

Participation of Women in Political Seminars and their Ability to Mentor their Children in Nakuru County

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ABSTRACT

As the number of women in politics continues to increase worldwide, balancing their political and parenting roles may pose a challenge. The study was carried out to investigate the effects of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru County. The study adopted ex-post facto research design. The study had accessible population of 129 respondents that comprised of 105 women members of county assembly aspirants, 12 women parliamentary aspirants, 10 women representative aspirants and two women senatorial aspirants in Nakuru County during 2017 general elections. Census sampling technique was used to select all the 129 respondents. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Content and face validity of the questionnaire was ascertained of the study objectives and advice by experts from Department of Applied Community Development Studies of Egerton University. To estimate the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on fourteen women political aspirants who participated in 2017 general elections from the neighboring Nyandarua County. The questionnaire was considered reliable when it attained an estimated Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.78. The questionnaire was self-administered with the guidance from the researcher. Quantitative data was summarized in frequency distribution tables and the responses analyzed using simple and multiple regression analysis methods with the help of SPSS computer package 25.0 version. Qualitative data was summarized in emerging themes based on the objectives of the study. The study revealed that participation of women in political seminars affected their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru County ($\beta = -0.852$) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study may offer insights to women politicians, education researchers and other stakeholders on the importance of parenthood and the challenges faced by women politicians.

Introduction

The increasing number of women aspiring and serving in political positions internationally has prompted scholars to explore political participation through a gender lens. Perhaps the point of great concern is to know whether female politicians are able to balance work-life and family life with a focus to parenthood. While this balance may affect all politicians, it is interesting to know that women have historically assumed greater responsibility in parenting. Inglehart and Norris (2003) noted that in terms of gender, men and women often bring different strengths, weaknesses in regard to parenting. Many cultures consider parenting to be synonymous with mothering, and mothering as an instinct found in all women.

In Africa transmission of culture to the next generation is a critical aspect of parenthood. Studies by Ahmedweli (2019) in Benadir region of Somalia and Kassa (2015) in Ethiopia revealed that women politicians did not participate in their expected responsibilities of disciplining and educating their children. Most of the available literature (Haregewoin, 2003; Norris 2000; Awotash, 2010; Phillips, 2007), concentrated more on the way parenthood affects political careers and the choices made by politicians, and on the way, parenthood affects individual attitudes and political participation within the public.

Kenya's Constitution 2010 provides for women's political participation at different levels of governance. The participation includes representation through five elections; which are presidential, senatorial, parliamentary, county and ward seats (RoK, 2010). It also provides for equal qualifications and powers of all leaders irrespective of candidate's gender whether male or female. It further provides additional 47 elective seats for women, one from each of the 47 counties to sit at the national assembly. Women are also given chances for nominations in the senate, national and county assemblies. These provisions are aimed at meeting the constitutional requirement of two thirds gender rule, in both appointment and elective positions in the country. However, although the electoral conditions are such constitutionally favourable, women participation in Kenyan politics remains low. This may partly be attributed to the cultural confinement of women to domestic responsibilities of parenting. Cultural confinements may affect the level at which women politicians perform their constitutional responsibilities.

Additionally, political seminars were found to have the potential to affect the ability of women politicians to mentor children. Residential seminars take long for mothers to be away from their children, a factor that may alienate some women from their child rearing practices. The long absence may also lead to marital suspicion and differences, which may lower women moral authority to mentor their children. Children may also shy away from their parents due to this separation. In Kenya, a study by Arriola and Johnson (2014) blame women's dismal performance in political campaigns on their lack of exposure on one side, while Rotich and

Byron (2016) say that political activities which include seminars are associated with urban women, as rural women are labelled irresponsible when they attend seminars. However, both sides of argument have not addressed the effectiveness of women politicians in their parental roles, an issue which the present study will focus on.

Modern roles have brought an active participation of fathers in children care. The main idea is that parents are expected to be child-centered and aim at optimal growth and development of their children, to help them have satisfactory biological, social, psychological and emotional growth. Parenting roles are therefore, the Research suggests that a sizeable number of parents are not available for their children due to their career engagements, particularly those in politics. For instance, a study by Sudarshan (2010) found out that there are consistent differences in parenthood between mothers and fathers. The study found that the absence of parenthood was felt more in families whose mothers were in politics than those with father politicians. In addition to this, a study by Khadar (2013) found out that the mere presence of children in the home is not enough to decrease some forms of women's political participation. All the same, the age of a politician's children that is an important factor in determining the quality of parenthood. For instance, by Khadar (2013), further argues that women with children aged five to 12 are more likely to participate in more political activities than are those women with younger children. Mothers with school- aged children are more likely to delegate their duties to house help or take them to boarding schools. Consequently, this denies a child the much-desired parental guidance. The study further observes that different parental roles were being carried out at different ages of a child. For instance, providing basic needs dominated young parents while developing self- esteem needs, education, socialization and transmission of culture are introduced by parents to older children.

From the studies reviewed in the background, it is evident that women politicians are faced with a number of challenges and opportunities in their participation in political activities. Some of the opportunities and challenges may affect their role as parents. However, existing literature does not demonstrate how women political participation in political activities may affect their parenting role. This was the gap that this study sought to fill.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Women Participation in Political Seminars and their Ability to Mentor their Children

Politicians learn and grow through seminars. According to Mikkola (2005), a seminar is a form of learning forum, offered by a commercial or professional organization aimed at bringing together a small group of people for recurring meetings (often for a week or longer). Seminars are organized in form of sessions, with each session focusing on some particular topic, in which

everyone present is requested to participate. This is often accomplished through an ongoing dialogue. Seminar organizers assign topics for discussion, questions can be raised and debates can be conducted. In politics, seminars are often held in hotels where participants can reside in case the hotel is far from home.

Traditions also tend to hold that leadership is a masculine trait. Schultz (2002) says that even in countries where societies have embraced women to gain formal education and employment, they don't support their participation in politics. And in communities where women lead, their performance is evaluated different from that of men. Where leaders exhibit autocratic leadership, people evaluate autocratic behaviour by women more negatively than the same behaviour by men. Traditions in many countries continue to emphasize on women's primary roles as mothers and housewives. This is used to restrict them to those roles that do not take them away from home like seminars. Many societies have a patriarchal family value system which favours sexually segregated roles. According to Sharma (2014), these traditional cultural values often militate against the advancement, progress and participation of women in any political process. In some countries, men even influence women on voting. In such an environment, women are not allowed to vie for political seats with the argument that politics will take them away from their basic family roles.

In Ethiopia for example, a study by Haregewoin and Emebet (2003) revealed that women are expected to take care of children and carry out domestic work and not participating in outside home activity. Home activities make women busy in the household and prevent their involvement in the politics of the country. In line with this a study conducted by Gidudu, Enose, and Betty (2014) on socio-cultural factors that hinder women's access to management positions, revealed that women have to do house duties, gardening, and washing up while men go out for duty and also go for further studies outside the family as women stay back to take charge of the family. Women's participation in politics is also influenced by religion. All religions share the belief about women's inferiority to men. Religion has therefore been used to bar women from participating in politics. In Pakistan, Sharma (2014) observes that women in Pakistan are ruled out of politics due to traditional conservative norms. Those who force their way into politics are seen as outcasts by their families. Islam religion from which the sharia laws are made is interpreted in a manner that excludes the leadership of women in their families, worship places and political life. Women are encouraged to play subsidiary roles since their place is in the kitchen and men are the opinion and decision makers. In Arabia, Ahmed and Arahial (2013) observed that Jordanian women in politics are seen to abandon and neglect their basic cultural role of caring for their families. According to Karl (2001), some of the obstacles that hinder women's participation in political affairs worldwide. They include low education and literacy

levels, low access to financial resources, cultural attitudes and stereotypes, religion and socialization, among other factors.

In Kenya, a study by Arriola and Johnson (2014) blame women's dismal performance in political campaigns on weak financial muscle. Additionally, another study conducted by Rotich and Byron (2016) in Kenya established that participation of young women in political party activities has been limited by their poor financial base. This situation has been compounded by escalating poverty, and low access to family resources by women especially in marginalized communities. In Kenya, traditional inheritance laws tend to favour men. Family property is controlled and shared out by men, while women have no right to inherit property from their parents.

According to United Nations (2000) the cultural perceptions in most African communities do not encourage women to actively participate in politics. Power and authority is believed to belong to men, thus women are encouraged to play subsidiary roles since their place is in the kitchen. In many African societies, women are not allowed to address men in public because it is considered taboo. In communities still practicing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), women who have not undergone this rite of passage (FGM) cannot be allowed to run for any elective position. Additionally, pastoral communities are organized in clan, which are led by a council of elders. These elders are the ones who select who to run for political offices, and are undermand to endorse or support female candidates. Some women who go against the wishes of elders have their families persecuted and regarded outcasts.

La Palombara and Weiner (2015) suggested that since in most African communities' women are considered a weaker gender, they are often targets of political thugs and hired goons. Male candidates are more likely to introduce political violence and hooliganism in their campaigns. Brutal attacks on female candidates and their families often intimidate and make aspiring female candidates to shun politics

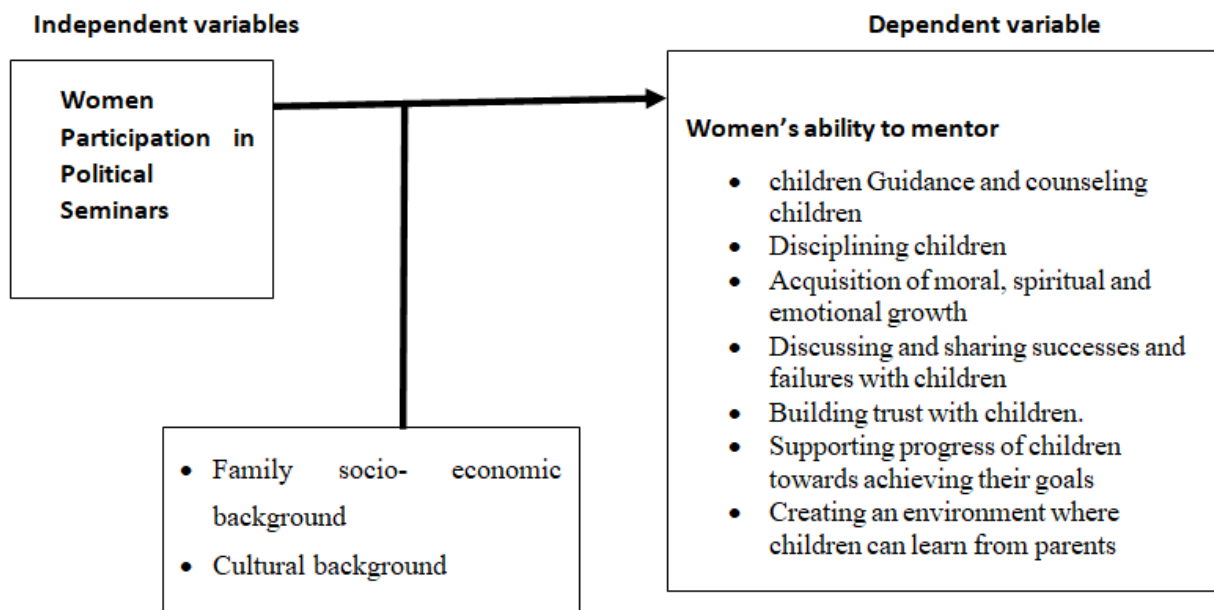
In Ethiopia, Kassa (2015) conducted a study on Challenges and Opportunities of Women Political Participation in Ethiopia. The findings of the study established that although women in politics are not appreciated, they altogether improve the livelihoods of their families. Semakafu (2014) conducted a study on the challenges of women in their bid to participate in the political process. The study established that women exclude themselves from participating in politics since they find it hard to cope with time required to cater for family and political obligations at the same time.

In Kenya, Nyanjom (2011) says that civic education on gender issues has not yet been able to erase the culture of restricting women to domestic duties among some communities. Women also seem to be their own enemies towards their political advancement and empowerment. Wanjala

and Odongo (2010) noted that most communities have perceptions that politics is a dirty game thus a preserve for men. As a result, women who are politically active are labelled as irresponsible and therefore not fit to be wives since they have no time for their children and husbands. They are also accused of immorality. Their long period in seminars out of home is interpreted as immorality.

From the foregoing, it's evident that women politicians face a number of opportunities and challenges by attending to political seminars. However, the existing literature has not demonstrated the influence of political seminars on parenting roles among women politicians. This is the gap that this study seeks to fill.

Figure 1: Relationship between study variables



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted ex-post facto research design. The study had accessible population of 129 respondents that comprised of 105 women members of county assembly aspirants, 12 women parliamentary aspirants, 10 women representative aspirants and two women senatorial aspirants in Nakuru County during 2017 general elections. Census sampling technique was used to select all the 129 respondents. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Content and face validity of the questionnaire was ascertain of the study objectives and advice by experts from Department of Applied Community Development Studies of Egerton University. To estimate the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted on fourteen women political aspirants who participated in 2017 general elections from the neighboring Nyandarua County. The

questionnaire was considered reliable when it attained an estimated Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.78. The questionnaire was self-administered with the guidance from the researcher. Quantitative data was summarized in frequency distribution tables and the responses analyzed using simple regression analysis methods with the help of SPSS computer package 25.0 version.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study sought to determine whether women participation in political seminars had any effect on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county.

To achieve this objective, responses to the items were summed up and divided by the total number of respondents (n= 129). This generated mean scores for each effect of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children in the study area. This level of analysis aimed at getting the general impression of the respondents' perceived effect of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children in the study area. The outcome of this analysis is presented in table below.

Table 1
Respondents' Mean Score on the Effect of Women Participation in Political seminars and their Ability to Mentor their Children

Women participation in political seminars and their ability to mentor children	Mean Score
Preparing seminar presentations denies me enough time to guide and counsel my children	3.91
Prolonged residential political seminars make me unavailable to discipline my children	3.02
Attending seminars denies me enough time to provide a conducive environment for my children to acquire moral, spiritual and emotional growth	3.67
Tight schedules of seminars denies me time to discuss important issues with my children	4.02
My attendance of political seminars denies me the opportunity to discuss with my children about their academic and life goals.	3.92
Absence from home for seminars denies me the chance to share my success and failures with my children	3.71

Seminars separate me with my children, denying me the chance to build a relationship that is grounded on trust with my children.	3.33
My time in seminars denies me the chance to connect my children to people and resources that support their progress towards achieving their goals	3.81
Attending seminars denies me the chance to create an environment where my children can learn from me	3.95
Average	3.70

Source: Field data, 2022

As can be seen in table 1, the grand mean score with respect to the nine effects of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children stood at 3.70. This implies that the effects of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children as perceived by the respondents was high. It is further learnt from the table that the aspect of women participation in political seminars that had the highest effect on their ability to mentor their children was tight schedules of seminars which denied women politicians time to discuss important issues with their children (mean= 4.02), followed by the fact that attending seminars denied women politicians the chance to create an environment where their children can learn from them (mean= 3.95), attendance of political seminars denies women politicians the opportunity to discuss academic and life goals of their children (mean= 3.92), and preparing seminar presentations which denied women politicians enough time to guide and counsel their children (mean= 3.91). The aspects of women politicians' participation in political seminars which in the opinion of respondents had the least effect on their ability to mentor their children was attendance to prolonged residential political seminars which made them unavailable to discipline their children (mean= 3.02), followed by the fact that seminars separated women politicians with their children, denying them the chance to build a relationship that is grounded on trust (mean= 3.33), attending seminars denied women enough time to provide a conducive environment for their children to acquire moral, spiritual and emotional growth (mean= 3.67), absence from home for seminars denied women the chance to share their success and challenges with their children (mean= 3.71), and the fact that women politicians' time in seminars denied them the chance to connect their children to people and resources that support their progress towards achieving their goals (mean= 3.81).

Apart from exploring the level of effect of women participation in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children, efforts were made to determine whether participation of women in political seminars had any statistically significant effect on their ability to mentor their children. The hypothesis which was tested in this analysis was stated thus;

Ho₃: Participation of women in political seminars has no statistically significant effect on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county, Kenya

The hypothesis therefore held that participation of women in political seminars had no statistically significant effect on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county. In order to confirm this proposition, simple (bivariate) linear regression was carried out with a view to ascertaining whether the women participation in political seminars was capable of predicting their ability to mentor their children. The results of simple linear regression analysis is presented in table 14.

Table 2
Summary of Simple Linear Regression Analysis between Women Participation in Political Seminars and their Ability to Mentor their Children

Variable		r	r ²	Constant	df	F	p
Dependent	Ability to mentor children	-0.852	0.725	118.665	1,379	1000	.000*
Independent	Women participation in political seminars		beta (β)	Regression coefficient		t	
			-0.852	-0.028		-38.624	.000*

(* means significant at .05 alpha level.)

Table 2 presents the statistical indices pertaining to the link between women participation in political seminars and their ability to mentor their children. From the table, it can be learnt that the F- value was statistically significant (F = 1000; df = 1,129; p<.05). This implies that there was a linear relationship between women participation in political seminars and women’s ability to mentor their children. Hence it can be reasoned that women participation in political seminars was a reliable predictor of the ability of women to mentor their children. The table additionally shows that the beta value (β= -0.852) was not only negative but also statistically significant (t = -38.624; p<.05). This indicates that women participation in political seminars had a statistically significant effect on their ability to mentor their children. Drawing on the computed coefficient of determination (r²= 0.725), it can be argued that 72.5%, of total variation of women’s ability to mentor their children was attributable to women participation in political seminars.

On the basis of the findings presented in table 2, the formulated null hypothesis (Ho₃) was rejected and conclusion made that women participation in political seminars and their ability to mentor their children were not statistically independent. This implies that women participation in

political seminars was a reliable predictor of women's ability to mentor their children in the study locale.

The observed findings on the effects of women attending seminars on their ability to mentor their children is consistent with the findings of an earlier study by Willis (2015), which showed that unavailability of women in politics to their children denied them the much needed role models. Kibet (2017) further observed that when women spent most of their time in politics, they were unavailable to discipline their children, inculcate good moral to them, share their success stories, and give their children enough time to learn from them.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in Political Seminars and the Ability of Women to Mentor their Children

The research objective sought to find out the effect of participation of women in political seminars on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county. To achieve this objective the following null hypothesis was formulated and stated thus;

Ho₃: Participation in women in political seminars has no statistically significant effect on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county, Kenya

The hypothesis was also tested through simple regression analysis which generated the following findings;

1. Participation in political seminars was not only linearly related to the ability of women to mentor their children but the analysis also indicated that this association was also statistically significant ($F = 1000$; $df = 1,129$; $p < .05$) in Nakuru county.
2. Participation of women in political seminars had a significant negative effect ($\beta = -852$; $t = -38.624$; $p < .05$) on their ability to mentor their children in Nakuru county.
3. Participation of women in political seminars accounted for 72.5% of the total variation in their ability of women to mentor their children in Nakuru county.

Conclusion of the Study

The study additionally showed that attending political seminars by women in politics had equally a high level of effect (see tables 2 and 13) on the ability of women to mentor their children in the county. Among the aspects of attending seminars that had the most negative effect on the ability of women to mentor their children were inability of women in politics to get time to discuss important issues with their children, inability to get chance to create an environment where children can learn from them, inability to get enough time to guide and counsel their children,

and inability to get the opportunity to discuss with the children about their academic and life goals. From these findings, can therefore be deduced that attending political seminars by women in politics impacted negatively on their ability to mentor their children.

Recommendations of the Study

Results from the study showed that participation by women in political seminars had similarly an appreciable negative effect on their parental roles in the county. Among the high level risk factors were; that tight schedules of seminars denied women enough time to discuss important issues with their children, attending seminars denied women the chance to create an environment for children to learn from them, attendance to political seminars denied women the opportunity to discuss with their children about their academic and life goals, and preparing seminar presentations denied women politicians enough time to guide and counsel their children. In this regard, there is need to address these aspects of women participation in politics that affected their parental roles. In regard to the tight schedules demanded by seminars, there is need for women politicians to plan their time so as to create, reserve and accommodate some time for their children. This will go a long way in creating a good environment for their children to discuss their academic and life goals, guide and counsel them.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study revealed that women participation in political campaigns, women funding political campaigns, women participation in political seminars, and women coverage of women in politics were responsible for the noted parental roles (providing security, basic needs, mentorship, and self-esteem needs) for their children. However, the study did not explore the aspects of women participation in politics that affected their parental roles. This is an area that warrants further research so as to extend the frontiers of knowledge in this critical aspect of basic education delivery in the county.

Summary of the Study

Exposure to Media Coverage and Ability of Women to Promote Self- Esteem of Children

The research objective sought to determine the effect of exposure to media coverage on the ability of women in politics to promote self- esteem of their children in Nakuru county. To achieve this objective the fourth null hypothesis was formulated and stated as follows.

Exposure to media coverage has no statistically significant effect on the ability of women in politics to promote self- esteem of their children in Nakuru county

The hypothesis was similarly tested through simple regression analysis whose outcome is shown herein below;

1. Exposure to media coverage significantly related ($F = 630.133$; $df = 1,129$; $p < .05$) on the ability of women in politics to promote self- esteem of their children in Nakuru county.
2. Exposure to media coverage had a statistically significant negative effect ($\beta = -790$; $t = -25.102$; $p < .05$) on the ability of women in politics to promote self- esteem of their children
3. Exposure to media coverage accounted for 62.4% of the total variation in the ability of women in politics to raise self- esteem of their children in Nakuru county.

Conclusions of the Study

The study revealed by the study that media coverage had similarly high level of effect on the ability of women to promote the self- esteem among their children in the county. The aspects of media coverage that had the greatest effect on parental roles among women were; that children felt like media interfered with their family privacy, children felt embarrassed by the media through negative coverage of their parents, and that children felt that the media was biased in covering their mother and other women politicians. Based on these revelations, it can be inferred that the media coverage was impinging on the ability of women in politics to raise the self- esteem of their children in the county.

Recommendations of the Study

Drawing on the findings generated, the study makes the following recommendations;

The study revealed that media coverage of women in politics had a great effect on their parental roles. The aspects of media coverage of women in politics that recorded great effect on their parental roles were; that children felt like the media interfered with their family privacy, children feared being embarrassed by the media through negative coverage, and that children felt like media was biased in covering women politicians. As a way of addressing these effects, media in Kenya should be professionalized so as to be responsible. Issues like family privacy, biasness and embarrassing content should be streamlined in the media laws of the land.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study suggests the following areas for further research, with a view to generating more knowledge in this critical area of parental roles among women in the society.

- i. The study addressed itself to the effects of exposure of women to media coverage of women on their ability to parental roles. In as much as these factors have critical effects on parental roles, there are other factors that have the potential to affect parental roles in the county which future research could focus on. An example is effect of men participation in politics on their parental roles.
- ii. The study relied on questionnaires to gather the targeted data. In view of this reality, there is need to replicate the study in the county using other instruments such as an interview schedule so as to generate data that may not have been captured by the questionnaire.

The study revealed that women participation in political campaigns, women funding political campaigns, women participation in political seminars, and women coverage of women in politics were responsible for the noted parental roles (providing security, basic needs, mentorship, and self-esteem needs) for their children. However, the study did not explore the aspects of women participation in politics that affected their parental roles. This is an area that warrants further research so as to extend the frontiers of knowledge in this critical aspect of basic education delivery in the county.

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