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**FACTORS AFFECTING  
WOMEN'S  
PARTICIPATION  
IN UNIVERSITY  
MANAGEMENT IN  
KENYA**

*Jane Onsongo*

**Gender Issues Research Report Series - no. 22**



Organisation for Social Science Research in  
Eastern and Southern Africa

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## **On OSSREA's Research Report Series**

The Organisation for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) has been running two research competitions – the Social Science and Gender Issues Research Competitions – for a number of years now. Winners of these competitions are required to submit their findings in the form of research reports.

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## **FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN UNIVERSITY MANAGEMENT IN KENYA**

*Jane Onsongo*

**Abstract:** Women Play an important role in society as procreators of the coming generation, as well as producers of goods and services. In the modern economies they are playing an important role in the labour force. However, 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. In recent years, women's participation in management in all spheres is being advocated. This research report is based on a study carried out to find out the factors affecting women's participation in university management in Kenya.

Data was collected from three public and three private chartered universities in Kenya between January and June 2002 using questionnaires, interview guides and document analysis guides. The participants included ten male managers (heads of departments, deans, personnel officers, one DVC and one vice-chancellor), twenty six women managers (deans, HODs, personnel officers and directors of institutes) and senior academic staff (twenty women and ten men with a rank of senior lecturer and above). The respondents were selected using stratified random sampling and purposive sampling methods for both the women and male managers.

The findings from the study revealed that women are indeed underrepresented in the management of universities in Kenya. There are several factors at the personal, institutional and societal levels preventing qualified women from ascending to senior positions in universities. At the personal level such factors as lack of confidence and fear of public office were found to be deterring women from taking management positions. At the institutional level discriminatory recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures, political appointments, unclear promotion criteria, absence of documented staff development policies for senior managers and few opportunities for further training affected women's participation in university management. In addition, societal factors such as discrimination against female child education and general beliefs about women's domestic role were identified as eroding women's self perception just as those women who succeeded in public domain were seen as failures in their domestic roles. The researcher argues that for women to participate in university management effectively some of these barriers must be removed, and suggests ways helpful to enhance women's participation.

## **1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY**

### **1.1 Introduction**

Women are recognized in the Kenyan society as procreators of the coming generation as well as producers of goods and services. However, 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 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.

Over the decades, issues concerning women have taken new dimensions and received varied treatments by the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The principle of equality of men and women was first recognized in 1945 in the United Nations Charter, and subsequently in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). In spite of the international declarations, of which Kenya is a signatory, affirming the legal rights and equality of men and women available literature shows that women still constitute a disproportionately small percentage of those participating in public decision making. Many global conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995), the Cairo Conference on Population and Development (1994) and World Summit for Social Development (1995) have recognized that, despite the progress made globally in improving the status of women, gender disparities still exist, especially in regard to participation in executive and electoral political positions. The low participation of women in these positions affects the progress in improving the legal and regulatory environment for promoting gender equality since very few women are influencing the legislative process. The rationale for promoting women's participation in university management is based on equity, quality and development. Given the nominally equal status of men and women in laws of most countries, it is only right that both sexes participate in decision making over matters affecting them.

Several obstacles that prevent women from advancing to senior management positions have been identified. Bello (1992) regards socio-cultural beliefs as the major barriers in this regard. These beliefs emphasize the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. They form an integral part of the socialization process and the gender education and training most men and women are exposed to from childhood. Based on the concept of role expectancy, an individual develops through the years his or her own set

of internalized values, beliefs, attitudes, ideals and aspirations. Another barrier is the institutional framework guiding the gender division of labour, recruitment and upward mobility. Olojede (1990) notes that since men dominate public decision-making bodies, it is the male values that are reflected in these decision-making bodies.

In Kenya women's participation in key decision-making positions is still minimal. In the public service, women in management positions are very few as compared to men. Women in executive positions, like in Job Groups P and above represent only 4.9%, compared to 95.1 % of men in the same groups (Source, Directorate of Personnel Management). Research has revealed that women mainly occupy junior positions in university management in Kenya. A survey of university staffing positions conducted in six universities (four public and two private) reveals that women are missing from among the chief officers of the universities. The next table summarises the various universities positions which women occupy.

Table 1. Status of women in management in six universities by February 2001

Position	Male	Female	Total
VC	6	0	6
DVC	14	1	15
Principal	8	1	9
Directors	22	4	26
Deans of faculties	35	4	39
Heads of departments	210	39	249
University council	73	10	83

SOURCE: University Calendars of Universities 1997-2001

In University of Nairobi the council which determines who manages the university is comprised of mainly men. Out of the fourteen members of the council only one is female. The situation at Kenyatta University is not different. Of the six deans of faculty only one is a woman (Faculty of Home Economics), and of the 42 heads of department only eleven are women (Kenyatta University Calendar 1999-2000). The fact that women are missing from the major policy and decision-making forums of the university has an implication on their recruitment and promotion opportunities (Mullei 1995; Poskitt 1998).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

In Kenya women constitute slightly over half of the total population and form a critical portion of the human resource base. However, available data indicates that they are inadequately represented in senior management positions in public institutions and where policies that affect them are made (Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995). The possible explanation for this situation could be that gender issues have not received due attention in most institutions. While a few researchers have in recent years began to document women's participation in management in the public and private sector in Kenya (Nzomo 1995; Lodiaga and Mbevi; 1995; Mullei 1995; Kanake 1997), such documentations often have not focused on the actual factors that affect women's participation in top management in universities. This study set out to investigate the factors that affect women's participation in management of Kenyan universities and identify possible strategies that can be used to enhance women's participation.

## **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

This study aims:

1. To establish the positions women occupy in university management in Kenya;
2. To determine the factors that affect women's participation in university management;
3. To identify the institutional policies and practices that govern recruitment, appointment and promotion of university managers and how these, in turn, affect women's participation in university management;
4. To suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance women's participation in university management in Kenya.

## **1.4 Research Questions**

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What positions do women occupy in university management in Kenya as compared to men?
2. What personal, institutional and societal factors affect women's participation in the management of universities?
3. What policies govern recruitment, appointment and promotion of university managers, and how do they affect women's participation in university management?

4. What interventions are being put in place in the universities to change the under-representation of women in management?
5. What possible strategies can be used to enhance women's participation in university management in Kenya?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

A survey of literature on women in management in Kenya shows that there is very little information on the actual position of women in university management. There is no sufficient data on the factors affecting women's career advancement. The significance of this study lies in its ability to determine the actual representation of women in university management and the factors that affect women's effective participation.

The suggestions from the study would lead to new orientation in formulation and implementation of new affirmative action policies that could enhance women's participation in university management. They will enable scholars and policy makers to design more progressive management programmes and policies aimed at ensuring equal participation of men and women in university management. The study will benefit women working in higher education by identifying obstacles they face or might face en route to senior management positions and by suggesting how to overcome them. It will also contribute to the corpus of literature on women in management in Africa in general, and in Kenya in particular.

### **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The main focus of this study is the factors affecting Kenyan women's participation in university management. The study used three public and three private chartered universities and their constituent colleges. Those men and women involved in management positions such as deputy vice chancellors, directors of institutes, deans of faculties and heads of departments were used. Senior academic staff (both men and women) were also included to elicit their views on some of the factors that have hindered them from ascending to higher management positions in their respective universities.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The researcher was faced with a number of problems, some of which were quite serious, during fieldwork. The initial intention was to interview all vice-chancellors and at least three deputy chancellors of the selected universities. However, during the field interviews access to these officers was denied to the researcher. One of the typical questions asked by their personal assistants was "*Who do you think you are to interview the Vice Chancellor?*" This was the case in most of the public universities. The private universities were very co-operative in this regard. Again, the

researcher's intention of analysing official documents pertaining to promotion, appointment criteria and staff lists was not possible in some public universities which refused to release these documents. This lack of access to official documents forced the researcher to rely on information from respondents and public documents. Publications, such as university calendars, helped to ascertain the status of the women in university management. Similarly, information about recruitment, appointment and promotion policies was obtained from respondents, as well as university calendars.

The prevailing negative attitude towards women's issues and especially towards professional women in the Kenya society was generally met with hostility from some male and women managers. Most senior academic men and managers were indisposed to be interviewed because they felt they were not the right people to answer the interview questions. Others assumed that the researcher was being used by donors to make money and the findings from the study would not benefit Kenyans. The sample size of the men who accepted the interviews was small (20) and therefore, their replies may not be representative of the whole male population in Kenyan universities.

### **1.8 Theoretical Framework**

The study was guided by the feminist theory. The theory recognises the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life and tries to understand women's oppression and the structures in society that espouse this oppression and subordination. The feminist perspective, looking at the many similarities between the genders, concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. Differences in the realization of that potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed constraints and from the influence of social institutions and values (Nzomo 1995).

Feminists advance *three broad perspectives* in trying to explain the absence of women from senior management in the public and private sector. The first perspective is *personal factors* in which the paucity of women in management positions is attributed to the psychosocial attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioral skills of women themselves. Among personal factors are self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges "to go up the ladder", women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle a crisis (Bond 1996). On the other hand, personal factors such as, assertiveness, confidence, resourceful creativeness, loyalty and trustworthiness help women to ascend to senior management positions (Singh and Shahabudin 2000).

The *structural or institutional factors* paradigm advances the view that it is the disadvantageous position of women in the organizational structure (few numbers, little power, limited access to resources) which shapes and defines the behaviour and positions of women. The underlying premise of this perspective is that men and women are equally capable of and committed to assuming positions of leadership. The problem is vested in the structure and the remedy is a fundamental change to eliminate inappropriate discrimination in institutional policies and practices. The structural factors that affect women negatively include: discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; male resistance to women in management positions; absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women; and limited opportunities for leadership training and for demonstrating competence as a result of power structure in the work place (Bond 1996). Structural factors affecting the participation of women positively include the presence of organizational guidance, good mentoring systems, proper staff development programmes for women, transparent appointment and promotion procedures, support services for women, access to information technology and flexible work schedules.

The last perspective is the one advanced by Smulders (1998). She explores the *cultural factors* which link gender factors and organizational structure factors. Her analysis is concerned with the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles, responsibilities and expectations to women and men. "The gender-based roles, irrelevant to the work place, are carried into the work place and kept in place because the actors involved, both dominant and subordinate, subscribe to social and organization reality" (Smulders 1998,50). The cultural factors lead to stereotypical views about women's abilities within the cultural context. The view that top management positions are only suitable for men relegates women to secondary roles. The emphasis is placed on women's role as mothers, caregivers and nurturers.

These three broad perspectives guided the present study to explore the factors that affect women's participation in university management in Kenya.

### 1.9 Definition of Terms

**Participation:** The term is used in this study to refer to the provision of equal opportunity to women to take part in the leadership and decision-making and management of higher education institutions in Kenya. It implies quantitative and qualitative participation of women in university management.

**Strategies:** The term is used to refer to ways and means that can be used to improve both quantitative and qualitative participation of women in

university management. They include formal (e.g. institutional and government policies) and informal (networking, open campaigns).

**Management:** The term in the study means any person charged with the responsibility of planning, coordinating and directing people, a department or an organization, in this case a university.

**Feminist Perspective:** This term is conceived as that standpoint which maintains that women and men have equal potential to develop themselves in all spheres of life but that the realization of women's potential is hampered by externally imposed constraints and influence of social institutions and values.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The literature on women and management in universities in Kenya is very scanty. This section presents a review of work that has been done in Kenya and other parts of the world on the positions women occupy in university management, factors hindering women from advancing to senior management in universities and some of the strategies that have been proposed to improve their situation.

### 2.2 The Status of Women in University Management

Research abounds especially in Europe and North America showing the status of women in management and more so in higher education management. Such research is beginning to attract the attention of research in developing countries. In this section literature related to the status of women in management of higher education is reviewed so as to shed more light on the research topic.

Lund (1998) conducted a survey on female staff numbers in commonwealth universities to identify the positions occupied by women in both academic and administrative hierarchies. Using secondary data obtained from the *Commonwealth Universities Yearbook*, the survey found that women are still seriously under-represented amongst full time staff in both administrative and academic hierarchies of commonwealth universities. The study revealed that there were no women vice-chancellors or deputy vice chancellors in Kenyan universities that were members of the commonwealth. There was one female registrar, two deans of faculties, and one librarian. Lund (1998) concluded that in terms of administrative posts, women are more likely to succeed as registrars, librarians, or heads of personnel, than if they aspire to be vice-chancellors or their deputies, directors of finance or deans of faculties.

An update to the survey done in the year 2000 pertaining to the status of women in senior management and academic positions in the Commonwealth universities showed that the status of women had improved marginally. In the year 2000 women were more visible in the positions of heads/directors of academic departments with nearly 18% of them in these posts. The statistics of the two surveys are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2. Distribution of men and women by occupation category in Commonwealth Universities: 1997-2000

Status	1997			2000		
	Women	%	Total	Women	%	Total
VCs	50	8.3%	600	54	9.0	602
DVCs	N/A	N/A	N/A	329	19.8	1664
Heads of Admin	96	18.8	511	79	14.9	531
Finance officers	34	10.1	337	45	12.0	374
Deans	238	13.0	1827	308	14.3	2160
Heads/Directors	1234	15.2	1823	2686	17.9	15017
Librarian	108	36.5	296	126	37.2	339

SOURCE: Singh, J, K (2002): Women and Higher Education Management in the Commonwealth: An Overview

The data in Table 2 shows that management in higher education is basically a male's affair. Women do not occupy positions that enable them to influence the policies and direction of their institutions, both at the departmental and institutional levels.

Dines (1993) summarized research findings from different countries (West Africa, Arab States, India, Malaysia, Indonesia, the South Pacific, Peru, the United States, the Caribbean, Finland and France) on the status of women in higher education management and factors hindering their participation in higher education management. She observed that country after country, women held less than 50% of academic and administrative posts in higher education institutions. Representation varied between about 10 and 20 % at middle management level and from 0 to 10% at senior management level.

In Kenya Lodiaga and Mbevi (1995) conducted a study to investigate women's employment level, opportunities and career advancement in selected public institutions. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the status of women in selected public institutions, identify factors that may enhance, promote or inhibit status and advancement of women,

and explore the available opportunities for women's advancement in various institutions. The findings from the study revealed that in the appointed administrative posts women were lacking. In all the universities there were no female deans of faculties. Only one woman was serving as a principal at a constituent college. The study further revealed that, of the seventeen directors in all the public universities, only three were women, and of the 186 heads of department in the universities only sixteen were women. The deans' committees of all public universities were composed of only men, and most Boards and Committees at Moi and Egerton universities had no women representatives at all.

It is true that campaigns for increased participation of women in management have intensified since the time the above studies were done. But a look into the university calendars of some of the public universities in the year 2000 revealed that the position of women has not changed much. This study, therefore, seeks to ascertain the current status of women in university management in Kenya, to examine factors that have continued to affect women's participation and to suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance their participation.

### **2.3 Barriers to Women's Participation in University Management**

Scott and Lawson recommended that women's participation in higher education management could be enhanced through such strategies as mentoring, women's self-empowerment by believing in themselves, and building confidence in selling themselves to get noticed and build credibility.

Heiskanen (1993) maintains that the position attained by women in higher education management is influenced by a number of factors. Of greatest importance among these are the existence of a pool of formally qualified women, the socio-cultural and psychological barriers preventing women from pursuing academic careers and assuming managerial roles, and the attitudes in the higher education system, especially of the academic community towards women's access to such positions in higher education institutions.

Kamau (2001), in her study of one private university in Kenya on the status of women and management in higher education, sought to find out what factors, besides research and publication, prevent women from rising to senior university management as much as their male counterparts. Accordingly, her findings indicted that lack of policy and practice aimed to encourage women to aspire for senior positions was the main hindrance for the women in that university. She also uncovered that women were subjected to pressures and experiences not met by men. These pressures included feelings of isolation, strain in coping up with stereotypical sex role

and the whole experience of pressure from institutional and societal cultures that are not supportive of women. Her study was very important in identifying some of the factors that affect women's participation in university management. The present study has expanded the sample size and tried to find out if the factors identified by Kamau (2001) were being experienced by women in the other universities.

Lodiaga and Mbevi (1995) in their study conducted in Kenya revealed that there were several causes for under-representation of women in positions of authority and responsibility. These were deep-rooted traditional/cultural and attitudinal concepts that influence both the employers' and employees' attitude, including women's self-concept to be dominated. These socio-cultural beliefs and stereotypical views promoted the notion of women's unsuitability for positions of power and responsibility. As a result of these attitudes, there were significant gender-based differences and of conflicts both in family and work places. One respondent said:

We live in a society which has made mothers the key figures in a child's upbringing. To take up a career and be successful involves enormous amount of organization and planning in which men rarely have much part (Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995,25).

Other factors included: lack of highly prominent women visible as role models in positions of authority and responsibility, flouting of recruitment and promotion procedures, attitudes of principals and heads of departments to women employees, domination of the professional/decision-making body by males, intimidation, and uncomfortable working environment due to gender and occupational segregation in task assignment.

Nzomo (1995) contends that the socio-cultural beliefs and myths about the role of women in society are the major determinants of women's failure to advance to top management positions both in the public and private sector. The other factors, in order of their importance, are inadequate formal education and training, absence of strong women's movement and networking, and absence of government legal and policy framework to support women's advancement. Indeed, as the study has shown, women unlike men face a number of barriers in their career advancement, some of which are found within the institutions while others are external.

#### **2.4 Strategies that Can Be Used to Enhance Women's Participation in University Management**

Various strategies have been formulated to increase the participation of women in education, decision-making and development activities in general. Global strategies are outlined in the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (1985) prepared during the United Nations Decade for Women in 1985.

One of the strategies outlined in the document relevant to this study is the one which states that research on the causes of absenteeism and dropout among girls should be intensified (United Nations 1985). The fourth world Conference on women in Beijing reiterated 69% of these strategies. But, strategies proposed at international forums tend to be too general, ignoring the specific obstacles in independent nations. One instance in this regard is their failure to directly address the formal education system.

Intervention strategies commonly suggested include: increasing women's participation in education at all levels so as to raise the number of women from which able managers could evolve; formulating equal opportunity policies, changing the environment in which women work, and the attitudes towards educated women, flexibility in working hours, and reviewing of recruitment and promotion policies in higher education. (Poskitt 1998; UNESCO 1994; Dines 1993).

Strategies specific to Kenya are given by Nzomo (1995) who suggests that there is: the urgent need to establish programs combining gender sensitization, legal awareness raising and civil education of both women and men, with a view to eradicating retrogressive socio-cultural attitudes and values, as well as democratizing the Kenyan society. The study underscored the importance of women's self-empowerment through their own organizations and through more effective networking that cuts across class, political and socio-economic divides (Nzomo 1995,2)

The reviews so far have shown that women are indeed under-represented in university management in Kenya and other parts of the world as well. Several factors have been identified as affecting women's participation in university management both locally and globally. A number of strategies of remedy have also been proposed. As such, the present research becomes duly important as it investigates and throws light on whether any and of the interventions has been put to use.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section describes the research design, sample and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection and analyses procedures.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A survey design is used in the present study. It attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. In the case of the this study the variable is women's participation in university management. This

design was chosen due to its advantages as identified by Reinharz (1992). These are:

- It can put a problem on the map by showing that it is more widespread than previously thought;
- Survey-based prevalence data are useful in demonstrating that a problem is distributed in a particular way throughout the population. This distribution may suggest factors that contribute to the problem, and these factors, in turn, provide hints as to how the problem may be prevented or remedied through particular forms of action;
- It can also help identify differences among groups and changes over time.

### **3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedures**

The sample was drawn from three public and three private universities in Kenya. At the time of the study Kenya had a total of eleven chartered Universities, six of which are public and five private. The universities were selected using stratified random sampling procedures. They were stratified into public and private, old and new. From each stratum three universities were selected purposively. Two of the universities from each stratum were from Nairobi, and one each from the countryside. The three public universities in the study were Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture, Science and technology, University of Nairobi, and Maseno University. University of Nairobi was selected because it is the oldest institution of higher learning in Kenya. It is fairly large in terms of student population, staff establishment and offers a variety of disciplines in both sciences and humanities. It was therefore assumed that the management functions of the institution are many and hence the need for many managers. The other two public universities are relatively new and were included to determine whether they were incorporating gender equity issues in their recruitment and appointment policies. The three private Universities in the sample were United States International University, Daystar University and University of Eastern Africa, Baraton.

### **3.4 Respondents**

The respondents in the study were both men and women occupying management positions as well as senior academic posts in the selected universities. They included deputy vice-chancellors, deans of faculties, registrars, deans of students, directors, heads of departments and senior academic staff. The chief officers were selected purposively whereas senior academic staffs were selected by stratified random sampling using ranks. Only senior academic staff which the rank of senior lecturer and above and

who worked at the university for a period of more than five years were included in the sample.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents, by status and sex

Status	Male	Female	Total
Vice chancellors	1	0	1
Deputy vice chancellors	1	1	2
Deans of Faculty	2	3	7
Deans of students	0	4	4
Directors of Institute	0	4	4
Registrars	0	2	2
Heads of department	4	8	12
Co-coordinators of programme	1	2	3
Personnel managers	1	1	3
Senior academic staff	10	20	30
Development officers	0	1	1
Total	20	46	69

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher had first obtained a permit from the Ministry of Education authorising her to conduct the research in Kenya. Consequently, she wrote a letter to the vice chancellors of the selected universities requesting permission to conduct the research in their institutions. It is worth noting here that the replies from the vice-chancellors took such a long time, in some cases up to four months, that she was forced to follow up with telephone calls and by paying visits.

In some of the universities the request for authorisation to conduct research was forwarded to a research committee as the research there was considered by some vice-chancellors as sensitive. Finally, after the permission was obtained from the universities, appointments were made with the key informants such as women deans, heads of departments and male managers. All the male and women managers were interviewed by the researcher and the necessary documents accessed from the relevant offices. Questionnaires were distributed to the senior academic staff with the assistance of four enumerators.

### 3.6 Research Instruments

Three research instruments were used in the collection of data. The questionnaires were distributed by the enumerators to lecturers to solicit the relevant information. Interview guides were used to interview deputy vice-

chancellors, their deputies, deans, principals of colleges, directors, registrars, heads of departments. Both men and women managers were also interviewed regarding the policies that govern recruitment, appointment and promotion of staff to senior management position and the possible reasons for the absence of women from these positions. Document analysis guides were also employed to analyse such documents as recruitment, appointment and promotion criteria, job advertisements, job application forms and interview guides, as well as staff development policies. This instrument was beneficial to see the extent to which equal opportunity rights for both women and men are stressed and how they affected women's participation in the university management. The lists of academic and administrative staff were used for gathering information about existing positions occupied by women in the university management. The instruments were piloted in one public, and one private university in Nairobi and adjustments were made accordingly.

### **3.7 Data Analysis Procedures**

The data was analysed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The information obtained from interviews was analyzed through a process of content analysis and categorized into themes. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts of managers, and percentages of women managers was used to show the status of women in the university management. Documentary data was also utilised to cross check, supplement and confirm information obtained from interviews and questionnaires.

## **4. FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

The study set out to determine the factors that affect women's participation in university management and suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance women's participation in university management. Data was collected from three public and three private universities. The respondents included ten male managers of the universities, twenty six women managers, and twenty women and ten men from senior academic staff. This chapter presents the findings from the study.

### **4.2 Background Information on the Respondents**

#### ***4.2.1 Age of Respondents***

Age was regarded as important element because it would give an indication of the age at which women usually ascend to management positions as compared to men. (Research has shown that women being late comers to the academic would join at a late age).

Table 4. Distribution of male and female managers, by age

Age	Frequency	
	Male	Female
26-30	0	1
31-35	0	1
36-40	3	5
41-45	3	8
46-50		6
56-60	2	5
Above 60	2	0
Total	10	26

Table 4 shows that majority of the male managers were aged between 36-50 years. The women managers were also aged between 36-50 years. Some (five) female managers were found to be above 50 years of age, unlike their male counterparts. However, in general, there was no significant difference in age between the male and women managers.

Table 5. Distribution of senior academic staff, by age

Age	Male	Female	Total
25 – 29	1	2	3
30 – 35	6	5	11
36 – 40	1	0	1
40 – 44	1	7	8
45 – 50	1	4	5
Over 50	0	2	2
Total	10	20	30

Table 5 shows that while most of the men (70%) were aged 35 years and below, most women (65%) were aged 40 years and above. Again no major differences in age between the men and women of senior academic staff was observed.

#### 4.2.2 Experience in University Teaching/Working

Table 6. Distribution of male and female managers, by experience (tenure)

Years	Male	Female	Total
3 – 5	2	6	8
5 – 6	2	0	2
6 – 10	2	4	6
11 – 15	2	6	8
16 – 20	1	6	7
Over 20	1	4	5
Total	10	26	36

Table 6 shows that 80% of the male managers had worked in the university for a period of over five years and that the same (76.9%) is true with the twenty female managers in the same working period. This shows that the respondents had worked in the university for more or less the same duration.

Table 7. Distribution of senior academic staff, by tenure

Years	Male	Female	Total
5 – 10	4	6	10
10 – 15	5	8	13
15 – 20	0	4	4
Less than 5 years	1	2	3
Total	10	20	30

Interestingly, Table 7 shows that 90% of both the male and female senior academic staff had a working experience of between 5-20 years.

### 4.2.3 Academic Qualification of Respondents

Table 8. Distribution of male and female managers' academic qualifications, by sex

Qualification	Male	Female	Total
PhD	7	11	18
Master's	3	13	16
Bachelor's degree	0	2	2
Total	10	26	36

Table 8 shows that majority of the respondents had a postgraduate degree with only two female managers having a bachelor's degree. This indicates that the respondents possessed the necessary academic qualification and were therefore duly qualified to hold the positions they were holding in the university management.

Table 9. Distribution of academic staff, by qualification

Qualification	Male	Female	Total
PhD	4	9	13
Master's	6	11	17
Total	10	20	30

Table 9 shows that the respondents in the study possessed the necessary qualifications for the positions they were holding in the senior academic staff.

## 4.3 Position and Responsibilities of Employees

### 4.3.1 Positions Occupied by Women in University Management in Kenya as Compared to Men's

To find out the positions women were occupying in the university management as compared to those of men the researcher used administrative and academic staff lists (where these were made available), University Calendars /Catalogues in cases where access to staff lists was denied and information obtained from the respondents. Analysis of the obtained data and information revealed that women are occupying a small

percentage of the senior management positions of the universities surveyed. The findings are summarized in the Table 10.

Table 10. Distribution of women in public universities management (as of July 2002)

Position	Nairobi Jomo Kenyatta			Maseno			Grand Total					
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T			
VC	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	3
DVC	1	1	2	3	0	3	3	0	3	7	1	8
Registrar	7	2	9	2	0	2	3	0	3	12	4	16
Principal	5	1	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	1	6
Director of institute	7	2	9	2	2	4	7	2	9	16	6	22
Dean of students	4	6	10	0	1	1	1	0	1	5	7	12
Dean of faculty	13	1	14	3	2	5	2	1	3	18	4	22
Finance officer	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	1	3
Librarian	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	3
HOD	71	14	85	10	3	13	14	2	16	95	19	114

Table 10 shows that women occupied such positions as heads of departments (19), deans of students (7) director of institutes (6) deans of faculties (4) librarians (1) and registrar (4). Overall the public universities surveyed seemed to have more women as heads of departments, deans of students and registrars. It was observed that women headed the departments of Home Science, Music, food and nutrition, gender studies; however, there was one woman who directed an institute of computer science in one of the universities an area which is traditionally considered as a preserve of men. Another women headed the department of communication and media technology in another public universities.

Table 11. Distribution of women in private universities management (as of July 2002)

Position	Daystar			Baraton			USIU			Total		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
VC	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	3
DVC	3	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	2	5	1	6
Registrar	0	2	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	3	4
Director	1	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0	1
Dean of students	1	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	3
Food services manager	-	1	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	0	2	2
Finance officer	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	3
Librarian	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	2	3
HOD	9	11	20	9	4	13	3	2	5	21	17	38
Public relations	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	3
Council Chair	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	0	3
HR manager	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	2	1	3
Development officer	1	0	1	0	1	1	-	-	-	1	1	2

Table 11 shows that majority of the women in the private universities under review occupied the positions of heads of department (17). Other women occupied such positions as librarians (2) registrar (3) and food services managers (2). Overall, the private universities surveyed seemed to have more women (17 out of 21) heading departments than that of public universities (19 out of 95). One major factor that emerged from the interviews was the fact that most of the women heading departments in private universities had worked in public universities for several years before moving to private universities. This appears to indicate that private universities were opening up more opportunities for women in management and were tapping the unused resource in the public universities. One of the private universities (USIU) had a female vice chancellor and a female deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs). There is also another private university, Africa Nazarene University, which has not been chartered at the time of the study, which has a female vice-chancellor as well.

One of the vice chancellors in whose university there were more women than men heading departments, when asked the reason for this trend explained that:

Women are good workers, they perform their duties with diligence, are patient and willing to offer services to people whereas men do not have the patience especially to work in young universities which may not be financially stable.

The Vice-Chancellor illustrated the patience of women by citing an example of a woman who had come from abroad with a doctorate and wanted employment in his university. When she first applied for job she was told that there was no vacancy at the time, and she would be considered after three years when the university had picked up. The woman came back after three years and got the job.

Another possible explanation for the increased participation of women in private universities management could be their religious commitment. Interviews with senior male managers in these institutions suggested that the religious commitment of the women made them easier to work with. The researcher also found out that some women in these religious sponsored universities were hired because their husbands had been hired either as chaplains or academic staff. However, the women possessed the necessary academic and professional qualifications for the job they were hired to do.

In both public and private universities, document analysis showed that women tended to work in the traditionally feminine areas such as, deans of home economics, directors of catering, directors for the institute of gender studies, heads of food and nutrition and deans of students. The findings from this study agree with the general picture painted in the literature about the positions women occupy in university management (Lund 1998; Singh 2002).

#### **4.3.2 Main Responsibilities of the Male and Female Managers**

To investigate further the role women played in university management, the men and woman managers were asked to indicate their main responsibilities in the university. The purpose of this question was to find out the extent to which women were involved in key decision-making responsibilities in the universities. The responses to this question indicated that there were differences between women managers and male managers' responsibilities. The summary is given in Table 12.

Table 12. Distribution of male and female managers, by main responsibilities

Responsibility	Male	Female	Total
Administrative	3	5	8
Programme development	3	1	4
Teaching	1	10	11
Co-ordination of programmes	2	3	5
Supervisor/staff	3	3	6
Student discipline	0	2	2
Recruitment	3	1	4
Policy development	5	2	7
Guidance and counseling	0	4	4
Monitoring and evaluation	2	0	2
Budgeting	3	1	4
Research	3	1	4

Table 12 shows that most of the women managers (10) were involved in teaching, (3) in co-ordination of programmes and supervision of staff, (3) in administrative work, and (4) in guidance and counseling. None of the women were involved in key decision-making activities in the universities, for example, in policy-making, monitoring and evaluation and budgeting. Instead, they shouldered heavy responsibilities in the support services like student discipline, teaching, guidance and counseling, roles which have been traditionally associated with women. These findings agree with what has been found in the United Kingdom (Brook 1997; Morley 1999) and United States (Glazer 1999; Park 1996). In addition to their responsibilities in the departments, faculties or institutes, women managers were found to be involved in other activities. These activities are summarised in Table 13.

Table 13. Other activities of women managers

Activity	Frequency
• HIV/AIDS committees	3
• Disciplinary committee	4
• Graduation committee	2
• Students welfare committee	10
• Staff welfare committee	2
• Task forces	2
• Preaching	4
• Church activities	4
• Students societies/clubs committee	5
• Seminars committee	2

The data in Table 13 shows that the women managers like other women elsewhere were shouldering a lot of responsibilities. The women were involved in everything ranging from assisting in the coordination of programmes to students activities and being in several committees. And yet, all these may not earn them any credit that helps their promotion. This is likely to translate into work overload, which might have an effect on their career advancement.

The women managers in the study were asked why they involved themselves in these activities. Their reasons are summarised in Table 14.

Table 14. Reasons for involvement of women in various activities

Reason	Frequency
Appointed	10
Self interest	8
Professional growth	5
Reducing poverty among women	2
For institution's growth	5

From Table 14 it can be observed that most women (10) were appointed to these responsibilities in addition to their managerial appointments; other women (8) were involved because of self interest, while others (5) saw them as career development opportunities. However, these responsibilities have been known not to count for promotion purposes into senior academic ranks. Therefore, the activities only take away the women's time for research and publication which is important as main criterion for promotion to senior academic ranks (Onsongo 2000; Park 1996).

#### **4.4 Factors that Affect Women's Participation in University Management in Kenya**

The main focus of the study was to determine factors that affect women's participation in university management. In order to identify these factors it was necessary to examine the policies governing recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures in the selected universities. This section presents the findings on these policies.

##### **4.4.1 *Criteria used to Recruit, Appoint and Promote Senior Managers in the Universities***

The female managers were asked to indicate the formal qualifications that were required and on their first appointments. Responses to this question are summarized Table 15.

Table 15. Formal qualifications required on recruitment

Qualification	Frequency
Master's degree	16
Bachelor's degree	6
Doctorate degree	4
Total	26

It can be observed from Table 15 that academic qualifications play a key role in the recruitment of university staff. It is true that the women did not join the universities as managers, but had started out from junior ranks before ascending to management positions and become senior academic staff. Interview with the male managers revealed that academic qualification was the main criteria used when appointing senior administrators of the university. The female respondents were asked to indicate their first rank on appointment. The responses are summarized in Table 16.

Table 16. Ranks of respondents on first appointment

Rank	Frequency
Assistant lecturer	6
Dean of students	1
Lecturer	5
Tutorial fellow	7
Graduate assistant	4
Human resource manager	1
Development officer	1
Assistant registrar	1

Table 16 shows that the majority of the women managers had started from the lowest ranks in the academic ladder; that is (7) as tutorial fellows; (4), as graduate assistants, and (6), as assistant lecturers. Only three of the women joined their universities in management positions as development officer, assistant registrar and human resource manager. This is because the jobs were purely administrative and supposedly not much challenging.

Respondents were next asked to indicate the duration of the term in their first appointment. Responses to this question showed that the women stayed on their appointment for a period ranging from less than a year to 10-12 years. Research conducted elsewhere has revealed that entry into junior

ranks mainly depends on academic qualifications but seniority in the hierarchy changes as the criteria for promotion becomes less rigid or formal. For example, some of the women interviewed had attained their management positions due to sudden events. One woman said:

I became Academic Dean due to a crisis. The then dean resigned. I was asked to act as I was new and did not understand the politics of the institution

Apart from the academic qualification, there were other criteria followed especially when it came to appointing senior management staff. These criteria included experience in the relevant field, administrative abilities, length of service in the university and religious commitment especially in the private universities which were sponsored by religious organisations.

Another criteria pointed out was that vacant positions were advertised both internally and externally. The mass media meetings, and internal memos were used to make members aware of available positions. However, this was the case only with academic appointments and promotions. An analysis of the university statutes indicates that that positions such as vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, finance officers, registrars and heads of departments were not advertised internally or externally.

The female managers were asked about how they had learnt about the vacancy. This question was intended to find out whether the information about vacancies was made available to all eligible applicants and in a transparent manner. The responses to this question are summarized in Table 17.

Table 17. Sources of information about vacancies

Source	Frequency
From advertisement	15
From a friend	6
From the vice-chancellor	2
Head of department	2
From employee spouse	1
Total	26

As can be seen from Table 17, the majority of the respondents got their information through job advertisements. This was mainly due to the fact that academic positions were normally advertised in the local media.

The senior academic staff, both male and female, were also asked how they learnt about the position. Five reported that it was through the media, six

from a friend, three from internal memos, four through meeting and two from personal efforts.

Respondents were also asked to indicate who or what had encouraged them to apply and their responses are summarised in Table 18.

Table 18. Sources of encouragement

Source of encouragement	Frequency
Qualification	8
Confidence	3
Head of department	2
Family member	2
Better prospects	3
Desire to work at university	2
Frustration at former work place	3
Nobody	7
Total	30

Table 18 shows that academic and professional qualification (8) was the most motivating factor for applying for the jobs. This was closely followed by personal initiative (7). The other senior academic staff also indicated that academic qualification and professional experience were instrumental in making them apply for the positions they were holding. The findings indicate that academic qualification and professional experience affect women's participation in higher education. When they possess the necessary academic and professional qualifications they become confident to apply for available positions. The desire for career advancement also comes second after professional and academic qualification.

Another question asked was what factors the women managers thought influenced the recruitment, appointment and promotion of females to senior management positions in their universities. The responses to this question are summarized in Table 19.

Table 19. Factors influencing recruitment, appointment and promotion of women

Factors	Frequency
Teaching experience	9
Administration experience	15
Merit	10
Publications	5
Ability	3
Nepotism	2
Other relationships	3
Personal attributes	5
Political affiliations	6
Religious commitment	3

Most of the women (15) considered administrative experience to be the main factor influencing the recruitment, appointment and promotion of women into senior management positions (Table 19). This was closely followed by merit (10), teaching experience (9), political affiliation (6), publications (5) and personal attributes (5). The administrative experience requirement was seen by some women to be unfair since men dominantly occupied management positions in the university. Again other unclear criteria were followed as one woman manager commenting on the factors influencing the appointment of women into senior management said:

Women are sometimes appointed as compromise candidates for a promotion when powerful male candidates are competing for a position or during a crisis when office politics embarrassments preclude preferred male appointees.

In responding to the question of what factor influenced the recruitment, appointment and promotion of women into senior management positions, the senior academic staff gave varied responses. Their responses are summarized in Table 20.

Table 20. Factors influencing appointment and of women (Senior academic staff)

Factors	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Networking	2	1
Ethnicity	4	0
Qualification	6	9
Experience (administrative and teaching)	4	8
Political affiliation	5	0
Husband's political position	1	0
Assertiveness	0	2
Confidence	0	2
Availability of positions	0	2
Willingness to take up positions	0	1

From the data in Table 20 it can be deduced that academic qualification, administrative and teaching experience at the university are key to the appointment, recruitment and promotion of women into senior management positions. However, one senior male academic also thought that political affiliation and ethnicity played a significant role in these appointments. This response may imply that some people are appointed to positions that they do not merit.

A document analysis revealed that qualification and experience were important considerations in the recruitment, appointment and promotion. A typical advertisement for the post of director of student's developments in Daystar University (Daily Nation Friday, March 15' 2002 –) reads like this:

Applicants must have a PhD in a field of specialty with professional skills in administration and management, communication and interpersonal relations, counseling, cross-cultural experience facilitation, commitment to young people, computing and leadership. The applicant should have at least 10 years (my emphasis) working in leadership position in an institution of higher learning

Such an advertisement is likely to attract more men than women simply because very few women can meet the qualifications. In Kenya, very few women hold PhD degrees and even those who have not had the opportunity to demonstrate their administrative skills since most management positions in institutions of higher learning are occupied by men. The requirement of a PhD and at least ten years of experience in a similar position can be termed as an indirect discrimination against women (Kamau 2001). As Gachukia (2002) argues, women with family responsibilities have to divide their time

between research, postgraduate studies and undertaking management training, all of which are mandatory for appointment and promotion to higher levels. This has not been possible for most women.

An analysis of job application forms from Daystar University revealed that a formal qualification (a master's/doctorate degree) was necessary for recruitment, appointment and promotion. There was an emphasis on Christian living, which is because it is a religious sponsored university. More weight is given to Christian witness; hence, there were questions asking how many times one reads the bible, attends prayer meetings, and his/her role in one's local church were asked. The referees have to be Christian friends who know the applicant intimately and can speak about the applicant's Christian commitment and how the religion is observed in their daily life.

The interview guide sheets for recruitment at Daystar University which emphasized Christian commitment, were availed. This emphasis is reflected in the questions in the referee's questionnaire which asked: "If married, will the spouse be a help or a hindrance to the applicant's ministry? Is their home well ordered? Are the children, if any, well behaved?" This shows how important Christian commitment is in the recruitment process. Once recruited, the members are monitored in their Christian living as well as their professional skills. This could be seen in the content of the staff appraisal forms, which are filled by heads of departments and deputy vice-chancellor administration, for those being considered for senior management positions.

Interview with male managers of the university on the criteria used to appoint senior administrative staff of the university also revealed that academic qualifications (five), administrative abilities (two), and experience in the university (four), were key in the appointments. For the private religious-sponsored universities, the appointment of vice-chancellors and their deputies was made by the supreme governing bodies of the churches or religious organizations sponsoring the universities. The male chief officers were asked whether the criteria were strictly followed. The majority of the respondents (seven) felt that the criteria were strictly followed to maintain quality. A few (three) felt that sometimes the criteria were not strictly followed.

Asked about the methods used to select people for available positions, the senior academic staff also emphasized the fact that qualifications and experience were the main factors considered (15). The religious sponsored universities seemed to appoint staff on the basis of religious commitment in addition to academic qualification and experience. However, some (five) senior academic staff did not know how the appointments were made as the

criteria were not made available to them. One male senior academic staff from the University of Nairobi observed that:

It has been very uncertain how some people have been recruited and promoted in our university. This has led to low morale in the university members of staff (male respondents – UON).

Another added:

Tribalism and favoritism are criteria used in the sense that appointments are mainly influenced by the former encounter with the person to be recruited (male respondent UON).

On of those who thought that recruitment, appointment and promotion were fair to all argued, “I think recruitment, appointment and promotion are based on merit. The implications are that if an area has more men trained in it than women, it will tend to be populated by men (male respondent, UON).

#### ***4.4.2 Composition of The Recruitment, Appointment and Promotion Committees***

The study sought to find out the composition of the appointment committees because studies elsewhere have revealed these committees are male-dominated; hence, women’s interests are ignored during interviews and many women feel intimidated during the interviews (Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995; Mullei 1995 and Gachukia 2002). Gachukia (2002) identifies the composition of interview panels as a formal barrier to women’s participation in higher education both as faculty and managers. She argues that the interviewing panels are frequently male-dominated and women candidates are usually subjected to irrelevant gender biased prejudices, e.g. “Are you still giving birth?”

Interviews with male managers, and document analysis showed that the compositions of these committees were predominantly male.

The committees were comprised of deans of faculties, heads of departments, deputy vice-chancellors (academic), and registrars and finance officers. Men held most of these positions. The members were selected on the basis of their office, some were appointed by the university council. There were no specific numbers reserved for women. Women became members by virtue of occupying a management position in the university.

The male managers were asked how they ensured that nobody was disadvantaged in the recruitment process because of their gender. They indicated that the issue of gender did not arise in the short-listing and recruitment process. The committees were expected to be fair and gender sensitive but no deliberate effort was made by the management to ensure

gender sensitivity and equal opportunity. Such argument has been disputed by some scholars especially feminists in the area of women and higher education. Oakley (2001,1) argues:

whatever is represented as gender neutral is likely to obscure the power relations of gender;...It is simply fiction that tests of excellence are neutral and that merit is an objective assessment. Women 'fail' to gain inclusion because they are judged in systems set up by men reflecting male standards and criteria.

Evidence from the senior academic staff questionnaire revealed that the composition of the recruitment panel determined who is recruited, appointed and promoted.

Some male professors interviewed argued that women should stop blaming masculinity for their low status in society and in higher education management; that they have sat in interview panels for many years and there was no time when gender became an issue and, all positions were advertised openly for both male and female. They wondered why women do not apply. For example, "deans are elected, *why can't women contest?*" they wondered. One male professor concluded that women were missing from leadership positions because:

they do not trust other women who are in senior management positions. They doubt the way they reached the top. Some even think they slept with the men who appointed them (male respondent).

Another male professor felt that the presence of women in the appointment committee will not help since women, once appointed managers, stop discussing gender inequality or even women issues and join the men's club. He thought that the best thing was for women to liaise with women who have reached the top and learn from them the tricks they used to reach the top.

The views of these professors are shared by some women leaders. For example, the chairperson of *Maendelo ya Wanawake* (a local organization set up to improve the status of women and girls) when addressing a public rally organized to celebrate the appointment of one woman to the East Africa Parliament, was quoted as saying:

There is no need for affirmative action. We are not discriminated against. Those claiming that women are discriminated have their own agenda; the rest of us are satisfied. What women need is humility, canvassing and networking skills to land plumb jobs instead of heckling and making constant complaints. Women were naturally endowed with patience, which they should use to win concession and opportunities. Women just need

better networking at the highest level (*Chairperson Manadeleo ya wanawake* Daily Nation, Monday November 26, 2001).

However, the same woman acknowledged that women leaders face challenges which arise from gender-based prejudices. She thus advises new woman leaders: "I urge you to put cotton wool in your ears because you will hear many things most of which are unpleasant. You are going to have so many enemies, you will not know where they come from".

The views expressed by this woman leader are shocking and surprising. The message she is sending out to the Kenyan women and girls, whose interests her organization is supposed to promote, is wrong. While it is difficult to argue against the importance of networking and establishing partnership among those who genuinely care about women's status in national life, the chairperson of Maendeleo ya Wanawake simplifies the matter to the point of trivializing women's concerns. Indeed, women's status in Kenya should not be predicted on the personal interests and influence of the people she converses. It should be based on clearly thought-out and clearly defined policies and laws.

The views of the women leaders are shared by some women managers in the universities. One woman head of department refused an interview because she did not believe women were discriminated in Kenya. When she discovered that the study had been sponsored by OSSREA, she argued that Europeans were pouring money into the developing world to break the family by cheating women that they were discriminated against. She believed that God created man and woman with different roles to play. Having studied in Europe she had witnessed families breaking up due to women's demanding equality with men; she therefore did not want to be part of the study and give her views to the researcher because they will be doctored to suit the donors' interests and reflect badly on the Kenyan people.

The findings from the study on the composition of recruitment and appointment committees showed that women are not represented in these committees simply because they do not hold managerial positions that would make up them members. The absence of women from these committees has an effect on women's participation in higher education management. As Mullei (1995, 75) rightly observes:

Since women are never present when decisions affecting them are taken (e.g. promotion, university recruitment of staff and students) their problems are ascribed a position of secondary importance.

#### 4.4.3 Factors Influencing Staff Development in Universities

The section on factors influencing recruitment, appointment and promotion has shown that academic qualifications, experience and administrative skills are important factors that affect women's participation in university management in Kenya. The study also sought to find out whether there were policies governing staff development and how women were benefiting from these policies. One male manager interviewed in the study pointed out that there were opportunities available for staff development for senior administrative staff. These included, (1) attendance at international conferences (2) regular in-house seminars and workshops. Some male managers, however, said there were no opportunities available. The majority of the women managers indicated that their universities had a policy statement with regard to staff development while a few said their university did not have a staff development policy.

Asked whether they had attended any further or in-service training related to their work in the university, the majority of the women managers said they had not. Those who had attended training were asked where and for how long. About half of the women managers said they had attended an in-house training in their universities while the other half had attended courses outside their institutions. Some of these courses were attended in the USA and United Kingdom. The duration of the courses ranged from a few days (five days), or a few weeks (six weeks) to 6 months, to four years and five years.

The women managers were also asked whether their policy statements regarding staff development were strictly followed. Their responses are summarized in Table 21.

Table 21. Strict adherence to staff development

	Frequency
Yes	10
No	6
Sometimes	2
Don't know	2
Total	20

Those who said the policies were not strictly followed gave the following reasons; that sometimes the personnel available does not meet the criteria; that individuals talk to higher authorities to flout the policies; that other rules are bent to suit individuals. Senior academic staff expressed similar sentiments.

The respondents were asked how they thought the policies on staff development affected women's participation in university management. Some women managers felt that the absence of staff development policies for senior managers disadvantaged women who are appointed to senior management without any training in management skills. One women resource manager described how she had difficulties when she was first appointed. She was given an office without a job description and with nobody to train her on the job. She was forced to draw heavily on her previous job experience to perform her duties. She interpreted this kind of appointment as being aimed at making her fail. She had to work extra hard to understand what the office expected of her. Other women managers indicated that the requirements for staff development sometimes conflicted with family roles. This is especially the case when the training is far from the place of work. Women with young families often choose to take care of their families and forget the (PhD). This affects their career progression (Kamau 2001). Yet, other women argued that the policies provide for equal training opportunities for men and women but the women are few. However, one male senior academic observed that "*when the policies are not clear to everybody those who do not know them feel insecure and may miss out on some opportunities to acquire more skills.*" This shows the importance of universities developing clear documented policies on staff development for senior managers.

The findings from study on staff development policies revealed the importance of training related to one's job. However, document analysis did not find any documented policy on staff development for senior university managers. The documented policy, which was mainly for academic staff, described the procedures for applying for doctoral studies leave. The senior administrative staff were assumed to have acquired skills from previous work experience and sometimes learn on the job. This is why the job advertisements probably required up to ten years of previous experience in the same position. Again, even the training the women managers had attended were mostly a few days' workshops and seminars and these may not exactly relate to their job performance.

Lack of training in management means that university managers use trial and error in trying to perform their duties. The question one needs to ask is how much can we rely on experience for good management? It seems most Kenyan universities believe in the old adage that says "*experience is the best teacher*". But with the rapid explosion of knowledge and information technology, university managers need some form of training so as to be effective managers. Universities need to develop staff development policies.

#### 4.4.4 Summary

This section has presented data on the factors that influence recruitment, appointment, promotion and staff development and how they affect women's participation in university management. - The data has shown that academic qualification, administrative skills and experience are the key factors that influence recruitment, appointment, and promotion of women into senior university management. Nepotism, ethnicity and political affiliation, religious commitment (in the case of religious sponsored universities), play a role in the appointments to senior management positions, especially as vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors, registrars, and financial officers.

These factors indeed affect women's participation in university management. Whereas the women who possess the required academic qualification, professional experience and administrative skills can compete with men on an equal basis for these positions, the majority of highly qualified women have not been appointed to senior management positions due to other factors such as, nepotism, ethnicity and political affiliation. Again, these appointment criteria are not made clear to everybody. As Gachukia (2000) points out, sometimes the selection criteria is not transparent and candidates are subjected to political pressure and cut-throat competitions for which most women are not socially prepared.

Commenting on recruitment, appointment and promotion in public universities, Achola and Aseka (2001) regretted that a practice has emerged in some public universities to appoint registrars from among the academic staff who abandon the scholarship for bureaucracy. Since the positions are neither advertised nor subjected to competitive interviewing, senior university managers mainly do the selection of the incumbents for such positions. This practice gives rise to speculations and suspicions regarding the criteria used in the appointments. Prah Kwesi (2001) on the other hand observes that promotions are sometimes awarded where they are not deserved. Cronyism and Ethnicism have infected promotion processes resulting in feelings of rejection, factionalism, and hostility amongst academics.

Political appointment has been identified as a big problem in public universities. Commenting on this, Achola and Aseka (2001) argue that political appointment:

- Violates the merit principle that is a cherished ideology that a university is an institution of higher learning;
- Goes against the spirit of openness and rules of fair play that universities strive to uphold in appointments and

promotions in academic and lower level administrative grades;

- Appointees wield immense powers on other members of staff who did not participate in their appointment. “It smacks of leaderships by imposition which is an anomalous practice in an institution suffused with democratic ethics such as a university”. (Achola and Aseka Daily Nation Nov 5 2001).

Political appointments invariably disadvantage women. For example, one woman director was disappointed when a post of deputy vice-chancellor was vacant for over twenty years in a university she had served in various administrative capacities. The position was given to a young man who the woman had interviewed for an academic position a few years back. The man did not have any administrative experience. He was appointed due to ethnic balancing resulting from the political climate of the time when the tribe, which was predominately the opposition, was being lured into joining the ruling party.

The absence of documented staff development policies for senior administrators also affect the participation of women in university management. The fact that they are expected to have learnt management skills from previous experience disadvantaged women. This is because the positions in the organizational structure, where work experience which is relevant to promotion to the top management could be gained, are all occupied largely by men. Sometimes the required work experiences is unstructured and undefined thus lending recruitment, appointment and promotion policies to variations so as to accommodate the experiences of those in good books for promotion.

Training is necessary to equip men and women with skills of management. It will change the way in which women perceive themselves and will give them confidence in their own capacity to be effective leaders. Training should be backed by institutional level legislation and regulation.

#### **4.5 Factors that Contribute to Women’s Effective Participation in University Management**

The women managers were asked to share the personal qualities/characteristics that enabled them to attain their present positions. This was considered important because young women aspiring to be in university management could imitate or learn from them. Role modeling has been pointed out as key to improving the access and participation of women in society. The women’s responses are summarized Table 22.

Table 22. Perceptions on personal attributes that enable women to get management positions

Personal Attributes	Frequency
Administrative skills	12
Eloquence	2
Assertiveness	3
Diligence	6
Outgoing personality	2
Perseverance	5
Handwork	10
Commitment to duty	2
Self-confidence	2
Decisiveness	2
Interpersonal skills	2
Visibility	1

From Table 22 it is clear that the women's administrative skills (12), hard work (10), diligence (6) and perseverance (5) are some of the personal attributes that made the women attain their management positions. This finding is in agreement with the literature where women managers have been found to require more attributes than men in order to ascend to senior management. Gachukia (2001) quoting Grace Alele Williams, outlines these attributes: professional qualification, having qualities of firmness, uprightness, competence, responsibility, hardworking, good interpersonal skills, assertiveness, confidence, morally stable, objective, disciplined and dedication.

One woman manager noted some of these attributes:

I am not sure but perhaps visibility, being articulate in senior management forum, working closely (co-operating) with former boss, showing evidence of having run high-profile project successfully, fearlessness.

The attributes women need to compete on equal footing with men were alluded to by one male professor in Kanake (1997) who said that:

Women should be more assertive and press for their rights. No one will give them what they want unless they fight for it... Women should pursue higher education (PhD), conduct research and publish in order to compete honorably with men. This will see more of them in senior professional ranks and in administration. (Kaname 1997,39)

The women managers were asked to indicate the guiding principles and belief systems that affect the way they managed. This was because

elsewhere in the literature women have been found to have different leadership styles from men. For example, women have been said to be more people-oriented, more consulting, encouraging, participatory in decision-making, and more caring; whereas men have been found to be autocratic and goal-oriented (Marshall 1998; Blackmore 1999). The responses to this questions are summarized in Table 23.

Table 23. Guiding principles in management styles of women (n=26)

Guiding principle	Frequency
Inspiration to be the best	5
Self-motivation	6
Personal conviction	2
Laid down policies	3
Honesty	3
Transparency	3
Confidence	4
Motherhood	2
Hard work	3
Service to people	10
Integrity	2
Christian beliefs	6
Student centeredness	2

From Table 23, it can be seen that service to other people (10) was the guiding principle for most of the women managers followed by self-motivation (6) Christian beliefs (6) inspiration to be the best (5) and confidence (4).

The study also sought to find factors outside the institution that affected women's participation in university management. These factors are summarized in Table 24.

Table 24. Factors outside the institution that affect women's participation

Factors	Frequency
Attending conferences	6
Support from family/friends	8
God given abilities	2
Experience in working with diverse cultures	2
Personal initiative	10
Being very principled	3
Financial support	2
Shortage of well trained computer scientists	5

Outside their institutions women managers greatly relied on personal initiatives (10) for their success, support from family/friends (8) and attending conference (Table 24).

The women managers were also asked to describe the institutional environment in which they worked in. Their responses are summarized in table 25

Table 25. Institutional environment in which women worked

Institutional environment	Frequency
Supportive	15
Hostile	10
Moderate	1
Total	26

They majority (15) of the women managers found the institutional environment in which they worked to be supportive, while (10) found it hostile and one woman found it moderate (Table 25). Those who found the environment hostile gave various reasons, such as male biases. The men are conscious about women stereotypes, which have been accepted in institutional practices. Some said that there is cold air around women's development. One woman head of department said, *"When women want to advance, the men become very hostile. For example, when women want to go for further studies men managers do not support them. If women are docile, the men then become positive and supportive."* Again, the same woman had problems with some men in her department who were not capable of performing their duties well. When she wrote letters to have them removed there was no action taken by her male boss.

Asked whether they had experienced any form of harassment in terms of their working relationship or intrusion in areas of responsibility, a third of the women managers said they had experienced some form of harassment.. The harassment included female/male intrusion in areas of responsibilities and interruptions at meetings. Other factors that made the institutional environment unfriendly to women managers are strict and unrealistic deadlines, malice with the aim of keeping the woman manager down, not easily accommodated maternity and study leave and futile sexual harassment attempts from male bosses as well as warning memos among others.

The responses to these questions reveal that the environment in higher education institutions in Kenya is not friendly to women, and hence, hostile environment affects women's participation in university management.

#### 4.5.1 *Factors/Problems that Would Limit Career or Professional Development for Women Managers*

The women managers were asked whether there are other factors at their work place and at the family level that they considered could limit their career or professional development. Their responses are summarised in Tables 26 and 27 respectively.

Table 26. Factors at the work place (n=26)

Factors	Frequency
None	5
Lack of money	6
Lack of psychological/intellectual/emotional support from senior management	7
Being the only woman in senior management	3
Lack of research facilities	4
Heavy workload	10
Gender biases	8
Political appointment of VCs/DVCs	12
Meager opportunities for further studies	6

The political appointments (12) of senior university managers especially in the public universities could limit the women managers' career or professional development (Table 26). One woman manager pointed out that the role which external national politics plays in the choice of principals and senior managers (VCs) would limit her career development within the institution. Heavy work load (10), gender biases (8), lack of psychological/intellectual and emotional support from senior management (7) and lack of finance or meager opportunities for further studies (7) were other factors that would limit women's career or professional development. One woman manager pointed out that the overwhelming administrative duties limit her ability to publish.

Table 27. Problems at the family Level (n=26)

Factors	Frequency	%
None	4	15.4
Family demands draw excessively to jeopardize performance	10	38.5
Lack of support from husband	17	46.1
Heavy work led to divorce	1	3.8
Moral obligations	2	7.7
Financial obligations	5	19.2

It can be seen from the Table 27 that the majority (17) of the women managers found lack of support from their husband as the main factor at the family level that could limit their career/professional development. The issues of support from husbands has been found to affect women's academic advancement. For example, writing about the role husbands play, Leonard (2001, 120) observes that:

Husbands also may be crazy about the idea of their partners doing higher degrees and they can actually prove a bigger obstacle than children..... the issue is long periods away from home..... wives are more likely to support their husband through the uphill struggle to complete a doctorate more than husbands who may threaten, or instigate a divorce.

The support from husbands was closely followed by family demands which drew excessively on the women managers' time hence jeopardizing their job performance. This was emphasized by one women dean of faculty who said that management is still viewed from a masculine perspective. This makes the senior managers ignore the domestic responsibilities of women. Hence, meetings are scheduled at odd hours. Some meetings end very late in the night and others are fixed on weekends. A woman who had small children found this too demanding. Another women manager who had a husband who did not understand the demands of her management position had to undergo a divorce. The husband started suspecting the woman of having extra-marital affairs and accused her of not paying enough attention to her family responsibilities. She was told to choose between her family and her job. She opted for her job and this led to a divorce.

To prove further the effect of family responsibilities on women managers, the women were asked how they managed to combine the conventional roles of a woman with the social expectation of a successful manager. These questions were asked because women professionals are expected to perform their traditional roles of mothers and wives. Those women who are successful as managers in higher education face cultural barriers in the form of their own internalized view of their roles and the expectations others have of them. The great professional women everywhere suffer great tension in their attempt to reconcile their professional roles. Moreover, their careers are dependent on the grace and favour of their spouses (Dines 1993). The women managers in the study were struggling as well. One said, "it is a struggle. There are times either family suffers or the management suffers. This is due to the pressure of work."

The responses to this question are summarized in Table 28.

Table 28. Ability to combine personal and professional roles

	Frequency
It is very challenging and difficult to manage and teach	12
Co-operative family members hence works at home	10
Strict time management without compromise	6
Prioritize roles	5
Self-organization	5
Not bothered with limitations as a woman	3
Focus at every stage	2

Data in Table 28 reveals that the women managers were having difficulties combining the conventional role of a woman as a wife and a mother and being successful managers. Hence, some found it very challenging to manage and teach. However, co-operative family members, especially husbands, made it possible for some of the women (10) to carry office work home where they work late into the night to meet strict deadlines. Strict time management without compromise (6), prioritizing roles (6) and self organization (5) helped the women to cope with the demands of the professional and domestic roles.

#### ***4.5.2 Institutional Practices and Their Effect on Women's Participation in University Management***

Realizing the struggle professional women go through, the researcher wanted to know whether the institutional practices were helping women to cope with the multiple roles. The respondents were asked which institutional practice in their universities were most sensitive to women managers' needs; the majority (20) said there were none. This is because most management practice did not consider whether one was a woman or a man. Maternity leave for those who are married was seen by some (6) as being the only policy that was gender sensitive. Asked which practices they considered to be most insensitive, the women gave various responses which are summarised in Table 29.

Table 29. Institutional practices insensitive to women

Practices	Frequency
Maternity leave duration	5
Heavy workload	10
Working on weekends	7
Meetings starting early, late	18
Gender imbalance	8
Gender discrimination in appointment to senior management position	5

From Table 29 it is clear that the timing of meetings is the most insensitive practice to women managers' needs. Heavy workload and gender imbalance in management positions also affect women's participation in university management.

One woman manager found the most insensitive practice in her university was that a club of elderly male professors control promotion. Another practice was that only publishing counts in promotions – other services are not noted.

#### ***4.5.3 Reasons why there are few Women Occupying Management Positions in Universities***

Studies have consistently shown that women are underrepresented in university management in Kenya and in other parts of the world (Kanake 1997; Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995; Kamau 2001; Singh 2002). The respondents were asked the possible explanation for the disadvantaged position of women in university management. There were several factors identified at the personal, institutional and societal levels. These factors are summarized in this section.

Table 30. Personal factors – responses from the women managers and male chief officers

Personal factors	Male	Female	Total
Women do not aspire higher	4	8	12
Lack of confidence among women	2	6	8
Eligible women turn down appointments	0	3	3
Timidity of women	0	2	2
Family commitments	5	15	20
Lack of ambition	0	2	2
Low academic qualification	0	4	4
Lack of motivation	0	8	8
No role models	0	2	2
Women tend to be helpers	0	3	3
Lack of experience	2	3	5
Women want favours	2	0	2
None	1	2	3

The data in Table 30 reveals that family commitments stands out as the single most personal factor that explains the absence of women from management positions in Kenyan universities. This is closely followed by women not aspiring for higher positions, and lack of motivation. These findings conform with other findings. Singh (2000) reports that in a workshop conducted for women in higher education management in Malaysia, the participants in the workshop identified disabling personal factors that prevent women from ascending to senior management positions. These factors included: women's less assertiveness or aggressiveness, poor networking, lack of support to other women, lack of personal conviction, lack of adequate knowledge and skills. Also included were: unwillingness to express opinion, withdrawing easily when faced with conflict, preference to stay at home or do jobs behind the scenes instead of going out to meet important people, bending to the views men hold of women and to men's ego.

Responding to a similar question on why women are missing from senior management, the senior academic staff (men and women) also concurred that some of the reasons include: lack of adequate qualifications, fear of public office and fear of competition. Some of the senior academic women had the following reasons: One woman said, "*Women due to their upbringing have a fear of public office*". Another one added, "Women have little or no time to take these positions due to domestic commitment and responsibilities".

Similarly another one noted, "We are still few who have at least achieved the foundational basic qualifications (PhDs)".

A male senior academic staff noted, "Very few women have the qualification and willingness to participate in senior management positions".

The findings on personal factors reveal that women lack the confidence or courage to apply for top positions. As Poskitt (1999) writes:

those wishing to appoint women are often frustrated by lack of female applicants. This can no longer be attributed to a shortfall in suitable trained women. Women either lack the self-confidence to apply for leadership positions in higher education or they are not attracted by the nature of work (Poskitt 1998).

Unlike women, men often have the tendency to take risks and apply for jobs for which they fulfill few of the requirements, and the qualifications. On the other hand, women tend to do the opposite (Coleman 1997). This could be true of some Kenyan women in the study. However, the Kenyan situation is also different because most of the senior positions are not advertised for open competition for the women to apply.

The respondents were asked to identify institutional factors that explain the absence of women from management positions in universities in Kenya. Their responses are summarised in Table 31.

Table 31. Institutional factors

Factors	Male	Female
Few numbers	5	8
Male chauvinism	0	6
Management positions dominated by male	0	2
Patriarchal structure	0	6
Political appointment	0	10
Men fear female domination	0	2
Notion that women are not good managers	0	3
Discrimination against women	0	12
All panelists are men	0	4
Unclear promotion procedures	0	5
Favoritism	2	4
Lack of extra-institutional networks for women	0	6
Irrelevant questions asked at interviews	3	2
Victimization of women by HODs	2	0
Appointment requirement (long experience)	3	5

At the institution level, discrimination against women was viewed by the women managers as the reason why women were missing from management of universities. The male managers on the other hand felt that the few number of women in the universities was the reason they were not appointed to senior management positions. The women managers as well as the male managers also pointed to the appointment, recruitment and promotion procedures as an explanation for the absence of women from university management. Such factors as political appointment of VCs, DVCs, irrelevant questions asked at interviews male chauvinism, patriarchal structure of the academy, and the fact that appointment required long experience were some of the reasons given by the respondents.

One woman manager commenting on the experience requirement noted that: "The fact that one cannot become a dean of faculty without having been a head of department was problematic for most women because most heads of departments are men".

In response to a similar question the senior academic staff pointed out institutional factors such as, few numbers of women and the fact that the top ranks are dominated by men were responsible for women's absence from senior management positions.

The researcher further investigated the issue of few numbers through document analysis. It was proved that women were indeed few and they occupied junior ranks in the academic ladder. The statistics on the number of women in four of the selected universities is summarized in Table 32.

Table 32. Number of women in four universities, by rank

Rank	Daystar				Baraton				USIU				Nairobi				Total			
	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F	M	F	T	%F
Professor	2	0	2	0	4	0	4	0	5	0	5	0	81	3	84	36	92	3	95	3.1
Associate professor	0	1	1	100	2	1	3	33.3	6	1	7	14.3	127	18	145	12.4	135	21	156	13.5
Senior lecturer	13	8	21	38.1	5	0	5	0	14	6	20	30	230	20	250	8	262	34	296	11.5
Lecturer	23	21	44	47.7	25	14	39	35.9	7	3	10	30	468	82	550	14.9	523	120	643	18.7
Assistant lecturer	11	9	20	45	3	2	5	40	0	0	0	0	72	15	87	17.5	86	26	112	23.2
Tutorial fellow	1	2	3	66.7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	72	6	78	77	73	8	81	9.9
Total	50	41	91	45	39	17	56	30.3	32	10	42	0	1050	144	1194	12.1	1171	212	1383	15.3

Table 32 shows that women comprise a small percentage of the academic staff (15.3%) of the universities under review. In addition to the few numbers, majority of the women are concentrated at the ranks of lecturer and below (51.9%). It is from the academic staff that university managers are drawn. The fact that there are few women professors means that there are few women from which to appoint university managers. As Doyle (1997) rightly points out, professorships are the natural breeding grounds for the post of vice-chancellors. The women in this study are likely not ascend to senior management given their low academic status.

#### **4.5.4 Societal Factors**

The respondents were asked whether there are societal factors which prevent women from accessing senior management. Socio-cultural factors are a result of traditional beliefs about women's roles. The gender-based roles even though irrelevant to the work place are carried into the workplace. Hammond (1993) argues that stereotype notions about women constitute major barriers to women's advancement to management positions in higher education. Shahabudin and Singh (2000) found that cultural factors such as men's stereotype views of women within the cultural context, perception that top positions are not for women, and influence of religion which sometimes relegates women to a secondary role were some of the societal factors affecting women's participation in university management. The respondents' responses are summarised in Table 33.

Table 33. Societal factors affecting women's participation

Factors	Frequency	
	Male	Female
Fewer opportunities for women in education	3	5
Men are seen as decision makers	0	5
Society condemns women to subordinate status	3	8
Discrimination against women in the church	6	6
Men get social support	0	3
World male dominance	7	12
Women in authority not recognized	0	5
Inequality in higher education management	0	6
Discrimination against girl education	6	15
Motherhood	3	5
Fear of isolation	0	5
Women lack social networks	3	0
Culture	8	0

The male managers attribute the absence of women from university management to culture world male dominance discrimination against women in the church, and discrimination against girl child education. The women managers, on the other hand, see discrimination against girl child education world male dominance society condemning women to subordinate status and discrimination against women in the church as some of the societal factors barring women from attaining senior management positions. Some of the societal factors were illustrated further by some of the respondents. For example, a senior male professor said: "The socio-cultural attitudes are the single most barriers to women's access to leadership positions in the Kenyan society. Women are not appointed leaders because they are not yet 'mature for leadership'". Asked why he thought this was the case he explained that "Kenya is just emerging from a male-dominated culture where women have not had the chance to leadership skills".

The women in management positions also lamented on how the social cultural attitudes were affecting them. One woman manager (a development officer) felt that she was sometimes left out on some of her responsibilities by junior male colleagues who felt she should not perform them because she was a woman. Some of these responsibilities included construction work supervision and purchase of land. Again, when required to perform jobs traditionally considered masculine, she had to request her junior male staff to perform them e.g. negotiating for a piece of land for the university. All these were mainly because in the surrounding community women are viewed as children who cannot make important decisions. The woman manager found this demeaning because part of the main work was to link the university to the community.

A woman resource manager observed that women have not been accepted as managers. She noted that some men junior staff found it hard to take instructions from women managers. Her male boss said that he cannot call her to his office alone especially after 5.00 p.m. This is because many of his male friends had backslided in their Christian beliefs because of being tempted by women. So he did not want to be seen alone with a woman in his office. People might think he is having an affair. The woman manager found this argument offensive and limiting her job performance because there are times when she may want to consult her boss on confidential matters. She said, "this is disempowering and imposing obstacles to women" who are, in terms of the society attitudes in spite of their qualifications, viewed as tempters to sin.

The socio-cultural factors indeed have affected women's participation in leadership in the Kenyan society. Even in the political arena these attitudes still relegate women to a subordinate role. Most men in the Kenyan society

think that leadership should be reserved for men. A man being interviewed by the media on the issue of women and leadership had this to say:

Women should not be in positions of leadership. How can a woman lead men? For example, if a woman becomes a president and gets pregnant or sick, who will be in the office? (KTN Documentary on Women and Politics on 15/4/2002).

These attitudes have also led to great opposition from men towards the affirmative action bill fronted in parliament by one woman legislator. The parliamentarians argue women should fight with men on merit for positions of leadership. One Member of Parliament once said, "Women divorcees should not hold positions of leadership because they have failed to manage their families, especially they should not be appointed judges in the high court".

The societal attitudes towards women are also prevalent in universities. Kamau (2001) in her study of one private university in Kenya found that the male respondents were generally of the opinion that women do not like supporting each other and that they fear to have other women rise to senior positions. The men also said that women do not work as hard as men to earn promotions to senior management. One male administrator gave the following reason for why women are few in senior positions:

Women like to be seen but not to be heard. You just see them around but they are not really doing what should assist them to make it to the top in academics. They are not really committed to academic work and when they miss on promotions they start complaining that they have been discriminated against. They simply have got to get serious with academic work; then they will catch up with men.

Another male assistant professor said:

You women (including the researcher) are the worst enemies of each other. Women seem to work against each other. Why do they keep complaining that they have no equal chances whereas when they get to the top they do not support each other? (Kamau 2001).

Such attitudes only serve to reinforce the subordinate status of women in the academy as well as in society. They make women lack self-confidence and inhibit their motivation to go for senior management positions in the universities.

#### **4.6 Obstacles Faced by Women Managers**

Several obstacles have been identified in the literature that prevent women from advancing to senior management positions in the public sector and universities in Kenya (Lodiaga and Mbevi 1995; Nzomo 1995; Kamau

2001). This study sought to find out from the women managers if they had encountered any obstacles at personal, institutional and societal levels en route to their current positions. This section presents findings from the study.

**4.6.1 Personal Obstacles**

A majority of the women managers said they had encountered some personal obstacles, while a few of the women said they did not encounter any personal obstacles en route to their current position. Some of the personal barriers encountered were time management family responsibilities and lack of confidence. Responses show that family responsibilities were the major obstacles faced by most women managers.

**4.6.2 Institutional Barriers**

The women managers were asked to identify the institutional barriers they had encountered en route to their management positions. The institutional barriers faced by the women managers are summarised in Table 34.

Table 34. Institutional barriers

Barriers	Frequency
No staff discipline mechanism	6
No influence/powers	5
Delays in processing matters/documents	5
None	5
Gender discrimination	4
Lack of co-operation from men	10
No job description or guidance	12
Vague promotion criteria	7
Ethnic barrier	3
Male networks and alliances	14

From Table 34 it is evident that women managers face a number of institutional barriers en route to their positions. The male networks and alliances form the major obstacles that most of the women managers faced. These alliances were geared towards making these women feel intimidated and incompetent. These networks could be the possible reason why male staff were reluctant to co-operate with the women managers. The women also faced the problem of being given offices with-out clear job description nor guidance. Hence, most of the women managers found it hard to perform their jobs well because their tasks were not well defined and there was nobody to guide them on what to do. They spent a lot of time groping in the

dark trying to understand their jobs. One woman manager described how she had been recruited to a new office which had no job description. She was the first to hold the office in the institution. She struggled to develop the job description for the position. She relied heavily on her previous job experience to streamline the office and get started.

Another woman narrated how she was having difficulties to manage men in her department who wanted her position. The men ganged together and were not performing their duties as expected. Whenever she complained about them to her senior boss who was male nothing was done about them. These men were being protected by their fellow men to the disadvantage of the woman manager.

#### **4.6.3 Societal Barriers**

The majority of the women managers said they had faced some social barriers en route to their current positions, while some said they did not face any social barriers. These responses may give an impression that the Kenyan society was beginning to accept women in leadership positions. This may not be true because in the universities most of the positions held by women are mainly academic management positions for example, heads of departments, deans of faculties, directors of a schools. Besides, some of the positions are in the areas traditionally considered feminine like deans of students, deans of home economics, heads of home-science, and directors of gender studies. To illustrate the societal barriers, one woman manger commented: “Women are not expected to excel in the sciences – computer scientists. Again – nurturing roles leave little time to pursue one’s career”.

Another female respondent said, “There is discrimination against girls education in societies. People are more comfortable relating to male.”

However, those women who said they had encountered societal barriers identified such barriers as: the belief that by being a woman one must bribe their way up; social demands such as holding positions in the church; and that discrimination against women in society leads to discrimination against women in the universities. Women are not expected to excel in technical academic field, for example, computer science.

The societal obstacles affect the women’s personal characteristics such as assertiveness, confidence and self-esteem which in turn make them to shy away from public offices. Those that go for these positions are seen as social outcasts who do not have enough time for their family responsibilities, and some of them end up being divorced as was the case with three women in this study.

#### **4.6.4 Summary**

This section has presented findings on the factors that explain the absence of women from senior management positions in Kenyan universities. These factors have to do with the personal characteristics of women arising from their socialization; institutional factors which are linked to the masculine culture of the universities, and recruitment, appointment and promotion procedures which tend to favour the men folk and thereby disadvantage women.

The women managers also face some barriers even when they have managed to access management positions. The barriers range from personal, institutional to societal levels. I am arguing therefore that for women to participate effectively in university management the obstacles must be overcome at these levels.

#### **4.7 Interventions put in Place to Enhance the Participation of Women in University Management**

Having established that women are few in management positions in the universities under study and that there are several factors affecting their participation in management, the researcher tried, through interviews and document analysis, to establish whether there were any interventions put in place to enhance the participation of women in university management.

The male managers were asked whether they were satisfied with the current ratio of women to men in senior management in their universities. Half of the male managers said they were satisfied and the other half said they were not. Those who said they were satisfied were asked to give reasons. The main reason for their satisfaction was the fact that women get into those positions on merit and through competition with men. Those who said they were not satisfied were asked what they were doing to readdress the imbalance. The majority said they were doing nothing, while some said they were encouraging women to go for further studies.

The women managers were also asked whether their universities had seen the need to enhance the participation of women in management. The majority of the women managers said no while, a few said yes. Those who answered in the affirmative were asked to say what was being done at the institutional and societal level to change the situation. At the institutional level, the interventions identified are summarised in Table 35.

Table 35. Interventions at institutional level

Intervention	Male	Female
Giving a chance to compete on merit	2	5
Training more women	0	2
Appointing qualified women to position	0	2
Gender balancing in committees	2	0

The interventions identified by the respondents in Table 35 were informal attempts perceived to be geared towards improving the status of women in general. There were no legislation or policies consciously aimed at enhancing women's participation in the institutional levels. The responses from the senior academic both staff (men and women) and document analysis revealed that there were no formal interventions. One male senior academic said information was organized to encourage women to get high qualifications particularly in the sciences and mathematics.

At the societal level, a majority of the women managers identified several programmes addressing girls' education as the intervention being put in place. Again, nothing written was available to show what programmes were on and the issues they were addressing.

The women managers were asked what they were doing as individuals to enhance the participation of women in university management. This question was aimed at proving whether the assertion or common belief held by men that women do not help each other when they get to the top positions was true. The women managers' responses to the question are summarized in Table 36.

Table 36. Interventions by women managers

Activity	Frequency
Doing a profile on women managers on video	1
Nominating women to committees	10
Airing their views at senate	3
Hold seminars for women outside university	8
Support training of eligible candidates	2
Appoint women to influential positions	3
Campaigning for girls education	6
Encouraging women to write and research on gender issues	7

As Table 36 shows, the women managers were doing some activity to enhance participation of women in university management. These activities included nominating women to committees holding seminars for women outside the university and encouraging women to write and research on gender issues. Therefore, the allegation that women, once at the top, do nothing to help other women is not true. The view could be attributed to the fact that these women's activities are informal and therefore nobody gets to know that the women in management are doing anything to help others.

The women managers were also asked to propose areas in which their universities can begin or expand on equal opportunities or affirmative action programmes and who should be the target groups for gender sensitization. The following areas were suggested:

- Gender sensitive programmes should be introduced;
- Scholarships and sponsorship to enable women acquire the necessary qualification;
- Appointing the qualified women to management positions;
- Networking among women should be encouraged;
- Training programmes in management skills;
- Encouraging research and publications on gender issues;
- Gender issues should be promoted through seminars and workshops.

The people to be targeted in the gender sensitization and social mobilization at the university include the top cream managers, administrators, all academic staff, students, women and marginalized ethnic groups.

In another question the women managers were asked to give advice to women aspiring for university management. The advice is summarised in Table 37.

Table 37. Advice to young women

Advice	Frequency
Ask them to take up jobs	6
Have necessary qualifications	10
Be hardworking	13
Have self confidence	5
Ignore societal stereotype	3
Be assertive	6
Be focused	2
Perform your job well	5

#### 4.8 Strategies to Enhance Women's Participation in University Management

The respondents were asked to suggest strategies that would be used to enhance the participation of women in university management. Their suggestions are presented in Section 4.8.1.

##### 4.8.1 Strategies at the Institutional Level

The male managers who felt that something needs to be done proposed that women should be given equal opportunities, gender awareness campaigns should be mounted, more training opportunities for women to enable them attain academic qualification and promotion of the few qualified women on merit.

Table 38. Strategies at the institutional level (male and female managers)

Strategy	Male	Female
Encouraging women to acquire qualifications	7	5
Promotions on merit	3	2
Training opportunities for women	4	2
Gender awareness campaign	2	20
Gender balance the positions	0	8
Develop a non-discriminatory procedure for recruitment and appointment	2	10
Scholarships, sponsorship for women	2	2
Affirmative action	8	4
Equal opportunity for men and women	2	2
Seminars and workshops	0	6

The majority of the male senior academic staff and male managers felt that encouraging women to acquire the necessary qualifications and affirmative action would go a long way in improving women's participation in university management. Whereas most women senior academic staff and women managers felt that gender awareness campaigns in the universities would improve women's status. Institutional sexism should be discouraged at all costs to put men and women at equal pace in all socio-cultural considerations.

#### 4.8.2 Strategies among Women

Women have been accused of being their own enemies by most men. What could be done amongst women to improve their status? The answers to this question are summarised in Table 39.

Table 39. Strategies among women

Strategy	Frequency		
	M	F	Total
Should compete with men at par	15	6	21
Sensitization	4	10	14
Emphasizing on girl child education at all levels	10	25	35
Political networking	3	8	11
Publishing/papers presentations	3	6	9
Administrative and academic training	7	17	24
Should be assertive	6	5	11
Should be aggressive and go for positions	10	3	13
Fund one another for studies	2	3	5
Socializing with women in leadership position	1	5	6
Networking	10	20	30
Self-motivation	4	6	10
Proof themselves worthy	4	0	4
Empowerment of women to bridge gender gap	10	13	23
Work hard	5	2	7

From Table 39 it is clear that most respondents see emphasising girl education at all levels as key in improving the status of women in the society and in higher education management. This was closely followed by networking among women, administrative and academic training and empowerment of women to bridge the gender gap. Women were also urged to be assertive and aggressive so as to get management positions by some of the respondents.

One male academic staff said, “Women should assert themselves by genuinely and aggressively participating in all aspects of academic life and should not think that men are not giving them the opportunity”.

The respondents were also asked to propose strategies that would involve the whole society. The socio-cultural attitudes towards women have been found to have a big impact on the access women have to education, employment and other facilities.

As Mutindi-Mumbua (2001,13) argues: “providing women with more education without changing the gender and power structures that reinforce and perpetuate gender inequities, will not facilitate their access to educational, employment level and political opportunities equal to those of their male counterparts”.

The strategies proposed at the societal level are summarised in Table 40.

Table 40. Strategies at the societal level

Strategy	M	F	T
Fight customs that hinder the progress of women	5	10	15
Change of attitude	3	15	18
Stress girl child education	2	17	19
Train women on how to plan child births	2	8	10
Discourage societal sexism	1	14	15
Change family traditional structure	0	10	10
Sensitize society to accept women’s leadership	5	20	25
Have political will to change status of women	7	25	22
Affirmative action	1	18	19
Have policy and legislation	4	26	30

The data in Table 40 shows that the majority of the respondents advocated for the development of policy and legislation to enhance the participation of women in management. Some respondents also suggested sensitization of society’s members to accept women’s leadership.

## **5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to:

- Establish the position women occupy in university management in Kenya;
- Find out the personal, institutional and social factors that affect women's participation in university management;
- Suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance women's participation in university management in Kenya.

To achieve these objectives three public universities and three private chartered universities were selected using stratified random sampling. From the selected universities twenty-six senior academic staff (ten men and twenty women) and thirty- six university managers (twenty- six women and ten men) were interviewed, and various documents were analysed to find out the factors that affect women's participation in university management. The findings from the study are presented in Chapter Four. In this section a summary of the answers to the research questions is given, conclusions are made and recommendations for the improvement of the practice are suggested.

### **5.2 What Positions do Women Occupy in University Management in Kenya as Compared to Men?**

This question was answered through interviews with male and women managers, a questionnaire for senior academic staff and an analysis of official documents of the selected universities. The statistics obtained from the study revealed that women were generally missing from senior management positions of the selected universities. There was only one woman vice chancellor of a private university, and two deputy vice chancellors (one in a public university and the other in a private university). On the whole, women were found to be occupying positions traditionally considered feminine such as deans of students, librarians and heads of departments of Home Science, Food and Nutrition with only two women heading departments that could be considered technical and masculine, that is, Director of the Institute of Computer Science and Communication, Media and Technology. Women seemed to fare better in terms of heading departments in private universities rather than in public universities.

A survey of the status of women in four of the selected universities also revealed that women were few in number and were concentrated in the junior ranks of the academic ladder with about 52% occupying the rank of lecturer and below. Out of the 95 professors in four universities, there were

only three women. There were twenty-one women out of the 156 associate professors. In total there were 212 women academic staff out of a total of 1383. This shows that there are generally very few women from which to appoint university managers. The few numbers can be attributed to the socio-cultural attitudes in the Kenyan society which discourage higher education for women, and the unclear appointment and promotion practices characterising Kenyan universities (Kanake 1997; Onsongo 2000).

### **5.3 What Factors Affect Women's Participation in University Management?**

The findings from the study revealed that there are various personal, institutional and societal factors affecting women's participation in university management.

- **At the personal level** such factors as academic qualification (PhD), administrative experience, management skills, confidence, assertiveness, high visibility, hard work and diligence were found to enhance women's participation in university management. On the other hand, absence of these personal attributes were said to limit women's confidence in applying for senior management positions.
- **At the societal level** support from family and friends was found to enhance women's participation. The support of husbands to married women was seen as key by most women managers. However, the general negative attitudes towards women in leadership, discrimination against girl child education, the world dominance of men in leadership, cultural practices that relegate women to the domestic sphere were said to be responsible for women's absence from leadership in universities.
- **At the institutional level** the recruitment, appointment and promotion practices stood out as the main factors affecting women's participation in university management. In some cases these policies were not clearly documented for senior management staff; whereas some openly discriminated against women. The political appointments of senior managers in public universities and the appointment by religious organizations sponsoring some universities were seen as one way of denying access to women. This is because in most of the religious organizations women do not rise to senior ranks such as bishop from which managers are appointed. The composition of the recruitment, appointment and promotion committees was also found to be dominantly male with no specific places reserved for women.

The institutional environment in which women worked was generally not very supportive. Some of the institutional practices such as timing of meetings were found to be insensitive to women managers' needs. The timing of meetings had cost some of the women in the study their

marriages, as the husbands could not stand their coming home late or even their attending meetings at weekends.

The requirements for appointment, recruitment and promotion were sometimes unfair to women who are late comers in the academy. For example, the requirement of a doctorate degree and ten years work experience in the same position placed in job adverts was found to discriminate against women indirectly.

#### **5.4 What Possible Strategies Could Be Used to Enhance the Participation of Women in University Management?**

At the time of the field research there were no interventions put in place in the selected universities to enhance the participation of women in university management. The respondents suggested various strategies at the personal, societal and institutional levels.

- **At the personal level** women were urged to work hard and acquire academic credentials so as to be able to compete on par with men. They were also asked to acquire the necessary administrative training and experience. Networking among women was also suggested.
- **At the institutional level** gender awareness campaign among staff in universities was seen as one way of opening opportunities for women. Seminars and workshops for staff, promotions on merit, offering scholarship for women staff, affirmative action and developing equal opportunity policies were some of the suggestions given.
- **At the societal level** fighting customs that hinder progress of women, change of attitude, stressing girl child education, gender sensitization, affirmative action policies and having the political will to promote women's issues were considered important in enhancing women's participation in general and in university management in particular

#### **5.5 Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions are made:

- Women are generally missing from management positions in Kenya universities;
- There is indirect discrimination against women in the appointment, recruitment and promotion of university management;
- There is generally a negative attitude in the Kenyan society and universities towards women in leadership positions;
- The institutional environment in Kenyan universities is not supportive of women in management positions.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study the following recommendations are made for the improvement of current practice.

### **1. Review appointment and promotion procedures**

Carmen (1999) points out that lack of transparency and accountability in hiring and promotion procedures allows male managers freedom to reproduce the institution in their own image. Universities need to come up with policies that ensure equal opportunity for both men and women. Information on all aspects of promotion criteria should be known to all members of staff.

### **2. Affirmative action**

This is a positive discrimination in favour of women. Given the past disadvantage experienced by women in most sectors of our society, it is necessary that they are given the opportunities that culture and traditions have deprived them. Institutions should require that women are represented at all levels, especially in the key decision making committees responsible for establishing promotion criteria, selecting conference representative, allocation of funds, research awards and support facilities within universities.

### **3. Elimination of sexist stereotypes from the collective conscience**

We need to sensitize our staff and the general public that both men and women can play an important role in development. We cannot afford to relegate one group of our society to traditional roles which are no longer viable for national development. Institutional attitudinal climate needs to be made conducive for women. Attitudes of senior academic and administrative staff must change.

### **4. Provide legislative and infrastructure support for women**

Universities need legislation and infrastructure to help women resolve the tension between personal and professional roles. Women managers should also be recognized as mothers and wives. This can be done through reasonable provision of maternity leave, and childcare centres within the institutions. There is need to make management women-friendly by finishing meetings on time and within working hours.

### **5. Special training programs for women**

Training is necessary to equip women with skills of management. This will go a long way in changing the way women perceive themselves and gives them confidence in their own capacity to be effective leaders. These special programs should, however, be backed with government

and institutional level legislation and regulation. Women should be encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, and other short courses to widen their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The Association of Commonwealth Universities' women's program is a big step in helping women develop management skills. The programme, through training workshops, production of training materials, training of trainers, and monitoring women's progress, among others, is geared towards empowering women in higher education management.

#### **6. Gender mainstreaming**

The universities should mainstream gender issues in their programmes and curricular. This means that they should assess the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies and programmes, in any area and at all levels. This will make women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and social spheres.

#### **7. Equal opportunity policies**

There is an urgent need for the formulation of equal opportunity policies that are distinct from those subsumed in the constitution and international documents. The absence of such policies makes it difficult to ensure equality of opportunity because there is no yardstick against which day-to-day practices can be measured. The formulators should be made aware of the gender specific barriers to educational opportunity so that they come up with policies that are gender responsive. After the policies have been formulated, there is a need to put in place machinery for monitoring and evaluation to see to it that the right procedures are followed in the selection and recruitment of staff to senior management.

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