to have a chairman and eight commissioners. This study shall also look at the number of women commissioners in relation to the number of male commissioners. Following the expiry of

tenure of eight commissioners by the end of June 2013, this study shall also give a close monitoring to the appointment of new commissioners after the recruitment process to replace the retired commissioners.

## 1.3Research Problem

Career growth may be construed to entail the expansion of responsibilities, decision making capacity, leadership and authority, and even prestige at the work place or in one's career. In the recent past, matters touching on gender balance and equality have come to the public domain with a general impression that the women have been neglected in public affairs and even in leadership positions. According to Kanake (1997) the general perception is that women have been relegated from making major decisions right from the family to the work place and even at the larger institutional and public domain. She observes that at the workplace, women have been associated with menial and mundane jobs and tasks. Career growth for women traditionally has been marred by three issues of concern, viz; personal, institutional and societal factors. Kelley (2012) views career growth as the advancement of an individual in a specified occupation or profession. Career growth provisions or structures may be seen to inspire and motivate individual employees to advance not only their experience, skills and knowledge but also their positions of making decisions for, or on behalf of the organization.

According to payroll records at the Teachers Service Commission as at July 01, 2013, women constitute over half of the total employee population and form a critical portion of the human resource base (1612 out of 3003 employees). It is notable from available data

however, that they are inadequately represented in senior management positions at the commission where policies that affect them are made (Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995). The Teachers Service Commission has a scheme of service that stipulates the career progression of employees within its establishment. The scheme of service for secretariat staff of the commission highlights various careers as provided for in the commission's employee establishment. It does specify certain qualifications and experiences for individual employees to progress to higher positions, but does not discriminate the qualifications in terms of gender. It is essentially a guide to employees' career progression in the commission. An imbalance does exist in terms of gender representation particularly at the middle – level management as well as the top management level. A majority of incumbents of middle – level management positions are women. Senior management positions on the other hand are dominated by men. The constitution of Kenya (2010) and current corporate practices by many organizations promote affirmative action as well as gender mainstreaming. It is notable that despite such a conducive underlying framework, women at the Commission still have not advanced in their careers up to top management, especially when their numbers are considered. This current state of affairs regarding gender mix at the middle and the top management positions is suggestive that gender equity issues have not received due attention and interest at the Teachers Service Commission.

Studies conducted by researchers in the context of women and their careers at the workplace have focused on various aspects (Nzomo 1995; Lodiaga and Mbevi, 1995; Kanake, 1997). Nzomo (1995) focused on women in top management in Kenya.

Herstudy indicated a strong inherent political, social and organization structural barriers to women career growth. Lodiaga and Mbevi (1995) studied status and advancement of women professionals in agriculture and environmental institutions and public universities in Kenya while Kanake (1997) studied gender disparities among the academic staff in Kenyan Universities. The results of their studies indicated a strong historical male dominance in these institutions as the major inhibition to women career growth. Madegwa (2011) studied challenges of career development faced by women in senior management in the civil service in Kenya, while Sujatha (2008) studied barriers in career growth of women managers, an Indian scenario. Previous studies often have not focused on the challenges for career growth of women in general especially in the Kenyan civil service. This study is necessitated by the importance and the contribution of women in organizations. This study seeks to determine the perceived challenges facing progressive career growth of women at Teachers Service Commission.

## 1.4 Research objective

The research objective was to determine the employee perception of the challenges facing occupational career growth of women in Teachers Service Commission Secretariat, Kenya.

## 1.5 Value of the study

The findings of the study would help policy makers of the Commission in drafting and implementing policies and embracing practices that are geared towards gender mainstreaming and gender equity.

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The commission and the government may use the results of the study to examine and audit the implications of various policies and legislations in the pursuit of gender balance, societal harmony and fairness even at the organizational level.

Researchers will benefit from the results of the study in identifying not only the employee perception of the challenges facing women career growth in Teachers Service Commission secretariat, but also possible causes of gender imbalance in leadership positions as well as have insights that may prompt further research in this contemporary matter of interest.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter sought to highlight relevant literature that may be useful in not only defining the theoretical context within career growth, women and career growth and challenges of women career growth, but also to steer a consistent and a logical way of not only collecting and synthesizing data, but also providing a solid foundation of interpreting the findings of the study.

## 2.2 Career Growth

Career growth may be considered to mean the movement of one grade or professional level to a higher one by an employee based on satisfactory qualifications. Munjuri (2011) notes that career advancement is affected by the following factors: Job performance; Contextual performance; Gender; Characteristics of human capital; Mentors, networking and commitment to development; Commitment to career development and career orientations; Satisfaction with the psychological contract; Selection criteria and methods; Organizational technology; Human resource planning; Organizational restructuring. According to Munjuri (*ibid*) these factors are usually given a critical consideration by employees who would wish to advance in their careers right from the time when they are joining the organization. This is usually due to the desire by individual employees to better their status both within the organization as well as within their line of their careers. Kelley (2012) posits that career development practices are a core function of human resource management which develops the short and long term capacity of employees. He views career development practices as leading to a competitive advantage to both the

employee as well as the organization in which the employee works. He further argues that since it relates to human resource management function, it ought to be coordinated and .effectively facilitated by the human resource management component of the organization.

## 2.3 Women and Career Growth

Grout *et al* (2011) observe that most organizations practice promotions for both men and women based on skewed application of promotional standards and qualifications for their employees on both genders. They argue that promotion terms offered to women are necessarily worse than those offered to men, even though firms know that offering women the same terms as men would erase any gender differences conditional on promotion. Thus, this differential treatment is not a consequence of gender differences in their propensity to leave senior jobs, but of competitive contracting in the labor market. According to Mayhew (2013), a study conducted in 2003 by University of California-Hayward professor Dr. Richard Drogin who discovered that women make up 72 percent of Wal-Mart's total workforce, but only 33 percent of its managers, is suggestive of the unsteady career growth path for women in organizations as compared to that of men. Wal-Mart is the largest employer in the U.S. This was a disturbingly disproportionate number of women prevented from reaching higher-level positions, which ultimately led Wal-Mart to becoming the defendant in a national gender-bias lawsuit.

Mannix (2012) says that despite making great strides in recent years, even in seemingly progressive organizations women rarely achieve the power and economic status of men.

By understanding when gender inequities are most likely to arise, and taking charge through pro-active strategizing, negotiation, and networking, women can control and advance their careers. Mannix's assertion gives an indication that women may not have real similar chances of career growth in reality as compared to their male counterparts. She explains however, that the adoption and practice of the appropriate strategies by individual women and organizations may help in bridging the gap between the career growths of women versus men.

Muthamia (2009) in her study on the role of women in the growth of the media in Kenya, she established that on average, the number of female employees outweighs the number of male employees at Kenya Broadcasting Corporation as a media house in Kenya. Despite this, the number of women in top management level was found to be minimal. Muthamia's (*ibid*) study did establish that women play critical roles in the functioning and the growth of the media industry in Kenya. From her study, it is implied that the career growth of women particularly in the Kenyan labor market is marred by inherent barriers embedded within the organizational set ups. This is a contradiction from her observation that female population in the workforce of many organizations is usually increasingly higher. This scenario presents the expectation that there should be a positive congruence of the number of women holding progressive positions with the number of women within organizations.

## 2.4 Challenges Facing Women in Career Growth

Gender inequalities at the management level of organization have been explained in various ways. Some researchers have focused on differences on career progress between women and men, identifying reasons like less education, seniority, training and experience. Some studies have also indicated that the women managers are confronted with structural barriers. Research by Harlon and Berheide (1994, cited by Sujatha, 2008) observed that sex-segregated jobs, holding jobs in lower position and lack of job ladders are major factors for women's under representation in the top management cadres. An Accenture research report (2006, cited by Sujatha, 2008), states that family commitments and persisting male networks in the corporate world are two often-cited explanations for the existing disparity between male and female manager's career progression. A study by Crotty and Meier (2002, cited by Sujatha, 2008) had found that the existence of bureaucratic structures in companies are inherently male characteristic that leads to disparity in treatment of women from the top management and are detrimental to the professional career success of women. The study conducted by Marshall (1995, cited by Sujatha, 2008) found that many organizations explain high turnover of women employees in terms of low level of adaptability to work environment, lack of job involvement due to higher levels of job stress and long working hours, lack of emotional balance and women's desire to spend more time for personal commitments such as a break in career for maternity.

A study by Madegwa (2011) established that limited access to informal networks, gender role stereotypes, blocked promotions due to the glass ceiling effect, fear of success and

inadequate education and training were impediments to career development for women in the civil service. These challenges indicate that there are either systemic impediments or cartels that influence or obstruct the career progression for women, especially to the top management levels. Muthoni (2011) argues that working women do have special challenges by virtue of their gender and their roles in the society as mothers, wives and many times daughters of ailing parents. It is these challenges that if not addressed, curtail the performance of women in the market and keep them in lower cadres while men dominate the senior management positions. There is also the dominance of male sakes in the workplaces, such as cut-throat competition, aggression, control and self-assertion that keeps women dwarfed career-wise. Muthoni (*ibid*) argues that there is also a misconception that women lack leadership qualities and dislike power, touted by men and swallowed whole by women.

## 2.4.1 Discriminatory Culture

Culture may be seen as one of the subtle forces that influence people's behavior, conduct and even the manner of doing things to a great extent. It implants general ways of conduct and orientations among the members of the society and even at the work place. Some of the challenges facing women career growth emanate from outside the organizational structures and provinces. Stainback *et al* (2011) point out the importance of supportive workplace cultures that mitigate the likelihood of sex discrimination. They argue that given an organizational culture that ensures that all genders are treated equally and fairly in all the interactional aspects within the organization, concerns about discriminatory culture would be minimal or not arise at all. They see the organization as

the context within which a culture exists and thrives. It is therefore paramount to consider its important influence of employees' experiences especially regarding discrimination across the genders. One possible explanation for this observation would be that as employees perform their roles within an organization, they have to conform to the pre-existing ways of doing things as well as the organizational policies and practices.

According to Bobbitt-Zeher (2011) previous studies have suggested that gender stereotyping and organizational factors may contribute to discrimination, however, it is not well understood how these elements connect to foster gender discrimination in everyday workplaces. The analyses conducted by Bobbitt-Zeher *(ibid)* reveal that gender stereotyping combines in predictable ways with sex composition of workplaces and organizational policies, often through interactional dynamics of discretionary policy usage, to result in discrimination. The findings suggest the importance of cultural, structural, and interactional influences on gender discrimination. In her studies on employment discrimination using 219 narratives constructed from cases for which the Ohio Civil Rights Commission ruled that there was probable cause to believe sex discrimination happened, she concludes that discrimination unfolds for women in everyday work settings and across a variety of types of discriminatory actions. She argues that men and women experience the world of work quite differently, such as in wage disparities, occupational sex segregation, and gender differences in authority. Her study emphasizes that just demonstrating the fact that discrimination based on gender exists at the work place is not enough; rather, an exploration of why it persists in work organizations is critical. She argues that discrimination takes place in organizations

through the processes of interaction between employees and the organization(s) such as in hiring, promotions and appointments to various positions through stereotyping and discretionary policy use.

Mayhew (2013) posits that working women are sometimes subjected to bias because of sex, in spite of numerous laws and regulations that prohibit employment discrimination targeting women. In line with Mayhew's (*ibid*) argument, the discriminatory culture may have persisted within organizations due to the persistent practice over time without there being raised a serious concern over the same practice by relevant stakeholders within the workplaces. This may be attributable to arguably, their diminished access to the experience that builds social capital which in many organizations includes access to appropriate education, training and even exposure. As a result, women have continuously faced some considerable degree of discrimination in their quest for their career advancement within organizations.

## 2.4.2 The Glass Ceiling

The metaphor of the "glass ceiling" has been used to describe an invisible but very real barrier that prevents women from moving up the career ladder beyond a certain point. According to Lockwood (2004) the glass ceiling is a concept that most frequently refers to barriers faced by women who attempt, or aspire to attain senior positions (as well as higher salary levels) in corporations, government, education and nonprofit organizations. Smith *et al* (2012) view the glass ceiling metaphor as frequently used to describe the obstacles and barriers in front of women seeking promotions to the top levels of organizations. Lockwood (*ibid*), observes that worldwide, individual women have been

breaking through the glass ceiling. She however notes that despite their individual strides at the workplace, they still trail the men. According to Lockwood (*ibid*), personal, institutional and societal barriers affect women's advancement. Smith *et al* (*ibid*) posit that the scarcity of female leaders is linked to ongoing prejudice and discrimination against women in the workplace. It is observable therefore from works of the above scholars and researchers that the glass ceiling dilemma is not only an artificial facet but also a systemic constraint against the career progression of women.

Cotter *et al* (2001) observe however that not all gender or racial inequalities need to be seen or defined as glass ceilings. They see the manifestation of the glass ceiling effect on areas such as levels of authority, positions in the corporate hierarchy, earnings and occupation. These researchers see the glass ceiling effect as artificial barriers that are not traceable in one's (women's) qualifications and past performances. According to their observation, the glass ceiling entails the unseen, yet the unbreakable barrier that keeps women from rising to the upper rungs of the corporate ladder, regardless of their qualifications and/ or achievements. They further clarify that the glass ceiling is more of labor market discrimination than market gender imbalances or inequalities. This scenario, they explain that it is not attributable to past characteristics of employees. It is clear from their research that while describing and handling the glass ceiling effect, job – relevant characteristics of the employee(s) are not given utmost consideration, rather, the fact that one's gender is female, does form the greatest barrier for the employee according to the systemic beliefs and considerations.

Gneezy *et al*, (2003) observe that even though the provision of equal opportunities for men and women has been a priority in many countries, large gender differences prevail in competitive high-ranking positions. They note that possible explanations include discrimination and differences in preferences and human capital. Lazear *et al* (1990) argue that differential movement along job ladders entails comparative advantage, so the ability standard for promotion is higher for women. This implies that more able women will be passed over in favor of less able men. Niederle and Vesterlund (2007) observe that competitive high ranking positions are largely occupied by men, and women remain scarce in engineering and sciences. They ague that explanations for these occupational differences focus on discrimination and preferences for work hours and field of study by women. Niederle and Vesterlund's *(ibid)* explanation (above) does imply that in addition to labor market discrimination that exists within organizations and industries, the choices that women make regarding their careers and their career progression initiative does contribute to their actual career state and positions within their organizations.

Heery and Noon (2008) contend that the metaphor of the glass ceiling conveys the idea that although women can see the opportunities and positions at the higher levels of the organizational hierarchy, there is a barrier denying them these positions. The reasons for this barrier can range from outright prejudice (direct discrimination) against women to unintentional discrimination where unnecessary conditions or qualifications are being used to decide on promotions. The glass ceiling may be seen as the barrier of negative attitudes and prejudices that prevent women from moving beyond certain levels in corporate hierarchy. In general, the glass ceiling may be seen to represent the invisible

and intangible factors and forces that restrain or bar women from advancing beyond certain career positions/ limits. These barriers may be effectively handled by a congruent application of efforts by the individual taking the appropriate initiatives, the organization implementing the right policies and practices, as well as the society providing the appropriate orientations within its culture.

### 2.4.3 Work Life Balance

An important challenge that women face in the course of their career lives is the role they play in the society as mothers, wives and caregivers. This important role that they play at the family level does pose a challenge to their career lives especially as it regards the amount of time and commitment directed towards the family (or life commitments) as compared to the work demands for career growth. Ezzedeen and Ritchey (2009) observe that gender role socialization literature shows that men are socialized to give priority to the bread-earner role, whereas women are socialized to give priority to the home maker and motherhood roles. While balancing their work and family roles, women tend to assign greater priorities to, and spend more time in their family responsibilities, independent of their work demands, while men try to trade off family responsibilities against work responsibilities (Aryee *et al*, 2005).

Unlike male managers, the female managers are faced with the challenges of resolving inevitable conflicts between the traditional female and family roles and the role of managerial leadership. Laden *et al* (2007) posit that an aspect of these role conflicts is the problem of balancing time between the traditional family role and the managerial

role. Both male and female senior managers are subject to this conflict, but because women traditionally bear the heaviest load of family work in most cultures, men face fewer and different role incongruities and conflicts than women. Women must resolve these conflicts in several contexts: preserving the degrees of career and geographic mobility that the path to top leadership may require sorting priorities at different points in time between careers as one tries to balance their career and their family unit.

For instance, women have to deal with the consequences of career interruptions that are more common among female managers early in their careers than among male managers and managing childbirth and child-rearing, neither of which is a traditional male role (Rothbard, 2001).

### 2.4.4 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment may be construed to refer to persistent and unwanted sexual advances, typically in the workplace, where the consequences of refusing are potentially very disadvantageous to the victim. It includes actions of a person (or group) who is repeatedly sending threatening letters, calling on phone, or repeatedly sending unwanted gifts to the victim. Tangri*et al* (2002) found out that, compared to men, women were more likely to report having to take in extra-heavy workloads and complete tasks outside of their job descriptions, and that aggressors threatened to make their life difficult. Thus women reported more frequent exposure to both direct and indirect forms of aggression. In view of Tangri*et al* (2002) unlike other forms of domination, sexism directly shapes and determines relations of power in people's private life, in familiar social spaces, in that most intimate context (home) and in that intimate sphere of relations (family).

McLaughlina *et al* (2012) observe that while Popular characterizations portray male supervisors harassing female subordinates, power-threat theories suggest that women in authority may be more frequent targets. They argue that men in authority find it easy to seek sexual favors from their subordinates. This may be attributable to the fact that in the organizational set up, these women employees are answerable to the men that they are responsible to, at least, at the work place. McLaughlina *et al (ibid)* further posits that even women in authority are not prone to sexual harassment. They argue that sexual harassment may also happen to women in power as a way of equalizing against their power conferred to them by their occupational career positions. It is evident that from these observations above, sexual harassment has a great manifestation of the exercise of power by the persons who execute it.

### 2.4.5 Leadership Styles

Several studies have found out that women practice different leadership styles from their male counterparts. As a result, their leadership styles do influence the paths that their career growth takes especially as they grow towards higher levels or positions in their careers. Adler and Izraeli (2003) advance the notion that women follow a different path to leadership. In business, they tend to transfer laterally into the most senior positions, building a career in one organization before going to the top of another. They often go around the glass ceiling rather than trying to break through it. Women are different in other aspects. They don't have a desire for power per se, but rather are committed to bettering society. Many are "drafted" or shaped by those who see their potential and they tend to draw their support from the public, not the corporate or political power structure.

Organizations tend to create barriers to the career growth of women by embracing corporate practices that favor the recruitment, retention and promotion of males over females. The arguments that women lack the necessary "line experience" needed for senior jobs and the notion that the "pipeline" needed to be filled before the numbers at the top would increase significantly are the common enemies to women's advancement into leadership echelons. Others include behavioral and cultural causes that center around issues of stereotyping, tokenism, power, preferred leadership styles, and the psychodynamics of male/female relations (Hodgets and Hegar, 2008).

Price (2007) contends that the low level of women in management provides a case for special consideration to be given to the development needs of female managers. He argues that a special attention ought to be given to top leadership positions in organizations. He argues that things like the provision of career breaks, refresher training, job-sharing and extended childcare facilities can make a considerable difference in career progress for women. Hammond (1993, cited by Price, 2997) identifies three artificial stages in women's careers; viz, joining organizations, establishing competence in management jobs, and strategies to progress up the management ladder into more senior jobs. According to Hammond, in comparison to men, women learn more from others and from facing up to hardships. Conversely, men say they gain more from assignments, but it seems that men tend to be given more challenging assignments.

Gatewood *et al* (2008) posit that in the process of selection, if the tool of selection such as an interview is utilized with a basis against the relevant characteristics of applicants or candidates for the job in question, the results of the selection tool(s) are devoid of fairness

and thus the right candidates may be discriminated against. Organizations may thus skew their recruitment and selection, and their promotion and appointment policies and practices to discriminate against women. It has been observed generally that organization's vision and mission are defined, shaped, and implemented by the top leadership of the organization. This may be seen to have a bearing on the general expectation that the top leadership is responsible for the performance of the organization. The manner in which women are treated or handled in an organization regarding their career growth may therefore be seen to be a reflection of the leadership style in control within the organization.

### 2.4.6 Education and Training

Erwee (1992, cited by Madegwa 2011) notes that in Kenya, education has gained recognition as a condition for social and economic development. In order to eliminate market discrimination women have been required to attain University or College training so as to satisfy basic prerequisites for most organizations as per their career growth provisions or requirements. Kenya's education policy does not discriminate on the basis of gender, although the education system is characterized by significant gender disparities (Republic of Kenya, 1999 cited by Madegwa, 2011). Boys and girls may be said to have achieved equal access to primary education in terms of enrolment although completion rates show that slightly more boys than girls complete primary education. Although the enrolment of girls and women in secondary and tertiary education has increased considerably, the overall participation rates show that boys and men have consistently had more access to education at every level than their female counterparts.

This scenario may be seen to have a true reflection at the workplace. For instance, though some female employees may be availed training opportunities they may decline to attend or participate due to the expected amount of time expected to be dedicated to the training or even the geographical distance of the training from home so as to attend to their family responsibilities.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

## 3.1 Introduction

This chapter details the research methodology that was adopted for this study. It describes the population, data collection methods as well as data analysis and presentation methods that were applied.

## 3.2 Research Design

This was a descriptive survey. A descriptive survey enabled this study to ascertain and describe the nature and specific employee perception aspects regarding the challenges facing women career growth at Teachers Service Commission.

## 3.3 Population

The target population of study was all the 1,612 women secretariat employees of Teachers Service Commission(Teachers Service Commission payroll, May 2013). Albright (2011) defines population as a set of all members about which a study intends to make inferences.

## 3.4 Sample

A sample of 160 women respondents was used. The sample units were selected using a stratified sampling design. Three major strata that were used comprised of low cadre secretariat staff (employees in job group "J" and below – 1,646), middle level managers (employees between job groups "K" - "N" - 1016)and the senior managers (employees in job group "P" and above - 341) within the secretariat staff. A simple random selection of

at least 30 % of the respondents from each stratum was expected to bear a fairly objective sample.

The table below indicates the selection of sample units:

**Table 3.4.1: Sample**

| Cadre | Total no. of women in TSC | Sample size | No. of women employees in TSC headquarters | No. of women employees in counties |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lower cadre (job group D to J) | 888 | 75 | 40 | 35 |
| Middle level mgt (job group K to N) | 592 | 65 | 35 | 30 |
| Senior level mgt (job group P and above) | 132 | 20 | 10 | 10 |
| **Grand total** | **1612** | **160** | **85** | **75** |

**3.5 Data Collection**

The study used primary data. Primary data was collected through the use of self - administered semi - structured questionnaires. Questionnaires comprised of two sections. Section one captured the demographic data of the respondents while section two of the questionnaire focused on the challenges that women face in their career growth. The questionnaires were administered using "drop and pick later" method.

**3.6 Data Analysis**

Descriptive statistics were used. Data was analyzed using averages (means), and proportions. The findings have been presented using tables and charts.

# CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, findings and discussion of results in line with the objective of the study which was to establish employee perception of the challenges facing women's career growth at the Teachers Service Commission.

## 4.2 Response rate

**Table 4.2.1: Return of Questionnaires**

| Questionnaire | No. of questionnaires | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Returned | 114 | 71.2 |
| Unreturned | 46 | 28.8 |
| **Total** | **160** | **100** |

From the previous table, it is evident that a significantly larger number of the respondents participated in the study by filling and returning the questionnaires. This may be indicative of their interest in the topic of the study thus responding fast. The study however noted a difference in the response rate between response from the Teachers Service Commission headquarters and the counties. The table below summarizes the response of the two categories.

**Table 4.2.2: Response rate**

| Response rate | Questionnaires issued | Questionnaires filled and returned | Response rate in percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| Headquarters | 85 | 79 | 92.9% |
| 47 Counties | 75 | 35 | 46.6% |
| **Total** | **160** | **114** | |

From table 4.2.2 above, respondents from the headquarters responded overwhelmingly well at 79 (92.9%) out of the possible 85 questionnaires distributed. On the other hand, respondents from the counties filled and returned 35 (46.6%) out of the total 75 questionnaires distributed. It is notable from this data that the response rate from the headquarters was above average as compared to the response from the counties which was likely below average as indicated above.

## 4.3 Demographic Characteristics

This section analyzes key characteristics of the respondents in an attempt to describe their status in relation to the feedback collected.

### 4.3.1 Designation

The study stratified the sample into three strata, viz; low cadre employees, middle level management and senior management. Out of the sampled respondents in the low cadre engaged, slightly more than half (53.3%) participated in the research. This gives an

above average representative proportion of the total number of female employees in the low cadre. The sample size of 75 respondents out of a total of 888 female employees represents 8.45%. Low cadre employees usually undertake duties that entail a larger component of manual work and a closer supervision by their immediate supervisors. The middle-level management participated in the research at 89.2% of the sampled and engaged respondents. The sample size was 65, drawn out of a total of 592 female employees in the cadre/cohort, comprising of 10.98%. This cohort undertakes duties that entail a fair degree of decision making and mental engagement as well as human skills since it does supervise the lower cadre employees as well as some of the middle management employees as it endeavors to implement various policies in provision of the commission. The sampled senior management cadre participated in the research at 80%. Their sample size of 20 represents 15.5% of a total of 132 senior management officers. The senior management cadre has a greater component of their responsibilities in policy formulation and decision making as well as crafting the goals, objectives and general strategic direction of the commission. This cadre plays a great role in terms of the general morale and inspiration among the employees.

### 4.3.2 Directorates

At least all the directorates were represented in the sample although there was variation in terms of the feedback received. The different directorates handle different types of services expected by the various stakeholders, teachers being the largest stakeholders. The teacher management specifically handles matters relating to recruitment and deployment of teachers, transfers and even promotion of teachers across the country. The

directorate participated at 15% of the respondents sampled and engaged by the study. The directorate has a total of 169 female employees. The human resource directorate majorly deals with day-to-day administration of human resource policies, practices and structures such as salary progression and administration of payroll for all employees (both secretariat staff and teachers). The directorate participated at 29% of the sampled respondents. It has a total of 240 female employees. The administration directorate, as the name suggests, represents the management in implementing policies and ensuring compliance of policies that relate to the smooth running of the commission. The directorate participated at 10% of the sampled respondents engaged. It has a total of 113 female employees. The finance directorate handles matters relating to the implementation of policies relating to the prudent utilization of the commission's finances. The directorate participated at 8% of the sampled respondents engaged. It has a total of 6 female employees. The ICT directorate is charged with the responsibility of ensuring efficiency is achieved in the commission through the use of technology. The directorate participated at 14% of the sampled respondents engaged. It has a total of 28 female employees. Accounts directorate majorly exists to ensure proper accounts record keeping and reconciliation within the commission. The directorate participated at 11% of the sampled respondents engaged. It has a total of 82 female employees. The internal audit ensures that compliance of all the policies of the commission is upheld in all the transactions within the commission by all the directorates. The directorate participated at 13% of the sampled respondents engaged. The directorate has a total of 21 female employees.

### 4.3.3 Period of Service

The period of service was considered an important aspect of this study due to its influence of perception based on employees' experiences and the general development of the psychological contract within the commission.

**Table 4.3.3: Period of Service**

| Period | Proportion of respondents |
|---|---|
| Less than 2 years | 15.8% |
| Between 2-4 years | 7.02% |
| Between 4-6 years | 22.81% |
| Between 6-8 years | 29.82% |
| Between 8-10 years | 14.91% |
| Over 10 years | 9.65% |

The table above indicates that respondents who have served the commission between 4 – 6 years and between 6 – 8 years have the highest proportion of participation in the study as far as period of service is concerned at 22.8 % and 29.8 % respectively. The study established that majority of the respondents were in the middle – level management (49%). It may be observed that these respondents are in the process of finding their bearing and identity within the commission with majority having been promoted at least once since they began working for the commission. The research data indicated those respondents who had served the commission for a fairly minimal period of time (i.e. Less than 4 years), were fairly shy to respond to the research questions citing lack of enough experience within the commission and the fear that the study may be used by

administrators to mete vengeance on them if their responses may be incriminating to the commission management. A general impression from the data collected from fairly "young" respondents in the commission indicated there was gender imbalance within the commission, there was discrimination manifested on account of gender, sexual harassment, and that the commission ought to take more deliberate initiatives to improve the prevailing circumstances and framework for the career progression of women employees. Respondents who had served the commission for a fairly longer period (over 8 years), expressed extreme stances regarding the existence of peculiar challenges that may be afflicting women employees of the commission. The study established that the respondents in this category were divided over whether the commission had done enough to ensure that gender equity does exist and that career progression for women does exist.

**Figure 4.3.3: Period of Service versus Questionnaires Returned**
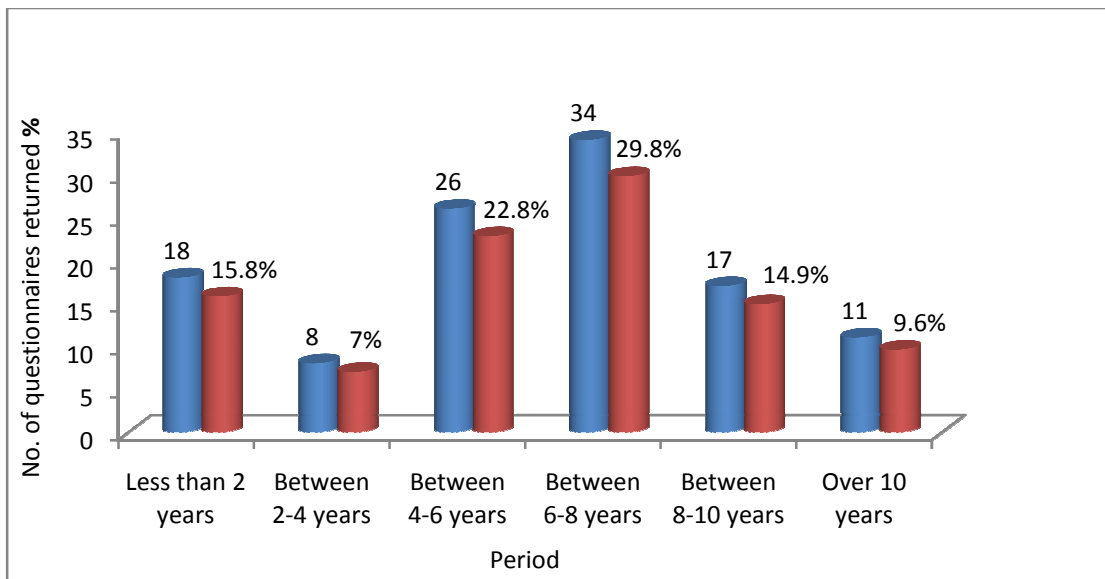


Part of the feedback from the respondents was their duration of service in the commission. The purpose was to attempt to establish their duration of service and their

general opinion as it regards the research questions. Since respondents were selected at random, their period of service could not be predicted in advance by the study. The above table indicates the distribution of various periods of service and their corresponding numbers of respondents from the sample. The study observed that respondents, who had had a career progression experience, were confident in expressing their perception regarding the challenges that women face at the commission. In line with the research topic, its objective and the methodology, all the respondents to the questionnaires were female.

### 4.3.4 Counties Representation

This study was a descriptive survey sourcing for data from all the 47 counties. Feedback from respondents from a total of 18 counties was received by the researcher. These counties were Nairobi, Taita Taveta, Bungoma, Kisii, Nyandarua, West Pokot, Turkana, Machalos, Kiambu, Kwale, Uasin Gishu, Kajiado, Embu, Nakuru, Kitui, Kisumu, Kericho and Siaya. Each County had 2 sampled female respondents who participated except Kwale County in which only 1 respondent participated. Thus a total of 35 respondents participated from the counties. The sampled respondents from the remaining 19 counties did not participate in the study.

### 4.3.5 Gender

All the respondents that were sampled and participated in the study were female.

**4.4 Perceived Challenges that Affect Women's Career Growth at Teachers Service Commission**

This section entails the major focus of the study i.e. the challenges facing women's career growth at the Teachers Service Commission secretariat. To handle this concern of the study, the respondents were first asked if there were unique challenges intervening in the career growth or progression of female secretariat employees. Secondly, the respondents were asked to identify the four challenges that were perceived as paramount to their career growth out of a list of fourteen (14) possible alternatives as secretariat employees of the commission.

The respondents were asked to indicate their response to various challenges describing plausible circumstances that may be barriers to career growth of women at Teachers Service Commission secretariat. The respondents were given a scale (where 1- strongly agree, 2 – agree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – disagree, 5 – strongly disagree).

For purposes of data analysis and interpretation, the scores on the likert scale from1 to 5 were averaged and 0.5-1.4 means strongly agree, 1.5 - 2.4 means agree, 2.5 - 3.4 means indifferent, 3.5 - 4.4 means disagree, while 4.5 - 5.0 means strongly disagree.

The use of likert scale on various statements representing challenges for career growth of women revealed the following:

**Table 4.4.1: Challenges Affecting Women Career Growth at Teachers Service Commission**

| No. | Challenges affecting women career growth at Teachers Service Commission | Mean/ Average |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Women have low/poor academic qualifications | 4.4 |
| 2 | Women are inexperienced to progress to top organizational positions | 4.6 |
| 3 | Women lack relevant networks/connections for career progression to top management positions | 3.4 |
| 4 | Women need god fathers for their careers to progress to top management | 4.2 |
| 5 | Women are not hardworking/lack good performance | 4.6 |
| 6 | Women are required/expected to compromise e.g. corruption, sexual favors, etc to rise to top management | 3.9 |
| 7 | Women require/need other considerations to progress to top management | 4.0 |

From the table above, the respondents strongly disagreed with the hypothesis that women do not post good performance and also these women are inexperienced to progress to top organizational positions. The respondents also disagreed with the other hypotheses except the postulation that women lack relevant networks/connections for their career

progression to top management positions.  To this hypothesis, they were indifferent. This gives an indication that networks may have an impact on one's career progression in the commission. This data indicates that women are very passionate about their femininity and they believe that they have got the requisite potential to perform any nature of duties and responsibilities within the organization. This feedback is in line with Smith *et al* (2012) who posit that the scarcity of women leaders is linked to ongoing prejudice and discrimination at the workplace.

**Table 4.4.2: Perception of the Position of Women in Teachers Service Commission**

| No. | Perception of reality in the commission | Mean |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Men and women are fairly well balanced at the cover cadre levels of the commission | 2.7 |
| 2 | Women out number men at the middle management level in the commission | 1.9 |
| 3 | Women are poorly represented at the commission's top management | 3.2 |
| 4 | The commission has done enough to ensure that there's gender equity at all levels within the commission | 3.3 |
| 5 | Recruitment at the commission is done with gender equity in mind. | 3.6 |
| 6 | Promotions in the commission are done with a | 3.4 |

| | consideration of gender balance | |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | Deployments at the commission are done with a fair consideration of gender balance | 3.4 |
| 8 | Women are generally favored in the commission | 3.9 |
| 9 | Men are generally favored in the commission | 3.5 |

From table 4.4.2 above, there is a general agreement in the perception that women outnumber men at the middle management level in the commission. In addition, respondents generally perceive that neither men nor women are favored in the commission. They also perceived that recruitment was not done with gender balance in mind. Respondents were indifferent to the statements regarding poor representation of women at the top management, the commission having done enough on gender equity at all levels, promotions and deployments in the context of gender balance. Their perception therefore is divided on these aspects of challenges that face women.

It is evident from the table that respondents were indifferent to gender balance, representation of women at the commission's top management, the hypothesis that the commission's management has done enough to ensure gender equity, promotions and deployments being done with gender balance in mind. This may be interpreted to be indicative of a considerable degree of manifestation of these challenges, only that there may not be an obvious factual way of proving, or the limitation that the study may not

have asked the respondents names of persons they think may have either participated/perpetuated or benefited, or suffered from these challenges.

The analysis of the collected data revealed the following:

**Figure 4.4.3: Perceived Challenges Facing Human Career Growth and their Ratings**
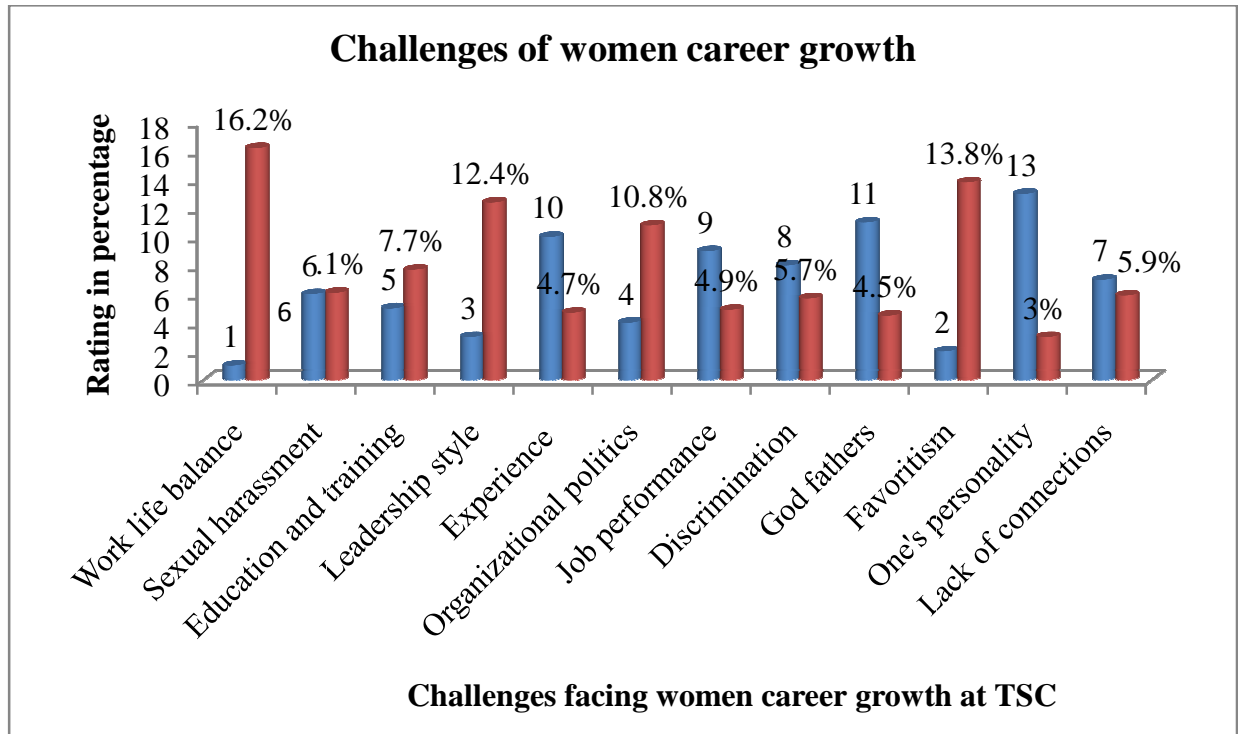


From figure 4.4.3 work life balance is perceived to be the challenge with the greatest negative impact (16.2%) on women's career growth at the Teachers Service Commission. Out of the challenges assessed in terms of employee's perception, work life balance, favoritism, leadership style, organizational politics and education & training were perceived as the major challenges in order of their superiority among the available challenges as indicated in figure 4.4.3 above. Nature has bestowed / endowed upon women the responsibility of child bearing and giving care to the family. As Laden *et al*

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(2007) note, women employees have to continually struggle with the conflict of balancing between the traditional family role and the managerial role. This natural scenario does place an automatic challenge upon a majority of women employees since every woman employee belongs to a family, whether nuclear family of an extended family. The natural family responsibilities may have been indicated as the leading challenge due to its inescapability to women. Women have to strike a balance between participating between both their careers as well as doing their family roles. Favoritism and leadership style were also prominently indicated at second (13.8%) and third (12.4%) positions respectively. The characterization of their manifestation revolves around social links and personality of the incumbent leadership or management. Of importance to note is that while family responsibilities are unavoidable, a woman employee may navigate their way to benefit career advancement favors and also adjust to fit into different incumbent leadership within the organization.

## 4.5 Existence of Unique Challenges for Women

Part of the study was to establish if/whether there were unique challenges for women's career growth at the Teachers Service Commission. From the data collected, the following chart represents the perception of the respondents.

**Figure 4.5: Unique Challenges for Women Career Growth at Teachers Service Commission**
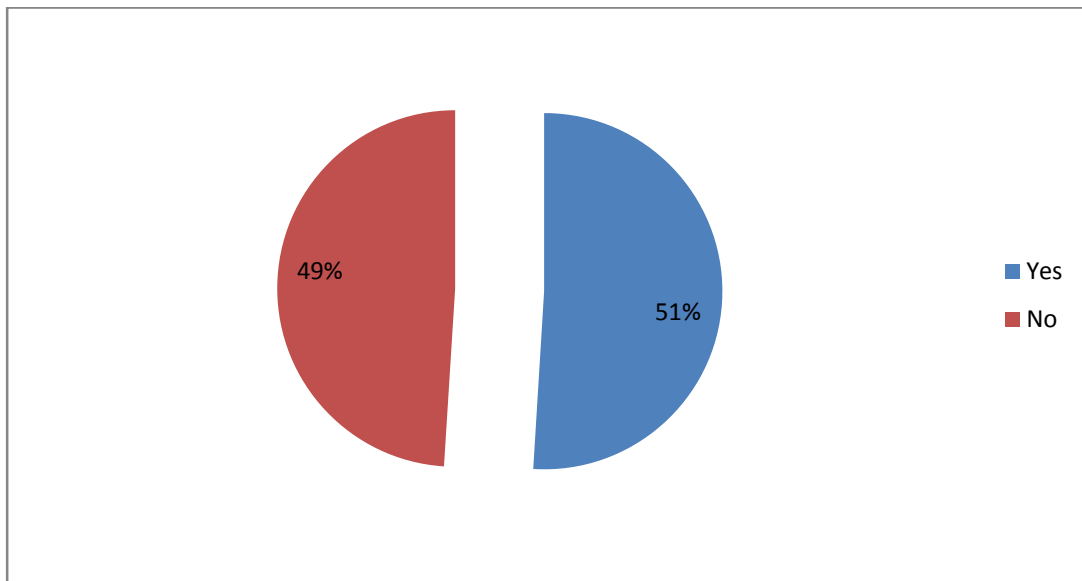


From the pie chart above, slightly more than half of the respondents expressed their affirmation to the statement that there are unique challenges that face the career growth of women at Teachers Service Commission. This response may be interpreted as indicative of the existence of almost fair job environment and challenges of career growth for employees of both genders in the Teachers Service Commission secretariat establishment. This data may also be interpreted to mean that while some employees may perceive the commission as having done enough to ensure gender equity at all levels, a fair majority (51 %) of the respondents indicated their perception of the commission as not having established/set a conducive environment and structures for a fair women career progression as employees. This may be seen to be suggestive of the need for the commission to enhance the work environment as well as its human resource procedures and processes so as to influence its female employees' perception positively.

# CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the findings as they are presented in chapter four. Conclusion and recommendations have also been discussed in relation to the objective of the study which was to determine the employee perception of the challenges facing occupational career growth of women in Teachers Service Commission secretariat.

## 5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study sought to identify the perceived challenges to women career growth at the Teachers Service Commission Secretariat. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated that most participants belonged to the middle-level management stratum/cohort of the population of interest to the study. In addition, respondents who returned the greatest number of questionnaires in terms of period of service belong to two consecutive cohorts i.e. between 4 - 6 years and between 6 - 8 years with 26 and 34 questionnaires returned respectively. All respondents were women as per the topic and the objective of the study. The study chose women respondents since women were considered to have a first hand opinion on matters that relate to their experience.

A great consideration of both the period of service and the designation or the level of management was deemed important. That consideration guided the validity of perceptions by various respondents. The researcher considered opinion from employees who had interacted with the commission for a relatively longer period to be more reliable

since it was in many instances coupled with personal experiences.  On the other hand, the researcher considered the opinion from respondents who were relatively new in the commission to be largely based on grapevine rather than based on experience.  The researcher however accorded equal attention to all the responses from the respondents on their perception regarding the challenges of interest to the study. The analysis brought out the major challenges that afflict women in the commission according to their perception based on the research feedback.  This was evidenced by the scores given to the specific challenges by the respondents.

Out of the fourteen (14) plausible challenges identified by the study, the six major challenges perceived to afflict women career growth identified were; inability to balance family responsibilities and work responsibilities, organizational politics, lack of proper education and training and sexual harassment.

The respondents also indicated their perception that there does exist a gender imbalance within the commission. Of important observation was the perception that gender imbalance was tilted towards one gender at various management levels or directorates and service areas.  For instance, the directorates of Human Resource and Teacher Management were perceived to be heavily dominated by the female employees across the various levels of management.


**5.3 Conclusion**

In conclusion, secretariat women employees of the Teachers Service Commission are perceived to face challenges which are unique from those faced by their male counterparts. These challenges intervene in their career growth within the commission

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and they include; work-life balance, favoritism, leadership style and organizational politics. Secondly, there does exist a perception that gender imbalances across the three levels of management, particularly the middle-level management and at the senior-level management, and also in the various directorates or service areas with gender-skewness favoring either gender of the secretariat employees. The challenges identified in the literature review were confirmed as by the respondents perception as existing in Teachers Service Commission, only for the magnitude and the degree of their manifestation.

## 5.4 Recommendations

The unemployment levels in Kenya keep rising every year with graduates from learning institutions flooding the job market every year. This scenario is coupled with a very competitive and a turbulent job environment. From the findings of this study, there is need for crafting and adoption of policies and practices that ensure that the Teachers Service Commission does have a balanced progression of its employees of both genders, irrespective of the type or nature of career.

Sensitization of all employees of the gender policy by the commission which was adopted by the commission in 2010 is vital so that employees are not only informed, but also empowered regarding the legislative framework governing gender issues. There is also need for women to be sensitized and trained on how to manage the greatest challenges identified by the study especially balancing their career growth and commitment, and their family responsibilities.

## 5.5 Limitations of the Study

The non-response rate of 28.8% may have had an impact on the findings of the study. The fact that the respondents were drawn across the 47 counties may mean that challenges that may be paramount in certain parts of the country may not have been considered in the analysis of the feedback due to the non-response of the sampled respondents.

## 5.6 Recommendation for Further Research

There is need to carry out research on how women can overcome the major unique challenges that they face in their career development both in the public and the private sector. The focus should be on strengthening response to, and management of challenges by women since identification of the challenges has been done by this study as well as other previous studies. Since organizations have organization- specific environments and circumstances, more studies on the issue of challenges that affect women career growth for women need to be carried out so as to establish the trend in as far as the most prevalent challenges across organizations in modern times.

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# APPENDICES

# APPENDIX I: UNIVERSITY INTRODUCTION LETTER

**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

MBA PROGRAMME

| | |
|---|---|
| Telephone: 020-2059162<br>Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi<br>Telex: 22095 Varsity | P.O. Box 30197<br>Nairobi, Kenya |

DATE 3/09/2013

## TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter ........ JASPER M. WAMBUA ..............
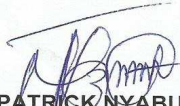
Registration No ......... D61/72488/2011 ...............

is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.

PATRICK NYABUTO
MBA ADMINISTRATOR
SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

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# APPENDIX II: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

JASPER M. WAMBUA
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SCHOOL of BUSINESS
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NAIROBI
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(CAPS)
AUGUST 12, 2013.

SECRETARIAT STAFF,
TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION

Dear respondent,

**REF: MBA RESEARCH PROJECT**

I am a bona fide student at the University of Nairobi pursuing a postgraduate degree program leading to the award of Master of Business Administration (MBA). I am conducting a research on the topic; **employee perception of the challenges facing women's career growth in Teachers Service Commission secretariat, Kenya,** as part of the requirements for the award of the degree.

I kindly request for your participation by filling in the attached questionnaire. We wish to assure you at this juncture that the information that you will provide shall be used strictly for the purpose of the research. Upon the conclusion of the research, we would be glad to share with you the results of the research upon your request.
Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

_____ ___

Jasper M. Wambua

# APPENDIX III: QUESTIONNAIRE

**SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

1. Sex

   Male[    ]        Female[    ]

2. Period of service  (a) Less than 2 years  [    ]    (b) Between 2 – 4 years    [    ](c)

   Between 4 – 6 years     [    ] (d) Between 6 – 8 years   [    ] (e) Between 8 – 10

   years[   ]     (f) Over 10 years  [   ]

3. County (Please state) …………………………………………………………

4. Directorate (a) Human Resource  [   ](b) Administration [    ]

   (c) Teacher Management[ ](d) Finance  [     ](e) ICT [    ] (f) Accounts   [    ] (g)

   Internal Audit   [   ]

5. Designation/ level in the Commission (a) Low level (Job group "J" and below)

   [    ]  (b) Middle level (between Job group "K" – "N")    [    ]  (c) Senior/Top

   management Level (Job group "P" and above) [   ]


   **SECTION B: CHALLENGES FACING WOMEN IN CAREER GROWTH**

   **AT TEACHERS SERVICE COMMISSION**

6. To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the factors

   that influence the career growth for women at the Teachers Service Commission?

| Challenges affecting women career growth | Strongly Agree | Agree | Neither agree nor disagree | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women have low/poor academic qualifications | | | | | |
| Women are inexperienced to progress to top organizational positions | | | | | |
| Women lack relevant networks/ connections for career progression to top management positions | | | | | |
| Women need god fathers for their careers to progress to top management | | | | | |
| Women are not hardworking/ lack good performance | | | | | |
| Women are required / expected to compromise e.g. corruption, sexual favours, etc. to rise to top management | | | | | |
| Women require/ need other considerations to progress to top management [State/ give example(s)] | | | | | |

7. (a) Do you think that there are unique challenges for the career growth of women?

Yes [  ]                    No [  ]

(b) If Yes to "a" above, state them

……………………………………………………………………………………

8. To what extent do you agree with the following statements

| Statement | Strongly | Agree | Neither agree | Disagree | Strongly |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a) Men and women are fairly well balanced at the lower cadre levels of the Commission | | | | | |
| b) Women outnumber men at the middle management level in the Commission | | | | | |
| c) Women are poorly represented at the Commission's top management | | | | | |
| d) The Commission has done enough to ensure that there's gender equity at all levels within the Commission | | | | | |
| e) Recruitment at the Commission is done with gender equity in mind | | | | | |
| f) Promotions in the Commission are done with a consideration of gender balance | | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| g) Deployments at the Commission are done with a fair consideration of gender balance | | | | |
| h) Women are generally favored in the Commission | | | | |
| i) Men are generally favored in the Commission | | | | |

9. Do you think the Commission offers equal opportunity for both men and women to advance their careers? Yes[   ]                    No [   ]

    Why?...............................................................................................................

10. Are members of both genders equally/fairly represented in top management positions (Job Group "P" and above)?

    Yes [   ]     No [   ]

11.  Are you aware of the Teachers Service Commission Gender Policy?

    Yes [   ]     No [   ]

12. The four greatest challenges women have in their career growth within the Commission are:

    a) Lack of proper education/ training          [   ]

    b) Sexual harassment                           [   ]

    c) Discrimination within the commission        [   ]

    d) Inability to balance work and family         [   ]

    e) Leadership style in the commission          [   ]

f) Lack of enough experience    [   ]

g) Poor performance records    [   ]

h) Lack of god fathers    [   ]

i) Lack of necessary networks/ connections    [   ]

j) Organizational  politics                    [   ]

k) Lack of strong personalities that favor consideration for higher positions

[   ]

l) Societal orientation that women can't lead or hold top organizational

positions[   ]

m) Favoritism,   cronyism   (rewarding   friends)   and   nepotism   at   top

management when it comes to promotions and appointments    [   ]

n) Other factors, e.g.…………………………………………

13. What is your comment on the issue of gender in the Commission?

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

14.  Any additional comment(s)

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………

**THANK YOU**