WOMEN AND EDUCATION IN KENYA

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A Dissertation Presented to The Faculty of Education Leadership and Higher Education

at Houston Baptist University

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

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by

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May 2021

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This dissertation follows the format and style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition* except where superseded by directions from the Director of the Doctor of Education in the Executive Educational Leadership Program at Houston Baptist University.

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to the most inspirational person I have ever met,

My magical daughter,

Emmanuella Neema,

You are my heart walking outside my body.

My mother, Victoria Nzisa, I am who I am because of who you are.

Vincent, you are the best thing that ever happened to me.

My father, Peter Muli, a father's blessing opens doors.

Roy, you are the wind beneath my wings.

Irene, my only sister and my true ride or die.

Mbula, my niece, I cherish you.

To all the girls and women, you can, you will, you must!

Romans 12:6-8

Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:

If prophecy, in proportion to our faith. If service, in our serving.

The one who teaches, in his teaching. The one who exhorts, in his exhortation.

The one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal.

The one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.

ABSTRACT

Muthoka, Seraphine Mwikali, *Women and Education in Kenya*. Doctor of Education (Executive Educational Leadership), May 2021, Houston Baptist University, Houston, Texas.

The intended purpose of this study is to add new perspectives to the existing body of knowledge on the experiences and perspectives of Kenyan women in pursuit of university education. The purposes of this research study are to (a) gain a deeper understanding of the challenges Kenyan women must overcome to access university education, (b) the support they receive when pursuing university education and (c) find out the advice Kenyan women who have attained either a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate have for fellow Kenyan women who desire to achieve university education. Data was collected through case studies from six Kenyan women who fit the defined criteria. Findings from each case study were analyzed individually, followed by cross-case analysis to bring out themes. The themes were (a) barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women, (b) support for Kenyan women pursuing university education, and (c) advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. Participants noted challenges like financial limitations, lack of government support, marginalization, stigmatization, and stereotyping against women. All participants acknowledged having several support systems. However, patriarchal and matriarchal support were sighted as the most important. The participants reflected on their academic experiences to advise Kenyan women aspiring for higher education, encouraging them to be resilient and adapt coping mechanisms to deal with the challenges. Implications of the findings were discussed and recommendations for future studies made based on gaps that emerged in the literature review and in the analysis and discussions of the findings in the study.

NOMENCLATURE

AIDS - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

CEDAW - Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency

CBPR - Community Based Participatory Research

CUE - Commission for University Education

EAC - East African Community

EACE - East African Certificate of Education Examination

EAACE - East African Advanced Certificate of Education

EACPE - East African Certificate of Primary Education

ECCDE - Early Childhood Care and Development Education

EFA - Education for All

FPE - Free Primary Education

FSE - Free Secondary Education

GAML - Global Alliance to Monitor Learning

GDP - Gross Domestic Production

GOK - Government of Kenya

GER - Gross Enrollment Rates

HIV - Human Immunodeficiency Virus

IAG - EII -Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators

KCPE - Kenya Certificate of Primary Education

KCSE - Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education

KNBS - Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

KNEC - Kenya National Examination Council

KNUT - Kenya National Union of teachers

KTTC - Kenya Teachers Trainers College

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

NARC - National Alliance Rainbow Coalition

NYS - National Youth Service

OPEC - Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries

SAPS - Structural Adjustments Programs

SDG - Sustainable Development Goals

TCG - Technical Cooperation Group

TVET - Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority

UIS - UNESCO Institute for Statistics

UN - United Nations

UNDP - The United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO - The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA - The United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF - United Nations Children Fund

USA - United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

Background of the Study

"If you educate a man you educate an individual, but if you educate a woman you educate a nation" (Dr. James Emmanuel Kwegyir-Aggrey, 1875-1927).

Education is the basis upon which the social, political, and economic development of any nation is founded. Education, whether formal or informal, plays a critical role and is one of the key pillars for all nations, with Kenya being no exception. It is also one of the crucial elements in determining developmental trends globally. The issue of women's education and gender equity is central in all education systems (Achoka, Julius, & Ndiku, 2007). Kiluva-Ndunda (2001) stated since Kenya gained its independence in 1963, various Kenyan governments have made deliberate efforts to establish effective education systems impacting the lives of its citizens and enabling them to complete globally. History of developing countries like Kenya indicates tendencies of gender disparity, not only in education but also in the labor market, political, leadership, and social and economic spheres (Mathenge, 1988).

Kenya's socio-cultural settings give dominance to men as opposed to women (Kerio, 2017). This is despite the fact women form more than 51% of the population (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2009 & 2010). Machira (2013) indicated Kenyan women experience challenges penetrating the patriarchal decision-making structures in important bodies governing the country where male perspectives tend to dominate the planning and development, policy making, and implementation of key programs in Kenya (Mwangi-Chemnjor, 1995). Until the mid-90s, the issues of gender equality focusing on education equity between males and females were not being addressed. Though various researchers recognized the state of girls' and women's education in relation to boys' and men's

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education, the focus had majorly been on girls' and women's education in isolation (Chege & Sifuna, 2006).

Globally, women are organizing for change and redefining their identities and roles, with Kenyan women being no exception (M'mbaha & Chepyator-Thomson, 2018). The push for women's education in Kenya has been driven by women. They have themselves funded for key processes and events like the Fourth World Conference on Women Beijing, in 1995, where issues of women and education were discussed (Sifuna, 2006). However, the Kenyan men reacted with cynical comments like "Girl child education! What is the problem? Nobody prevents the girls and women from excelling" (Chege & Sifuna, 2006, p. 1). This has not deterred the Kenyan women in the push for better education opportunities for the girl child for the betterment of her life (Chege & Sifuna, 2006). Historically, failure to address the impact of perceived gender-neutral educational policies has reinforced gender inequities in educational opportunities and the increased cost of living has had a negative impact on women's education due to gender cultural assumptions (Taeko, 2014).

Simiyu (1990) argued that women's education and empowerment are two issues going hand in hand. If a country intends to achieve its maximum potential, it needs to empower women and girls without undermining the importance of men and boys. As the African proverb cited above states, educating a woman not only empowers her, but her surroundings, her community, her country, and the world at large (Siaya, 1999). This is not to say that all cultures agree with this perspective. On the contrary, there are cultures that continuously oppress their women in all aspects, especially in matters concerning education (Wadende, 2011).

Historically, existing Kenyan national policies have restricted critical discussions on women's education to private sectors. Since education plays a significant role in shaping growth trends, mainly in the current world, the Kenyan government is gradually embracing

the idea of equal education for all genders, but not at the desired pace (Unterhalter, Yates, Makinda, & North, 2012). However, it is critical to appreciate the challenge within greater historical and cultural settings favoring men's education over women's education. Kenya, a country that gained its independence in 1963, upholds policies that may be heavily influenced by traditions of favoring the boy child over the girl child, especially in matters relating to education (Taeko, 2014).

Sifuna (2008) observed that Kenya has made outstanding accomplishments in increasing access to education, particularly in areas that were preferred by colonial education, political, and economic policies. However, the country is yet to report gender equality in all the regions, especially in matters related to women's education. Onsongo (2009) argued this is due partly to the absolute discrimination of the regions perceived as being rebellious to the English colonizers. Various factors, specific to regions, hinder women's education. They include perceived insignificance in educating a woman as opposed to educating a man. Cultural beliefs portray educating women as opportunity costs since the women will get married and leave their fathers' homesteads, often thought as a wasted investment. On the other hand, some men perceive educated women as a challenge to their male hegemony and will tend to marry uneducated women (Onsongo, 2007).

Sifuna et al. (2007) found the following:

> There are school cultures whose hidden curriculum serves to alienate girls, disempower them, and eventually push them out of the system. Also, the formal curriculum perpetuates traditional gender boundaries and employment opportunities that do not favor female labor. Moreover, there are socio-cultural attitudes, expectations, and definitions that characterize successful womanhood in terms of feminine qualities of subservience and domestic roles. Interestingly, despite the growing body of knowledge on the importance of female education and the complexities involved, Kenya continues to struggle with the challenge of putting into place mechanisms that work to promote girls' and women's education for greater gender equality. This can be explained by lack of political will and commitment on the part of the governments and the fact that research on girls' education avoids the gender perspective while policy dialogues have continued to marginalize debates on gender and the educational system (p. 14).

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Onsongo (2009) stated the Kenyan government introduced cost sharing policies in government schools in 2003, with the aim of enabling all Kenyan children access to primary school education as part of the Vision 2030 agenda. In 2008, the Kenyan government pushed the agenda further by instituting free secondary education. Kerio (2017) pointed out, despite this initiative by the Kenyan government, the Kenyan woman is still greatly disadvantaged because she has limited opportunities since she may not have the required educational qualifications. She must compete with overqualified male counterparts for similar opportunities, though not equipped with similar skills (Mwebi & Simwata, 2013). Women are not often perceived as economic agents in comparison to the men, yet the women form more than 50% of the population (KNBS, 2009).

The cultural perspective relegates Kenyan women to roles tied to a mother or a wife, and therefore preference is frequently given to the male child (Machira, 2013). Nkemdilim (2012) noted that often, when educational decisions are made in African homes, the male child is often given priority because he is seen as the heir to the home. Though this is a common narrative across Africa, there have been success stories of women rising and uniting to fight for equality, especially in matters relating to education (Kaluyu, 2015). Ouma (2007) stated that numerous Kenyan scholars continue to carry out research in the education field with the hope that the Kenyan government will implement some of the research-based recommendations and, therefore, enable more Kenyan women to access all levels of education in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Houston Baptist University's mission is to provide a learning experience instilling in students a passion for academic, spiritual, and professional excellence as a result of their central confession, Jesus Christ is Lord. The University established ten guides, referred to as

the ten pillars, to guide it in implementing this vision. The pillars are built on the classics, embrace the challenge of Christian graduate education, establish a residential society of learning, increase cultural impact through faculty, bring Athens and Jerusalem together, expand commitment to the creative arts -- visual, musical, and literary -- cultivate a strong global focus, and move to the next level as an institution. This research project is strongly linked to Houston Baptist University's ninth pillar, cultivating a strong global focus. The University desires to have an international focus, much like the Christian church tasked with the onus to travel and share the Christian message while helping the poor (University, 2015).

Chesaina (1994) stated that education, especially women's education, plays a key role in breaking down stereotypes towards women in certain communities. When used properly, education becomes a powerful tool, offering women various options in their lives and impacting their families positively (Cuther, 2013). Various studies carried out over time conclude that gender disparity, especially in matters relating to education, decreases economic development of a nation, eventually leading to less gross national income (Foulds, 2014). The researcher pursued a different approach in relation to women and education in Kenya, reviewing the experiences of successful Kenyan women who have attained university education.

Foulds (2014) stated that it is important to understand and appreciate the growth of education in Kenya from traditional settings, through the missionary period and colonial era to the post-colonial times. Jaumont (2014) asserted the gender roles and identities of women in Kenya were constructed by male-dominated ideologies relegating women to homebound roles that did not require them to have access to education. This resulted in less Kenyan women and girls benefiting from education compared to the men and boys (Kaluyu, 2015). The Kenyan women enrolling in Kenyan public universities consistently remains as low as 36.7% even though women form more than 50% of the Kenyan population (KNBS, 2009).

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Therefore, the researcher investigated some of the challenges hindering women from enrolling in these universities to pursue higher education. The educated woman sometimes experiences socio-cultural attitudes, expectations, and definitions defining a successful, educated woman in terms of feminine qualities of subservience and domestic roles (Kerio, 2017).

Based on these claims, it was the researcher's goal to give an evaluation of the state of women's education in Kenya and the significance of improved access and achievement of educational prospects to Kenya's economic growth (Ouma, 2007). The researcher explored the issue of Kenyan women and higher education by conducting in depth case studies with Kenyan women who have attained university education. The researcher focused on the support these women received from the government, immediate and extended family, their churches, friends, or any other support system while pursuing higher education (Omwami, 2015). The aspect of social, cultural, and economic barriers these Kenyan women overcame to achieve higher education was also investigated (Kaluyu, 2015).

Statement of the Purpose and Significance

Studies carried out over time on the topic of women and education in Kenya indicate there are more areas needing to be explored in relation to this topic. The various recommendations for further research by scholars form a rich basis for exploration (Cuther, 2013; Foulds, 2014; Kerio, 2017; M'mbaha et al., 2018; Machira, 2013; Mudulia, Ayiro, & Kipsoi, 2017; Namulundah, 2016; Kiluva-Ndunda, 2001; Nkemdilim, 2012; Nzioka, 2010; Odhiambo, 2016; Omwami, 2015; Siaya ,2011; Sifuna, 2006).

The data collected and conclusions drawn from this study may be applied to improving the Kenyan education system to support more Kenyan women in their quest for higher education (Odhiambo, 2016). Insights from this research study can be adapted by the Kenyan National Government and local county councils to improve learning environments,

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encouraging more Kenyan women to pursue higher university education (Kerio, 2017). The researcher intends for areas recommended for further research to form a basis for future studies, such as helping to create more workable solutions for women and education in Kenya (Mareng, 2010). Education policy makers and key stakeholders may be able to adapt the results of this study to address the structural obstacles Kenyan women face in pursuit of higher education (Mudulia et al., 2017). The results obtained from this study can be applied to develop strategies useful in attracting and retaining Kenyan women at the university level, therefore equipping them with skills and knowledge enabling enable them to positively impact their families, communities, and the country at large (Maseno & Kilonzo, 2011).

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) focusing on improving women's welfare regarding education may apply the findings of this study to develop better implementation and more effective strategies to assist Kenyan women in accessing higher education (Abuya, 2010). The results and recommendations of this study can be shared through various conferences and publications related to women and education, highlighting the issue of Kenyan women and higher education in Kenya (Taeko, 2014). As the research discussed the impact of patriarchy on Kenyan women in pursuit of higher education, the findings will possibly play a key role in addressing gender disparity in higher education (Siaya, 1999).

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What barriers does a Kenyan woman need to overcome in order to achieve higher education, namely either a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree?

2. What support is available to Kenyan women pursuing higher university education?

3. What advice do Kenyan women who have achieved higher university education have for other Kenyan women who want to pursue or are in the process of pursuing higher university education?

Definition of Terms

Acquiescence

Acquiescence refers to respondents or participants in a research study agreeing to all questions or statements they are presented with, irrespective of the content therein, regardless of doubt or actual disagreement (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2012).

Gender Equity

Gender equity refers to the eradication of barriers and stereotypical thinking that limit the participation of women and opportunities in pursuit of basic and higher education. Gender equity stresses the importance of offering women the same opportunities as their male counterparts (Goroskho, 2008).

Hegemonic Social Structures

Kaluyu (2015) states that hegemonic structures are the methods a leading gender uses to suppress the weaker gender. The leading gender will use all resources available to normalize the domination of the weaker gender, including indoctrinating the public through the government, education, media, and social practices that support their behavior.

Kenyan Woman

For the purposes of this study, Kenyan woman refers to women born in Kenya and have lived there for at least 15 years. These Kenyan women have acquired a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate from a recognized university, either in Kenya or abroad.

Naysaying

This refers to research bias when the participants in a study answer all the questions in the survey in a negative manner, regardless of the nature of the questions (Gravetter et al., 2012).

Patriarchy

This refers to a system of life where the eldest male is the head of a family and makes all the decisions on behalf of the family. This is not limited to a family setting, and in other cases patriarchy also refers to a governing system giving preference to men over women (Jones, 2000; Machira, 2013; Tong, 1989).

Reflexivity

A process applied in research to show reliability and validity of a study. The researchers intentionally reflect on themselves and acknowledge any assumptions and preconceptions that they may bring to a research study, thus affecting the eventual outcome (Milinki, 1999).

Social Desirability Response Bias

In social desirability response bias, the respondents in a study respond to the questions in a way that is regarded positively by other people. The respondents may over-emphasize good traits and underrepresent what is perceived as bad conduct (Gravetter et al., 2012).

Theoretical Framework

This study was supported by various theoretical frameworks on the diverse issues affecting women's education in Kenya. Advocacy theory focuses on addressing social justice

issues in groups perceived as marginalized, thus laying framework for the sociocultural issues Kenyan women experience in pursuit of both basic and higher education (Machira, 2013).

One of the aspects reviewed in this research study is Kenyan women's education in the colonial period through a critical theory perspective (Omboga, 2008). The critical theory looked at matters affecting the liberation of marginalized people and, in this case, Kenyan women in pursuit of higher education, from obvious or not so obvious hegemonic social structures (Acker, McBreen, & Taylor 2007). The theory inspires such groups to carve out a place for themselves by scripting their own history in a self-aware viewpoint. This theory reviews the support, or lack thereof, for the Kenyan women in the political, economic, and social environment in Kenya as they pursue higher education (William-Black, 2008). The theory is critical in examining the Kenyan education system from early childhood care, primary, secondary, and university education in relation (Njuguna, 2002). Alternative, vocational, technical education, and informal sector training was also examined (Mugisha & Mwamwenda, 1991).

The feminist standpoint theory reviews how personal experiences are largely susceptible to the position one has in society and the power relations with which they associate (Barnett, 2009). Hartsock (1983) stated that the lives of men and women are differentiated based on the structure of the society within which they exist. Historically in Kenya, men were, and are still, given the first opportunity to pursue education over women (Nkemdilim, 2012). This theory is used to examine the social position of Kenyan women and the implications this has in their pursuit of both basic and higher education (Richardson, 2001). The issue of patriarchy is discussed, as it is a significant part of the Kenyan society, often disadvantaging the women (Machira, 2013). These theories form the basis of the theoretical framework for this study.

Limitations

Limitations in a study are circumstances that come up that the researcher has no control over. The limitations of this study are:

1. The feedback and views gathered from this research study did not represent the views of other Kenyan women who have pursued and achieved higher university education either in Kenya or abroad.

2. The researcher had limited time to carry out the study within the parameters of the doctoral program.

3. The self-reporting survey the researcher used did not conclusively capture all views of the participants interviewed in this survey.

Delimitations

The delimitations of a study are restrictions imposed by the researcher in the development of the study based on the scope of the study. The delimitations of this study include:

1. The participants used in this study included only Kenyan women who had either acquired a bachelor's degree, master's, or doctorate degree. Therefore, the results from the study may not be a representation of all Kenyan women.

2. The researcher used a self-reporting survey to collect data for this study.

3. This study was restricted to six Kenyan women who fit the criteria described by the researcher.

Assumptions

The general assumptions of this study were:

1. The interviewees understood the questions presented and responded factually and openly.

2. The candidates selected by the researcher to respond to the survey would be receptive.

3. The researcher's interpratation of the interviewees' feeback was an actual representation of their views and experiences.

Organization of the Study

This research study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, statement of the purpose and significance, research questions, definition of terms, theoretical framework, limitations, delimitations, assumptions, and organization of the study. Chapter 2 extensively reviews the literature supporting this study. Chapter 3 covers purpose, context, setting, participants, instrumentation, data collection, researcher bias, and data analysis. Chapter 4 discusses the research findings based on the research questions. Chapter 5 includes discussion, implications, recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and cultural experiences and challenges Kenyan women must overcome to access higher education. The study also explores the support they receive when pursuing higher education. The third purpose is to find out the advice Kenyan women, who have attained either a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate have for fellow Kenyan women. The intended purpose of this study is to add new perspectives to the existing body of knowledge on the experiences and perspectives of women from third-world countries in pursuit of higher education. These goals come out of a desire to add a new dimension to the existing literature by bringing to the fore the experiences of women from developing countries who are part of the elite because of their education.

This literature review is organized in various sections to paint a clear picture of the various aspects affecting women and education in Kenya. The topics covered include global trends regarding women's education, Kenyan women's education in the colonial period, the social, economic, and political environment in Kenya in relation to Kenyan women's education, and the Kenyan education system, which is inclusive of early childhood care, primary, secondary, and university education. The literature review also covers alternative, vocational, and technical education and informal sector training available for the Kenyan women in pursuit of higher education. The researcher also reviews the literature on internal and external factors influencing Kenyan women to pursue higher education. Finally, the researcher analyzes literature on the role of patriarchy in Kenyan in their pursuit of higher education.

Global Trends on Women and Education

The drive for equality is not a new phenomenon. However, it is a concept existing from as early as the 18th century, when women in Europe championed their right to get an education. The international community in the 21st Century acknowledges women have a right to education as a basic human right (M'mbaha et al., 2018). The UN applies the equality principle, stating that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights under the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. This principle sets the ground for interpretation and application of various principles in various aspects of human rights, including education. The basic concept is that all human beings have a right to education and governments should provide this basic education to all its citizens. The goal is that education should be holistic and focus on the full development of a person, enabling them to develop respect for everyone. Parents have the full right to choose the type of education they want for their children (UN, 2015).

The Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and is referred to as the International Bill of Women's Rights. It is a large document consisting of 30 articles clearly defining what includes discrimination against women, laying down procedures to be applied at the national level to address any atrocities against girls and women. Countries that are members of CEDAW commit to ending discrimination against women by agreeing to include gender equity in their legal system, set up public institutions protecting women, and ensure that all discriminatory actions against women at all levels are abolished (UN, 2015).

The UN Eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) include providing universally free primary education. The other goals are to end extreme poverty, promote gender equality, empower women, reduce childhood mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, continue to sustain the environment, and global partnership for better

development (UN, 2015). The World Education Forum 2015 was organized by UNDP, UN Women, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, UNHCR, and UNFPA in a conference hosted by the Republic of Korea in Incheon, South Korea. One hundred sixty countries were represented by over 1,600 participants, including key country stakeholders like ministers and leaders of organizations who are critical in influencing national policies and making decisions. The Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which sets out a new vision for education for the next 15 years, was adapted by all the participating countries. The members set out 20 specific action items that all participants were going to adapt to achieve the stated goals of making free education available to all. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015).

> We further entrust UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, to continue its mandated role to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 agenda, in particular by undertaking advocacy to sustain political commitment; facilitating policy dialogue, knowledge sharing and standard setting; monitoring progress towards the education targets; convening global, regional and national stakeholders to guide the implementation of the agenda; and functioning as a focal point for education within the overall Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) coordination architecture (Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, p. 10).

With the adoption of the sustainable development goals, also referred to as the millennium development goals (MGDs), the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), a branch of UNESCO, is the official provider of educational data. UIS supervises three key organizations that are the global alliance to monitor learning (GAML), focusing on bringing skilled stakeholders together to offer tangible solutions that support the creation of new indicators by outlining acceptable assessment standards. The technical cooperation group (TCG) oversees the technical work required to properly define and implement global and thematic indicators based on feedback received from members and relevant stakeholders like civil societies and multilateral agencies. Inter-Agency Group on Education Inequality Indicators (IAG-EII) is tasked with defining the acceptable standards to be applied in

reporting and interpreting domestic survey feedback focusing keenly on equity (UNESCO, 2015).

UIS data indicates that as of 2017, the number of youth and children that do not have access to education was about 262 million. This includes 64 million primary school children, 61 million in lower secondary, and 138 million in upper secondary. UIS data further indicates that the number of countries providing equal education opportunities is less than 40%. The data further indicates that only 39% of countries have both genders enrolled in secondary schools in equal proportions. Existing data indicate that girls have lower rates of completing school as opposed to boys, their chances diminishing as they get to higher education. The data indicates the SDG of universally free primary education for all may not be achieved for the poor in some countries for the next two generations. The most underprivileged girl in Sub-Saharan Africa is most likely to take 60 more years to complete primary school than the most privileged boy (UNESCO, 2015).

Women form two-thirds of the world's uneducated adult population, currently standing at 774 million uneducated adults. The number of uneducated women has not changed in the last 20 years, despite the deliberate effort applied to advocate for gender equality in education. The number of uneducated young females is 76 million out of the 123 million uneducated youth. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the rate of female literacy is less than 50% in more than 15 countries, while in others, it is less than 20% (UNESCO, 2015). Global trends indicate that women surpass men in pursuing and achieving higher education. However, this should not be interpreted to hide the underlying gender inequality issues in education. There have been increased enrollment rates at various educational levels since the 1960s. Sutton (1998) stated that in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, the registration rates were 2% for higher education, 15% secondary education, and 73% for primary education in 1960. These figures have increased to 7% by 1990 in Latin America's tertiary education, 42% in Asia for secondary

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education, and 98% in Africa for primary education. Currently, one-fifth of the global population is engaged in some formal education, an increase from one-tenth in 1953 (UNESCO, 2005).

UIS data indicates that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of omission in education. Unfortunately, a fifth of the children aged 6 to 11, a third of the youth 12 to 14, and 60% of youth 15 to 17 are not enrolled in schools to receive an education. UNESCO recognizes the challenges these countries face and works with partners and donors to assist (UNESCO, 2015). While some countries, like Kenya, introduced free primary education (FPE) in 2003, there have been challenges concerning the quality of education provided. Most of the public schools lack basic amenities like desks and chairs, exercise books and pencils, textbooks, electricity, toilets, and clean water. Another issue is large numbers of students per class coupled with teacher shortages (Benta, Moses, Elijah, Moses, & Kassahun, 2015; Onsongo, 2009; UNESCO, 2015).

Gender equality in education is a major concern in Sub-Saharan Africa. UNESCO's (2015) data indicates girls are disadvantaged from an early age as opposed to boys. In primary schools, 23% of girls are already out of school compared to 19% of boys. These statistics occur more in adolescents: 36% of girls compared to 32% of boys are not in school. Nine million girls aged 6 to 11 will never go to school, compared to 6 million boys.

Growth of Women's Education in Kenya

Formal education in Kenya can be traced back to the arrival of missionaries. Prior to 1920, Kenya was known as the East African Protectorate placed under British rule in the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890. In their incorporation of education, the missionaries did not include traditional African education systems that were already existing and were part of the daily lives of the indigenous people (Chege et al., 2006; Okuro, 2010). The traditional education systems were based on communal life roles, with women and men having clear distinct roles based on their gender (Foulds, 2014; Kaluyu, 2015). The early missionaries may

not have acknowledged the traditional educational systems, but they capitalized on it, enforcing the differences between the male and female roles through the formal education and claims of divine ordinance (Sifuna, 2006). Colonialism found an already existing system favoring men over women in terms of education (Omwami, 2015). The Kenyan women were accorded the lowest form of education in relation to their male counterparts and all the other races occupying Kenya at that time (Mutua, 1978; Sifuna, 2006; Sifuna et al., 2007). "The effects of the colonial and missionary gendering processes that were engrained in, and perpetuated through, Western education have continued to plague the Kenyan education system into the twenty-first century" (Sifuna, 2006, p. 11).

Table 2.1: Male and Female students enrolled in Kenyan Schools in 1953

Primary	1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
Male	71,229	50,822	41,694	39,127
Female	28,279	18,233	12,934	10,115
Intermediate	**5 Years**	**6 Years**	**7 Years**	**8 Years**
Male	20,134	14,152	8,263	5,440
Female	4,629	2,814	1,760	955
Secondary	**9 Years**	**10 Years**	**11 Years**	**12 Years**
Male	2,072	946	398	298
Female	347	108	25	11
Post-Secondary	**13 Years**	**14 Years**		
Male	31	18		
Female	(Not given)	1		

Note. The data indicates that more males than females consistently enrolled in primary, intermediate, secondary, and post-secondary education in this period (Shepherd, 1955).

The onset of colonialism in Kenya was characterized by the arrival of white European settlers in 1896 (Ogot, 1974). The white settlers needed land to settle on, leading to many ethnic communities losing their birth right land that had been inherited from their forefathers (Namulundah, 2016). The white settlers needed laborers to work on these lands; consequently, in 1901, they introduced taxes, a new concept for Kenyans and forcing the Kenyan male population to work for the settlers in order to pay these taxes (Nzioka, 2010).

The settlers further imposed hut taxes, putting additional strain on the Kenyan male population because of the polygamous nature of the African families (Okuro, 2010). Most Kenyan men had multiple wives who lived in their own huts. They were thus forced to abandon their traditional roles as the providers and protectors of their families in order to meet the exceeding burden of paying these taxes (Bennet, 1963; Ogot, 1974).

According to Anderson (1970), Kenyan women had to find means to survive and fend for their families because large tracts of fertile land had been grabbed by the settlers, prompting them to look for alternative areas of farming. This resulted in harm to the environment, mainly because women lacked basic agricultural education due to having been excluded from any form of any education that would have equipped them with the necessary agricultural skills of growing food on previously unfarmed land (Kanogo, 1992). The Kenyan woman was systematically ostracized by the colonial government, denied access to education, and was regarded as inferior and paid very minimal wages for any work she did. Additionally, she was forced to fend for herself, as Kenyan men were forced to work for the white settlers in order to pay for the taxes (Omwami, 2015; Sifuna et al., 2007).

Sifuna (2006) observed that girls were rarely given the opportunity to go to school compared to boys. This has further been supported by Chesaina (1994), who also observed that women were frequently treated as secondary and inferior to their male counterparts in the African homestead. This may largely be attributed to the patrilineal descent system still largely dominating African culture. Kenya is no exception, where male children inherit their fathers' land while daughters are married off and are automatically incorporated into their husbands' cultures (Maseno et al., 2011). In the eventuality that women were offered the opportunity to pursue education, they were often not given the same opportunities as men. They were frequently trained as secretaries, schoolmistresses, and nurses, though they were not given the opportunity to be leaders in these roles (Munro, 1976; Odhiambo, 2016).

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After World War I in 1918, enrollment of Kenyan children in schools started rising. However, only wealthy Kenyan families could afford to take their children to school. Preference was given to boy children over girl children (Munro, 1976; Sifuna, 2006). The colonial administration offered support for the education system, organized according to the races living in Kenya, with Kenyan children perceived as inferior to the Asian and Europeans (Mwiria, 1991; Sogunro, 2014).

> In 1950, for example, the government allowed one (1) British Pound per annum for the education of an African child, while the Asian had 8.3 Pounds and the European had 56 pounds spent on education per child, per year. Logic dictates that in terms of offering quality education, the investment of 1 British Pound for every African child (more often a boy) could not compare reasonably with that of 56 Pounds for every European child (Sifuna, 2006, p. 26).

The perspectives of the European missionaries regarding the role of Kenyan women changed with time. The missionaries in Central Kenya offered Kenyan women who had run away from their matrimonial or paternal homes with shelter, food, and clothing. They further converted them to Christianity and provided them with minimum education (Dubel, 1981; Sifuna 2006). The European missionaries perceived education on gender roles, further enforced by the Christian doctrines. Women were therefore trained as mothers, wives, and domestic workers, while men and boys were trained in outdoor activities like carpentry and masonry (Mudulia et al.; 2017). This education system impacted women negatively as Kenya developed and needed workers to fill various skilled roles. Women were unable to effectively compete with their male counterparts, as they were majorly equipped with domestic skills (Mutua, 1978).

In 1925, the colonial government acknowledged that the quality of education offered to Kenyan women was lower compared to what was offered to Kenyan men and the rest of the races, namely Asians and Europeans (Ogot, 1974). The female curriculum was improved but still limited, like the curriculum developed by the missionaries, to roles like childcare,

healthcare, nutrition, and sewing. Kenyan boys, on the other hand, had a curriculum including reading, writing, and mathematics (Robertson, 1986; Sifuna, 2006). Since most of the farming land had been allocated to the settlers, locals were forced to look for alternative means of survival. This led to high rates of urbanization, characterized by an increase in growth opportunities for Kenyan women, both economically and educationally (Mwiria, 1991). The first female training school in Kenya was called Jeanes School and had a more comprehensive curriculum, including farming, basic bookkeeping and accounting, sewing, first aid, cooking, reading, curios, laundry, and sanitation (Shepherd, 1955; Sifuna, 2006).

After Kenya gained its independence on December 12, 1963, the Kenyan President, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, formed an education commission to look at the state of education in Kenya. The commission produced a report referred to as the Ominde Report (Ominde, 1964). The commission's main task was to develop an inclusive education policy targeting the existing policies set up by the colonial government and missionary education. These policies had been set up on racial biasness, whereby Kenyans were offered the lowest quality of education compared to the Europeans and the Asians (Bongonko, 1992). The commission sought opinions from the public and any interested stakeholders, though the final recommendations were the sole responsibility of the committee members. The two central issues were the inclusion of women in education, economic, and development activities, and education in relation to national development and domestic labor (Wadende, 2011). The Ominde Report noted that Kenya needed to develop its domestic labor to fill up key roles previously occupied by Europeans and Asians. The country had transitioned from subsistence farming to a monetary economic system. The Ominde Report recommended the provision of universal basic education to equip Kenyans with the necessary skills useful for the political, economic, and social development of Kenya (Ominde, 1964; Taeko 2014). The commission focused on refining the education system based on the racial biasness that negated Kenyans

as an inferior race and did not address issues associated with gender inequalities. The commission's report concluded that education was the main qualification for employment, which favored the male population compared to the women (Ominde, 1964; Republic of Kenya, 1988, 1991).

A series of subsequent commissions were formed and several reports endorsing several recommendations on the improvement of women welfare and education were made (Abuya, 2010). The sessional paper produced in 1965 outlined guidelines of building social, political, and economic dynamics of the country and did not refer to any gender issues. In 1974, the government introduced educational loans to assist students. However, expenses that were not related to their educations were to be funded by their parents (Cuther, 2013). This plan to finance students changed, forcing parents to share the financial burden. This put the girl child at a disadvantage since the boy child was given educational priority (Foulds, 2014; Republic of Kenya, 1988, 1991, 2003). The Gachathi Report in 1976 reviewed the lack of women's education and its negative impact on the economic growth of the country. The report proposed corrective recommendations to improve on the existing educational and economic gender imbalances existing due to the Kenyan traditional beliefs putting women in a lower rank than men (Siaya, 1999).

The Wanjiri Report of 1982 focused on women and reviewed the various economic activities they were involved in. The report recommended the introduction of reproductive health education in schools to curb the high rates of girls dropping out of school due to unplanned pregnancies (Gondwe, 2016; the Republic of Kenya, 1988). Subsequent reports acknowledged the need to address the inequality in education, which placed Kenyan women at a disadvantaged economic position. These reports did not, however, outline specific plans to end the inequality, instead blaming the subordinate position held to the colonial system (Kanake, 1997; Siaya, 1999).

The abolishment of the student loan program in 1988 was meant to ease the financial

burden, but instead had a negative impact on the education system (Mudulia et al., 2017).

This was because school enrollments dropped and students continuously repeated grades,

thus creating low transitions from primary school to secondary schools (Bedi, Kimalu, Manda

& Nafula, 2002).

> The gross enrolment rate (GER) dropped from 115 percent in 1987 to 95 percent in
> 1990 and further to 91 percent in 2002 (Republic of Kenya, 1988, 1991, 2003).
> Primary school GER declined from 98 percent in 1989 to 89 percent in 2002, while
> the secondary school enrolment rate dropped from 29 to 23 percent during the same
> period. The GER for girls remained relatively lower than that for boys. In 2001 for
> example, the primary school GER was recorded at 90 and 91 percent for girls and
> boys, respectively. This scenario was attributed to the high cost of education, having a
> negative impact on access, retention, equity, and quality (the Republic of Kenya,
> 2001). It is imperative to note that these trends were observed despite Kenya being
> among the highest spenders on education in Sub-Saharan Africa. However, over 75
> percent of the education budget was spent on paying teachers' salaries (Milu, John,
> Esther & Stella, 2010, p. 1).

The Kenyan government re-introduced FPE in 2003 with the intent of reversing the

poor national trends in educational accomplishments. This was in line with international

educational policies like the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) formulated in

1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in which world

leaders committed to universal primary education by 2015 (UNESCO, 1990; Asena, Simiyu

& Riechi, 2016). The main purpose of FPE was to offer educational opportunities to children

who were unable to attend primary school based on costs associated with primary education.

The government allocated 14.57 USD per child, split between overall expenses and teaching

material, with 36 percent allocated to the former and 64 percent to the latter. However, the

FPE program has faced diverse challenges ranging from overcrowded classes, poor

amenities, and lack of classrooms and teaching materials (Benta, Oketch & Musyoka, 2013;

Benta et al., 2015).

> The immediate effect of the FPE was an improvement in primary school enrolment.
> The GER increased from 92 percent in 2002 to 104 percent in 2003 of the school age

population (the Republic of Kenya, 2007). The enrolment of girls rose 17 percent, from 3 million in 2002 to 3.5 million in 2003, while that of boys rose18 percent from 3.1 to 3.7 million in the same period. By 2006, total enrolment in primary schools was 7.63 million, up from 7.59 million in 2005. It is also important to note that some of the students enrolling were adults (Milu et al., 2010, p. 3).

In January 2008, the government introduced free secondary education (FSE), leading to an increase in the number of students transitioning from primary schools to secondary schools (Abdinoor, 2012). The government offered 100 USD per child per annum for basic learning expenses and implemented policies aimed at increasing the capacities of the public secondary schools countrywide (Newman, 2017). The government anticipated that high numbers of students would enroll for FSE and therefore wanted to increase the teacher student ratio from one teacher per 40 students to 45 students. The government also sought to increase the number of classes per level from a minimum of one to at least three (Ministry of Education,2008; Newman, 2017).

The government only provided for tuition expenses; making parents were responsible for all other expenses related to their children's secondary education. The FSE program has also faced challenges much like the FPE program (Kerio, 2017; Mareng, 2010). Some challenges include the government delaying disbursement of funds for both FSE and FPE, high inflation rates experienced in the country due to various to economic factors which led to high fuel and commodity prices, insufficient and poor facilities, and lack of adequate teaching staff (Mareng, 2010; UNESCO, 2015). Some of the mitigating solutions implemented by various secondary schools include offering day school as opposed to boarding school, therefore reducing the operating costs and creating access for more students. The schools employed teachers on a temporary basis to ease the workload experienced due to the increasing number of students (Mareng, 2010; Nkemdilim, 2012; Newman, 2017).

Cuther (2013) observed that though Kenya has made efforts to address the issue of women and education and create avenues for Kenyan women to pursue both basic and higher

education, continuous research studies conducted by various researchers indicate numerous issues affecting their ability to pursue education (Foulds, 2014; Kerio, 2017; M'mbaha et al., 2018). These factors were mainly centered on the social, economic, and political environments in Kenya. The aspect of patriarchy plays a key role since the Kenyan society is primarily dominated by the hegemonic culture, giving first opportunities to the male child as opposed to the female child (Cuther, 2013; Namulundah, 2016; Nkemdilim, 2012). Kenyan history indicates women were often relegated to feminine roles and systematically denied opportunities to pursue educational goals, something that still affects Kenyan women to date. These factors play a key role in affecting Kenyan women in their pursuit of higher education (Odhiambo, 2016; Omwami, 2015; Siaya 1999; Chege et al., 2006; Sifuna, 2006).

Education System in Kenya

The Kenyan education system is built on an 8-4-4 structure, having replaced the 7-4-2-3 system in 1985. The 8-4-4 system consists of children spending eight years in primary school, four years in secondary school, and four year pursuing undergraduate programs at the university level. Primary school is compulsory under the FPE program and was introduced by the Kenyan government in 2003. However, FSE, introduced in 2008, is available but not mandatory (Ministry of Education, 2014; Sifuna, 2006). The school academic calendar begins in January, ends in November, and is divided into three terms with the first term running from January to March, second term running from May to July, and the third term running from September to November. The Ministry of Education, headed by a Minister of Education, oversees pre-primary, primary, secondary, and informal education in Kenya, ensuring high quality of education is maintained across the country. The recruiting, hiring, assigning, transferring, and discipline procedures are handled by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), an independent office from Ministry of Education, 2014).

The 7-4-2-3 was a model adapted by Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, then referred to as the East African Community (EAC), which collapsed in 1977. The model consisted of seven years in primary school, after which students took the East African Certificate of Primary Education (EACPE). This would then qualify them for four years in secondary school, where they took the East African Certificate of Education Examination (EACE). Students then went through two years in high school and sat for the East African Advanced Certificate of Education (EAACE) exam that qualified them for three to five years in university education. After the collapse of the EAC, Kenya changed the name EACPE to the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE), and EACE changed to Kenya Certificate of Education (KCE).

Early Childhood Care and Development Education

Early Childhood Care and Development Education (ECCDE) was not addressed in the 1968 Education Act. Ideally, ECCDE caters to children from toddlerhood to seven years old, at which point they are required to join the FPE program. ECCDE is an integral part of the education system that includes kindergarten, which is considered pre-primary schooling, where children are trained in diverse activities stimulating their growth (Nganga, 2009). Children at this stage are greatly influenced by the overall environment and the people surrounding them. Ideally, ECCDE should have a holistic approach in order to equip children with a solid base of the emotional, social, physical, and mental lifelong foundation. Countries can use ECCDE to promote human resource growth, gender disparity, and create a sense of social unity, which is in line with SDG that aims at ensuring all children have access to quality and equal ECCDE opportunities to prepare them for primary school education (Ominde, 1964; Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2005).

Though there are many benefits associated with ECCDE, centers offering ECCDE do not often receive much support from the key education stakeholders, including the

government (Nzioka, 2010). The main challenges include low enrollment rates, poor facilities, lack of learning resources, few qualified teachers, enrolling underage or over-age children, inconsistence ECCDE programs, and lack of funding (Nganga, 2009; Riechi, Mbiti & Kisilu, 2006). In 2013, the Kenyan government included ECCDE in the basic education plan and placed it under Ministry of Education, though the implementation has been a challenge primarily been left up to county governments, thus a lack of central curriculum for ECCDE. Due to these challenges, the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) has been working to make ECCDE a program implemented by the central government (Adams & Swadener, 2000; Mireri, 2015).

The introduction of FPE by the Kenyan government in 2003 gave many parents the option of not enrolling their children in ECCDE, instead allowing parents to take them to primary school because ECCDE is not free and is funded by the parents (Milu et al., 2010). As a result of the high enrollment rates in primary schools due to FPE, ECCDE programs in these schools were closed to accommodate the large student numbers. There is minimal government involvement in ECCDE, leaving the planning to parents who choose the ECCDE appropriate for their young children (Mireri, 2015; Nganga, 2009).

Primary School Education

FPE was initially introduced in Kenya in the late 1970s. However, the Structural Adjustments Programs (SAPS) abolished it in 1988 to lessen the financial strain already experienced by the public education system (Oketch & Somerset, 2010). This created a cost sharing situation where parents had to cater for uniforms, buying books, and even constructing of school buildings and all other expenses related to running the school, with the exception of the recruitment and paying of teachers, which the government handled (Milu et al., 2010). However, this created a negative impact on primary school education because children were dropping out of school due to the high costs associated with education. The

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children were often forced to repeat classes due to poor performance, also leading to low transition rates from primary school to secondary school (Ominde, 1964; Sifuna, 2006).

The cost sharing initiative was also characterized by declining school enrollment rates. For example, in 1990 the gross enrollment rates (GER) were 95 percent, a decline of 20 percent from 115 percent in 1987. This further declined to 91 percent in 2002. Girls' GER was observed to be lower than boys' (Republic of Kenya, 1988, 1991, 2003). The Kenyan government introduced FPE in 2003, in line with SDG and EFA and the 2001 Students Act, advocating access to affordable and equitable education for all Kenyans (UNESCO, 2005, 2015). The FPE was primarily driven by the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC), which was democratically elected to office in the 2002 election. The FPE program is aimed at addressing the social gaps between the poor and the rich by creating equity through education and offering children from poor backgrounds an opportunity to pursue basic education. The government provides 14.57 USD per child per annum, with the funds applied towards both administrative and tuition costs (Milu et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2005). FPE had a positive impact on GER, increasing from 92 percent in 2002 to 104 percent in 2003, though the enrollment for girls was relatively lower than boys.

> The enrolment of girls rose by 17 percent, from 3 million in 2002 to 3.5 million in 2003, while that of boys rose by 18 percent from 3.1 to 3.7 million in the same period. By 2006, total enrolment in primary schools was 7.63 million, up from 7.59 million in 2005. It is also important to note that some of the students enrolling were adults (Milu et al., 2010, p.3).

The high GER led to several challenges for the FPE. Classes were overcrowded, leading to high student to teacher ratios, as well as a lack of proper desks and chairs for students, classrooms and amenities, instructional materials, and sufficient number of teachers. Parents were responsible for buying school uniforms and stationery for their children (UN, 2005; UN 2015). Various coping strategies have been implemented to support high GER. Some of these include recruiting more trained teachers, offering volunteering opportunities

for teachers, building more classrooms through fundraising initiatives, and general improvement of learning facilities (Benta et al., 2015). The FPE program receives donations from organizations like World Bank, the British Government, The Swedish Government, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and UNICEF to enable its sustainability (UNESCO, 2015). Students sit for Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), a national examination at the end of their eighth year of schooling, qualifying them to attend secondary school. The subjects covered in this exam are social studies, mathematics, Kiswahili, agriculture, and science (Milu et al., 2010; Omwami, 2015; Sifuna, 2006).

Table 2.2: Enrolment in FPE by Gender ('000) and Gender Parity Index

Level of Education	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Primary School						
Boys	4,722.8	4,789.8	4,887.3	4,972.7	5,019.7	5,052.4
Girls	4,460.7	4,563.1	4,673.7	4,784.4	4,837.9	4,898.4
Total	9,183.50	9,352.8	9,561.1	9,757.6	9,857.6	9,950.7
Parity	0.94	0.95	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.97

Note. The table above indicates that GER for primary schools increased with 8%, while the parity index improved over time but did not get to parity. Hence, quality was not achieved (Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2014)

Data indicates that the number of girls enrolled in primary education is still lower than the number of boys (Ministry of Education, 2014). These can be attributed to various social, economic, political, and environmental factors contributing to gender disparity. The transition rates from primary schools to secondary schools for boys are higher than those of girls. This contributes to the overall low numbers of Kenyans who pursue higher education (Milu et al., 2010; Ministry of Education, 2014; Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2005).

Table 2.3: Schooling Profile Indicators Showing FPE Retention Rates

Level of Education	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Primary School						

Standard 1 to 6	84.3%	84.8%	90.8%	91.9%	98.0%	98.1%
Standard 1 to 8	76.8%	77.3%	77.3%	77.2%	76.6%	77.7%

Note. Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2014. The table above indicates that the retention to grade six has reached the target envisioned under the Dakar Framework of Education for All. The retention rates to class eight have remained consistently at an average of 77.15%, lower than the target envisioned under the Dakar Framework of Education for All.

The retention rates under the FPE program could be affected by various factors like family background, sociocultural factors, and the overall learning environment. The level of parental education, dreams, aspirations of the family, gender of the children, and the financial and economic circumstances of the family also contribute to these retention rates (Benta et al., 2013). Environmental factors also play a role. Sociocultural factors contribute through aspects like education significance and importance in the society or cultural group, as well as the number of children in relation to a family's economic ability to educate their children (Mzuza, Yudong & Kapute, 2013; Namulundah, 2016). The overall school environment also affects the retention and completion rates, for if the school environment is not conducive, students may not be motivated to complete their education (Ministry of Education 2014; Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2015). The table below shows the enrolment rates by gender in all the 48 counties in Kenya. The overall number of girls enrolling for FPE is lower than the number of boys.

Table 2.4: Primary Enrollment and Enrollment Rates by County

	Enrollment			GER			NER		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
Kenya	5,052,389	4,898,357	9,950,746	105.6%	101.4%	103.5%	90.0%	86.4%	88.2%

Note. Adapted from Ministry of Education, 2014. The overall number of girls enrolling for FPE as of 2014 is lower by 154,032 than that of boys. The GER is lower by 4.2%, and the NER is lower by 3.6%

Secondary School Education

Students transition from primary schools to secondary schools by taking the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and are allocated the secondary school to attend by the Ministry of Education based on their results. Secondary schooling lasts for four years and serves as the foundation for higher education at either a university, through tertiary training, or venturing into the job market (Asena et al., 2016; Newman, (2017). Secondary schools are either public or private. Public schools are managed by a board of governors in association with parent teacher associations and are government funded in collaboration with the communities in which they exist, while private schools are owned by private individuals and companies, including churches and non-governmental organizations (Asena et al., 2016; Kerio, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2014).

The secondary school curriculum is designed to serve both categories of students who proceed for further education and those that do not proceed further, therefore offering courses that are job oriented (Newman, 2017). The curriculum is comprehensive and consists of subjects divided into five categories. Category one is compulsory and consists of English, mathematics, and Kiswahili. In category two, students can choose any two subjects they prefer from the options of biological sciences, chemistry, and physics. Category three contains geography, social studies, ethics, Christianity, Islam, history, and government. Group four consists of home science, agriculture, electricity, metalwork, woodwork, drawing, and design. Category five contains French, Arabic, German, commerce, and music. Students choose one subject in categories three, four, and five. Students take KCPE, a national exam administered and supervised by the National Examination Council (Ministry of Education, 2014). The introduction of FSE in 2008 led to a higher number of students transitioning from primary schools to secondary schools (Ministry of Education, 2014; UNESCO, 2015).

Table 2.5: Enrolment in FSE by Gender ('000) and Gender Parity Index

Level of Education	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Secondary School						
Boys	787.90	885.5	948.7	1,019.0	1,127.7	1,202.3
Girls	684.7	767.8	819.0	895.8	976.6	1,107.6
Total	1,472.6	1,653.4	1,767.7	1,1914.8	2,104.3	2,331.7
Parity	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.88	0.87	0.92

Note. Adapted from Ministry of Education Science, and Technology, 2014. The table above indicates that the number of boys enrolled for FSE increased by 414.4, while the number of girls increased by 422.9. The overall increase in FSE enrolment was 837.3 in that period.

The Kenyan government only provides for tuition expenses, while parents pay for the rest of the expenses associated with their children pursuing secondary school education (Ministry of Education 2014). There are various reasons making the demand for secondary school not to be as explicit as the demand for primary school. The opportunity costs of attaining secondary school education exceed that of attaining primary school education, thus there is likely to be an assumption by poor parents that basic primary education is enough (Abdinoor, 2012; Baland & Robinson, 2000). Parents may opt to encourage their children to look for jobs without considering their future earning potentials. This may be attributed to uneducated parents from poor backgrounds not being informed on the benefits of further education (Jensen, 2010).

The secondary school curriculum was designed to equip learners with the practical skills required in the job market and create equity in resource distribution throughout the country. However, the curriculum has been criticized for not sufficiently addressing the issue of unemployment due to more emphases of urban jobs as opposed to rural and agricultural development (Asena et al., 2016; Ministry of Education 2008). This creates high rural to urban immigration characterized by unemployment, leading to high crime rates, over

population, poor nutrition, and low mortality rates (Asena et al., 2016). Lack of communication between education stakeholders often results in a breakdown between the planners influenced by political pressure to meet goals of a current government, as well as educators who are focused on giving the best to students (Jaumont, 2014; Mareng, 2010).

Table 2.6: Schooling Profile Indicators Showing FSE Completion Rates

Level of Education	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Secondary School						
Access Form 1	48%	52%	53%	53%	60%	63%
Access Form 4	40%	36%	43%	46%	49%	48%

Note. Adapted from Ministry of Education 2014. The table above indicates the completion rates in FSE for the stated period. The lowest completion rates were witnessed in 2010, while the highest completion rates were witnessed in 2013.

Completion rates in secondary school education are affected by the same factors as primary school education, such as the overall school environment, sociocultural factors, and the family's influence (Newman, 2017). The government also plays a key role since it is supposed to sustain the continuous provision of FSE by providing funds. These funds cater to provision of sufficient and qualified teachers, adequate learning facilities, and preventing high dropout rates, a fact often associated with lack of finances to pay for school fees due to poverty levels experienced by most parents in rural areas (Abuya, 2010; Asena et al., 2016; Benta et al.,2015). One of the key benefits associated with secondary school education is the positive trend on fertility behaviors and marriage among teenagers through delayed early marriages, leading to decreased cases of early pregnancies and childbearing (Odhiambo, 2016). Secondary school education also gives girls better opportunities in the skilled job market, an indication that the FSE makes a positive impact in the job industry (M'mbaha et al., 2018; Newman, 2017).

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Gap Analysis of FPE and FSE in Kenya

Gap analysis is the process of comparing set performance targets against the actual performance, which may be on or off target. Gap analysis is a comprehensive process involving defining, detailing, evaluating, and addressing the gaps between the defined goals and objectives and the actual results experienced during or after implementation (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2004). Gap analysis in educational practices involves reviewing existing education policies to ascertain their effectiveness. The evaluation goals and objectives need to be properly defined to answer the right questions and avoid wasting time. The users of the findings need to understand how these findings impact the existing policies, in this case in relation to education (Gall, M., Gall, J., & Borg, 2006). The program to be evaluated is a major aspect of any evaluation, as it answers key questions like what skills are required to make the evaluation, what problems the program intended to solve in the first place, and what data exists regarding the program. Contextual issues like the political climate and context surrounding the evaluation need to be considered (Fitzpatrick et al., 2004; Gall et al., 2006).

The FPE policy was introduced in 2003, while FSE was introduced in 2008, by the Kenyan Government in line with one of UN SDG of ensuring that everyone has access to basic education by 2030. The programs have experienced diverse challenges at various levels with various stakeholders blaming each other for these challenges (Oketch et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2015). The findings of the evaluations were used to improve the implementation of FPE and FSE by empowering teachers by addressing the existing gaps. The findings were used to improve the policies by revising some components of these policies. All the education stakeholders should be involved in addressing the findings in the program evaluation (UNESCO, 2005).

The approaches used in the policy evaluation are the concepts of street-level bureaucracy, including the top-down, bottom-up, and the interactive approaches. With the top-

down policy evaluation approach, the policy implementation is seen as a process that is rational, planned, and completely controlled by a chief authority figure, department, or organization (Gall et al., 2006). There are implementation requirements outlined as a set of conditions that, when satisfied, create an avenue for policy implementation to occur. The bottom-up policy evaluation process emphasizes constant communication processes to understand the policies involved, the systems and mechanisms supporting the policies, and the factors hindering the success of these policies. This evaluation process seeks to understand the perspectives of all the key stakeholders and tends not to be effective (Haddad & Demsky, 1995).

The concept of street-level bureaucracy in policy evaluation presumes that public servants play a key role in bringing services to the public masses. The public servants experience challenges when delivering these services. They often develop methods and procedures for delivering these services, which eventually become part of the policy implementation (Gall et al., 2006). For instance, a teacher's level of qualifications determines how she will teach the curriculum, therefore determining how the content will be delivered to the students. This then becomes part of policy implementation (Darling-Hammond, 1990).

The interactive approaches used in program evaluation are planning, formative, and summative. Formative evaluations focus on making improvements in an ongoing activity or policy. They seek to make recommendations for the improvement of an ongoing program like the ongoing FPE and FSE policies (Gall et al., 2006). Summative evaluation, on the other hand, involves reviewing the end of a program to ascertain whether it met the intended objectives. In this case, the summative evaluation would be done at the end of the implementation of the FPE and FSE to ascertain whether it was a success or a failure (Benta et al., 2015). The practical guidelines were used in this policy evaluation, mainly compromised of a desk review of all the policies in place since FPE was introduced. The evaluation process applied key words like FPE, FSE policy, teachers, bottom-up, top-down, Kenya, and incremental process (Lyne, 2003). It

also involved a comprehensive review of various policy documents from various educational sectors since the introduction of free primary education. Synthesis of the documents was done by identifying key thematic areas and evaluating the feedback in these areas (Gall et al., 2006; Lyne, 2003; Rossi, Lipsey & Freeman, 2004).

The introduction of FPE and FSE led to an overload of the education systems due to large numbers of students enrolling, leading to overstretched facilities and teachers, thus affecting their ability to be impactful. The students enrolling also included overage students who should have been enrolled in adult classes but instead opted for FSE because it was free, an experience across Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Lesotho (Oketch et al., 2010). Involving teachers in the planning and implementation of both FPE and FSE would be instrumental in resolving the challenges faced by the programs. The teachers articulate the policies differently, thus using their diverse understanding to implement them, which may pose a challenge in the overall quality (Majanga, Nasongo & Sylvia, 2011). They are generally excluded in the entire policy articulation process and therefore lack the motivation to implement the policies by articulating their daily activities to encompass these policies (Benta et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2005).

Large class sizes coupled with a lack of learning supplies and class furniture creates an environment that is not conducive. Most rural schools lack electricity, running water, adequate toilet facilities, and enough classrooms. The Kenyan government has acknowledged that FPE and FSE have experienced challenges in terms of structure and resources. However, they have not acknowledged the impact on teachers (Benta et al., 2015; UNESCO, 2005). The FPE was introduced by the NARC party as a political obligation and commitment made during the political campaigns in 2001. The program was implemented in a rapid manner without involving all the stakeholders for proper planning and implementation, applying the concept of top-down bureaucracy. KNUT addresses the issues of teachers' grievances regarding

addressing their remuneration but does not have the ability to address the structural and funding issues associated with FPE and FSE (Oketch et al., 2010; Sawamura & Sifuna, 2008).

The FPE and FSE need more support to be effective, especially in empowering the teachers to be more effective. The FPE and FSE programs do not necessarily address the issue of gender and education and the factors influencing girls enrolling for these programs (Majanga et al., 2011). The community, society, school environment, and the overall family structure and environment affect girls' access to education. In order to make these programs more effective, all educational stakeholders, the government, the Ministry of Education, KNUT, UNESCO, school administrators, teachers, and students need to work together to address the systemic challenges facing FPE and FSE (Benta et al., 2015; Sawamura et al., 2008; Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2015).

University Education

When students take KCSE, they are qualified to attend public universities for various academic programs based on their grades (Ministry of Education, 2014). Universities in Kenya are either private or public. Public universities are established by an act of parliament and private universities through an accreditation process by the Commission for University Education (CUE), the government agency authorized to regulate university education in Kenya as of 2012. Universities in Kenya offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. All foreign universities are required to apply for accreditation from CUE. As of November 2017, CUE listed the number of public chartered universities at 31 and private chartered universities at 18. Public constituent colleges were six, private constituent colleges were five, and institutions with letters of interim authority were 14 (CUE, 2019).

University education in Kenya can be traced to the colonial era in 1947. However, the plan materialized in 1951 when it received a royal charter to open the Royal Technical College of East Africa and admitted the first students in 1956. The college was transformed

into an Inter-Territorial University College in 1961 and renamed the Royal College of Nairobi. After Kenya gained its independence in 1963, the college was elevated to University College of Nairobi and offered courses in science, art, engineering, as well as readying students for Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees at the University of London (Chege et al., 2006). In 1970, through an act of Parliament, the University College was transformed to University of Nairobi. Since then, Kenya has experienced growth in University education with the current number of public chartered and private chartered universities at 49. United States International University-Africa (USIU-Africa) was the first private university to be established in Kenya in 1970 (Sifuna, 2006; Williams-Black, 2008).

Williams-Black (2008) states that Thomas Mboya, a Kenyan activist and politician, secured 81 scholarships in 1959 for Kenyans to attend 40 universities in the United States of America (USA) and secured 320 more in 1960. The scholarship program was referred to as the airlifts and gave opportunities to many Kenyan women to pursue higher education. This is despite the fact that Kenyan women were often ignored in the political, economic, and social fronts (Sifuna, 2008). This was reciprocated in the United States, where white women who championed for the rights of black women realized they were also victims and lacked some basic rights, capitalized by sexist suppression and patriarchy (Jaumont, 2014; Siaya, 1999). Women all over the world formed movements to fight for equality in all fronts, especially in educational opportunities, with Kenyan women forming Maendeleo ya Wanawake (MYWO) an organization that championed their rights (Anderson, 1970; Chesaina, 1994; Cuther, 2013).

Ouma (2007) states that public universities sometimes venture into education marketization to raise funds, despite not having the institutional capacity to sufficiently address the needs of students. These institutions frequently lack enough teaching facilities, staff, and market programs before developing the capacity to offer, therefore resulting in

programs of lesser quality (Mwebi et al., 2013). However, since 2012, CUE regulates universities in Kenya and requires them to build capacity before introducing new programs. Private universities in Kenya offer fewer programs geared towards information technology, business studies, and social sciences, as opposed to public universities who offer more diverse programs (Nzioka, 2010). Public universities are subsidized by the government and are more unlike the private universities that depend on tuition, endowments, and funding from sponsors and the university founders (Onsongo, 2007). The number of students attending both public and private universities has increased. However, the proportion of women to men remains relatively low. The Kenyan women enrolling in Kenyan public universities consistently remains as low as 36.7%, even though women form more than 50% of the Kenyan population (KNBS, 2009; Odhiambo,2016).

Kanake (1997) states that there are various reasons leading to fewer Kenyan women enrolling in universities for higher education. The sociocultural factors play a lead role in determining whether women pursue their dreams of higher education. There are communities that opt to offer their daughters the lowest levels of education since they are afraid, they will be overlooked when it comes to marriage prospects. This is because men perceive they will have challenges living with highly educated women since these women are sometimes stereotyped as difficult, rude, and lazy when it comes to housework (Siaya, 1999; Sifuna, 2006). Colonialism also created a negative impact on Kenyan women's opportunities to pursue university education because they defined education on gender roles, hence creating larger gaps between men and women (Mwiria, 1991). The colonialists and the missionaries created separate curriculums for the genders, favoring men for skilled and professional careers while women were trained in feminine duties like cooking, childcare, and housekeeping, ensuring women remain inferior to men (Siaya, 1999; Sifuna, 2006).

Kerio (2017) observes that the economic situation often creates a barrier for Kenyan women to pursue a higher university education. Women sometimes depend on financial support from their parents, siblings, relatives, the community, donors, the government, and spouses to pay their university education and other university-related costs (Mareng, 2010). In cases where women are working and have an income, there are other competing financial needs, thus creating a dilemma in opportunity costs. Family obligations, like supporting younger siblings to pursue education at various levels (either primary or secondary), come first over their desire to pursue university education (Namulundah, 2016). Due to communal nature of Kenyan life, children have the obligation of taking care of their parents once they finish school and secure jobs. The Kenyan woman may opt to attend to her parents' needs instead of pursuing university education since this is what the society expects (Newman, 2017). Lack of higher university education means Kenyan women are offered jobs that do not pay them competitive salaries and benefits since they are not able to compete in the job market (Kaluyu, 2015). This means that these women are in a perpetual economic crisis trying to cope with the ever-increasing demands placed on them by the (Mudulia et al., 2017; UNESCO, 2015).

Machira (2013) states that sometimes parents may opt to enroll their girl children in alternate tertiary learning institutions like polytechnics and colleges with fewer admission requirements. The courses offered are also relatively shorter compared to the degree programs in universities, thus providing quicker employment opportunities because they offer practical skills needed in the job market (Jaumont, 2014). Patriarchy is a factor affecting Kenyan women in pursuit of higher university education because Kenyan families are largely led by men. The level of education a father has influences the choices made for the daughters in his family. However, the social perspectives may play a role since patriarchal perspectives give preference to males over females (Jensen, 2010; Kaluyu, 2015).

Harassment or intimidating experiences while pursuing university education tend to affect women more than men, leading to women being fearful, embarrassed, and intimidated. These factors may affect them and contribute to not completing their university education (Muasya, 2014). They may also feel isolated and opt to withdraw from programs and courses, limiting their prospects and future opportunities (Okeyo ,2014). Sexual harassment of female university students may lead to them developing inferiority complexities, eroding their self-esteem and quality of life (Rintaugu, Kamau, Amusa, & Toriola 2014). Other issues affecting the ability of Kenyan women's ability to access university education include continuous and persistent poverty in sub-Saharan Africa (Abuya, 2010). Women were traditionally exempted from major decision-making forums in issues affecting them, like access to basic and higher education, impacting them negatively (Cuther, 2013; Foulds, 2014). However, women are now represented in these decision-making organs. Therefore, they impact future decisions made regarding their welfare (Omwami, 2015; UNESCO, 2015).

Vocational and Technical Education

The wave of independence witnessed across Africa throughout the 1950s and 60s was characterized by a desire for the newly formed governments to provide better lives for their people politically, socially, economically, and educationally (Simiyu, 1990). The fast-growing populations meant overcrowding, straining various systems, including an education system that was still developing. According to Nishimura and Orodho (1999), during the colonial period, technical and vocational education was perceived as form of lower level of education by the people, while the colonial government perceived this system of education as a way of introducing important skills, a conflict leading to its failure (Mugisha et al., 1991). The technical and vocational education and training authority (TVET) under the Ministry of Education is mandated and authorized to supervise, regulate, accredit, and inspect the quality of educational programs offered by vocational and training institutions. According to the

TVET database, the number of vocational and technical institutes registered and licensed to operate in Kenya was 1,295, as of August 2019 (UNESCO, 2015).

The formal education system, as well as technical and vocational training, are interlinked with different levels of entry to technical and vocational training, referred to as either post-primary, post-secondary, or post-graduate. The training offered in the technical and vocational institutions is a combination of formal, informal, and non-formal, offering an opportunity for the integration of knowledge and practical skills (Murithi, 2013). The technical and vocational learning institutions include Technical teachers' college, Youth Polytechnics, the National Polytechnics, National Youth Service, Technical Training Institutes, and Harambee Institutes of Technology (Sifuna, 2006).

Youth Polytechnics

Sifuna (2006) states that Youth Polytechnics, formerly known as Village Polytechnics, was founded to address the issue of lack of employment for youth after completing primary school. The polytechnics offered informal training, equipping graduates with valuable skills leading to opportunities to make a living. The polytechnics provide the youth skills to be both entrepreneurs and skilled employees (Jensen, 2010; Murithi, 2013). The youth are trained in carpentry, hair dressing and beauty therapy, electricity, clothes design and sewing, leatherwork, metalwork, catering, masonry, and mechanics. The number of women enrolling in these youth polytechnics was less than that of men, a fact associated with historical factors where boys are given priority over girls (Kiluva-Ndunda 2001; Mugisha et al., 1991; Republic of Kenya, 2004; Simiyu, 1990).

The youth polytechnics have faced challenges, such as the curriculum being heavy on theory sessions with few practical sessions, therefore offering less hands-on training. The curriculum often does not motivate the students to venture into self-employment, which was the main aim of setting up youth polytechnics (Jensen, 2010). For youth polytechnics to be

effective, research recommend that the curriculum focus on field studies and practical

sessions offering the students more hands-on experiences (Murithi, 2013). The trainers

should have diverse entrepreneurship backgrounds, both in theory and practical, to be more

effective in their teaching. The age of the youth enrolling in these youth polytechnics should

be 20 years and above (Nishimura et al., 1999; Simiyu, 1990; World Bank, 2009).

National Youth Service

The Kenyan Government established the National Youth Service (NYS) in 1964. In

2018, through an act of Parliament, the NYS Act established NYS as a fully-fledged, semi-

independent state corporation. NYS' vision has five key points: paramilitary training and

service regiment, national service and youth socialization, vocational training and social

transformation, enterprise and youth economy, and bankable institutional architecture. The

youth who enroll voluntarily in the program are trained in manufacturing, food security,

affordable housing, and affordable health care (Kimani, 2017)

Other African countries that have NYS are Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Jamaica, and

Seychelles. In Zimbabwe, the NYS program, established in 2001, was banned in 2018 after

the fall of President Robert Mugabe because the organization was condemned for violating

human rights on behalf of the then ruling part, Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic

Front (ZANU–PF). In Seychelles, the NYS program was established in 1981 but ceased its

operations in 1998. Initially, enrollment was compulsory for all youth, but it was later

changed to a voluntary basis and the duration reduced from two years to one year. The

program was accused of indoctrinating the youth with ideologies of the Seychelles Peoples

Progressive Fronts socialists who were in power. The Nigerian NYS program was established

in 1973 with its focus being to create national cohesion and promote the growth and

development of the Nigerian youth. The program is compulsory for all Nigerian youth unless

they are disabled, have been enlisted, and served in the military for at least one year or

graduated when they were more than 30 years old. The program has faced criticism from various sectors, including concerns it has failed to meet its initial objectives but mostly exploits the youth to provide cheap labor for various projects that the Nigerian government should be catering for (Kimani, 2017).

In 2019, the Kenyan NYS recruited 10,000 youths below 24 years of age, scored a D or above on their KCSE exams, passed a rigorous medical checkup to ensure they were physically fit for six months of training, and then allowed them to join the NYS for one year. After the training, the successful trainees choose between technical or vocational courses, equipping them with skills to be independent and productive members of society. Kimani (2017) states that the NYS has made significant improvements in Kibera, one of the biggest slums in Kenya, through the building of more schools. The NYS has also been involved in improving the overall environmental hygiene through better sanitation programs and new agricultural programs like growing foods on sacks and fish farming. The NYS program also equips youth with skills in road construction, sanitation, and security. The NYS program has been criticized for extensive corruption, leading to massive losses in the organization (Kimani, 2017).

National Polytechnics

In line with the Vision 2030 goals, the Ministry of Education promoted eight technical training institutes to national polytechnics in 2019, bringing them to 10 in the country. These institutions are located in the following counties: North Eastern Province and Gusii, Mombasa, Kitale, Nyeri, Meru, Sigalala, and Kabete. The Kenyan government, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, plans to establish a technical training institute in each of the 47 counties in the country that will partner with the universities to offer diplomas and higher diplomas. The focus of these programs will be to offer technical skills and produce more technicians, engineers, and operators in order to provide for the industrial

needs of the country more effectively (Ministry of Education 2014; Nishimura et al., 1999; Ominde, 1964; Sifuna, 2006).

Entry requirements into national polytechnics were high and incredibly competitive, thus the polytechnics admitted the best students without regards to gender inequality that had existed from the pre-colonial through colonial to post-colonial times. Male students preferred engineering, electronic, and construction while female students preferred secretarial and home keeping (Ministry of Education 2014; Njau & Wamahiu, 1994).

Kenya Teachers Training College

The Kenya Teachers Trainers College (KTTC) was established in 1978 under the Education Act with the assistance of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). The main aim was to train teachers in technical skills, but KTTC has grown over time to train instructors in other industries. KTTC trains in entrepreneurship, mathematics, mechanical engineering, education, computer literacy, English, information and technology, and mechanical engineering (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Research by various scholars (Jensen, 2010; Kimani, 2017; Nishimura et al., 1999; Njau et al., 1994; Nzioka, 2010; Sifuna, 2006) indicates there are various reasons affecting women's enrolment in the alternative, vocational, and technical institutes. Some of these reasons are associated with the perception that TVET was more focused on offering courses favoring men such as engineering, mechanics, electrical, and construction. Often TVETs are perceived as lower forms of educational institutions in comparison to universities and colleges, that they present fewer prospects of high paying jobs after completion, a factor that may keep women's enrolment rates low (Jensen, 2010). Sometimes the lack of knowledge on the immense training opportunities offered by TVET could be a contributing factor to these institutions not actively engaging in marketing activities to create public awareness (Nzioka, 2010). In cases where women are engaged in early marriages immediately after completing

primary school or secondary school, they may not opt to pursue higher education – least of all TVET. This may be partly attributed to strained finances, potentially affected by competing opportunity costs in meeting family needs (Nkemdilim, 2012). Women hold multiple roles as wives, mothers, and professionals, which may lead to high drop rates and non-completion. Other contributing factors may include pregnancy, possibly forcing women to drop out of school in favor of addressing family needs (Keino, 1985; Mudulia et al., 2017; Murithi, 2013; Nkemdilim, 2012).

Social, Political, and Economic Environment in Kenya

Globally, education systems in a country are affected by various interrelated factors like social, economic, political, technological, religious, historical, and geographical features of a country, and Kenya is no exception. (Mackatiani, Imbovah, Imbova, & Gakungai, 2016). KNBS (2010) states that Kenya has a population of 38.61 million and covers a geographical area of 583,000 square kilometers. The national language is Kiswahili, while the official languages are Kiswahili and English. The national symbols are the public seal, the Kenyan national flag, the coat of arms, and the national anthem. The country consists of 40 ethnic groups each speaking its own tribe's language, creating a diverse national culture. Kenya allows freedom of worship, allowing diverse, non-traditional religions such as Catholicism, Protestant, and Muslim. Kenya's main economic activity is agriculture, though it also ventures into manufacturing and service industries (Japan International Cooperation Agency [JICA], 2012).

Political Environment in Relation to Kenyan Women and Education

Mackatiani et al. (2016) state that the political philosophy of a country influences its education system. The education systems in the USA and Japan are devolved with each State in USA, adapting its own education policies, which are capitalistic in nature. Cuba, Mexico, and Bulgaria have socialist political systems focusing on owning property as the main

framework of an economic system; therefore, their education systems are diverse, including training in military and secularism. France, on the other hand, has a centralized education system like Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania, where the central government controls the curriculum through a ministry.

Nzioka (2010) states that the formal education system in Kenya can be traced to the arrival of missionaries. However, the arrival of British settlers around 1903 revolutionized the education system in Kenya. The education system was set up along racial lines, whereby British children were offered the best education, followed by Indians (Mwiria, 1991). Kenyans were offered substandard education since they were deemed as ineducable. However, this was propaganda perpetuated by the British settlers who needed the Kenyans to provide cheap labor for them, in their homes and their fields (Mareng, 2010). The African curriculum mainly compromised of carpentry for men, while for ladies consisted of home keeping and agriculture, skills that deemed useful for the white settlers ruling then. The political ideologies of the colonial government dominated the Kenyan education system (Ominde, 1964; Onsongo, 2007; Sifuna, 2006).

After Kenya gained its independence on December 12, 1963, the then-president, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, formed a commission headed by Professor Ominde. He was a member of many national and international societies and commissions and a Fellow of the Royal Geography Society of Britain. The commission was tasked with reviewing the existing education system and advise the government on strategies of forming a national education system that was cohesive and did not discriminate based on race (Wadende, 2011). One of the recommendations was the introduction of FPE. The other recommendation was to introduce initiatives to drive the harambee perspectives. Harambee means communities pulling resources together, in this case building both primary and secondary schools (Ominde, 1964). Tracing the growth of education in Kenya, one of the subtopics discussed in

this literature review indicates that immediately after colonization, the Kenyan government wanted to remedy the injustices imposed by the colonial government, especially the education system. The political ideology was based on a spirit of the Kenyan people pulling together to build a better future (Omwami, 2015).

The multi-party-political system was adopted in Kenya in 1992 after the country was ruled by a single political party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU), since independence in 1963 (UNESCO, 2005). In 2002, NARC, a coalition party, won the elections and steered the country towards economic growth. The NARC party won the subsequent 2007 elections. However, this led to post-election violence because the elections were perceived to be rigged (Okuro, 2010). Some of the impacts of the violence included many people being displaced while schools and education centers were burnt. The FPE program, which was an initiative primarily driven by NARC, aimed at addressing the social gaps between the poor and rich by creating equity through education, in line with SDG and UN goals (Benta et al., 2015). FSE was introduced in 2008 and has seen a growth in the number of students having access to higher learning, though this has not sufficiently addressed issues of gender and equality (UNESCO, 2015).

The amendment of the Kenyan constitution in 2010 to include gender quotas in the government saw the implementation of the two-thirds gender rule favoring women, thus ensuring women were represented in the government (Kenyan Constitution, 2010). This meant that out of the 379 seats in the Kenyan parliament, 47 women would be elected from the counties and 12 nominated as representatives. The political representation of Kenyan women in the highest Kenyan political organization creates higher advocacy for Kenyan women in education and other spheres affecting their lives (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011). As women's level of education rises, so does their ability to make sound political decisions,

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gaining the ability to fight for their own rights, especially in matters relating to education (M'mbaha et al., 2018; Mutua, 1978).

Social Environment in Relation to Kenyan Women and Education

According to the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Kenya's population was 47,564,300. The male population size was 23,548,100 while the female population was 24,014,700 (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). Life expectancy for Kenyan women is 70.6 years, higher by three years compared to Kenyan males at 67.3 years. Kenyan women have an average of three children. The literacy levels indicate that 85% of the Kenyan male population have a literacy level higher by 6.8% compared to the female population at 78.2 %. Data shows that most Kenyan women have their first child at the average age between 25-29, and the median age for Kenyan women is 20.2 years while the Kenyan male is 19.9 years. The maternal mortality rate is 342 deaths for every 100,00 live births (Africa: Kenya — the world factbook, 2020).

The social environment in Kenya is remarkably diverse, consisting of over 40 tribes with different values, beliefs, and cultural norms affecting the educational perspective of the overall society, while particularly impacting the educational experiences of Kenyan women. Though there is diversity, there are common factors bringing the Kenyan people together. Religion plays a key role in uniting Kenyan. Most are Christians, while a relatively small number still hold onto their traditional indigenous faith (Siaya, 1999). The harambee spirit of pulling together for the overall advancement of the community is an aspect ingrained in the Kenyan people, irrespective of the tribe of origin. The predominant lifestyle in Kenya is commune-based, in that families are generally extended and depend on each other for survival (Gondwe, 2016).

According to Jaumont (2014), geographical factors play an important factor in the ability of Kenyan female children accessing education compared to the male child. The urban

towns in Kenya have closer proximity to both primary and secondary schools as opposed to the rural areas, a factor posing a challenge to girls going to school in rural areas since parents may not be willing to send them to distant areas because of security concerns (Benta et al., 2013). The long distances to and from school in the rural areas may be physically challenging for the girls, who may opt to stay out of school and settle for other options that do not advance their educational opportunities (Gondwe, 2016). The Northern areas in Kenya are characterized by dry land and lack of infrastructure, thus are more affected than other parts of Kenya. This geographical challenge is also experienced in other African countries like Malawi, Zimbabwe, Uganda, and Tanzania (Kaluyu, 2015).

The parental level of education is a defining factor in deciding which child will attend school and what level of education they will attain. Studies conducted in Kenya, Malaysia, Egypt, Mexico, India, and Ghana found that when the mother in the family has attained a substantial level of education, the likelihood of her being an advocate for her daughters to pursue both basic and higher education is greater (Abuya, Mumah, Mutisya, Kabiru, & Austrian 2018). The mothers are more likely to invest time and resources in their children's education, therefore propelling them to higher levels of education. These educated mothers are more likely to have a steady income to support their daughters in pursuit of education (Abdinoor, 2012; Birdsall, Levine, & Ibrahim, 2005; Lee & Jonson-Reid 2016). There are scholars who disagree with this social observation and claim that a mother's level of education does not necessarily influence their daughters to pursue educational goals. On the contrary, if a woman is highly educated, she is less likely to spend more time with her children and will instead focus on her career, as opposed to a woman who is less educated and does not have a demanding career who will have time to focus on her children, thus motivating them to pursue higher educational goals (Behrman & Rosenzweig, 2005; Magnuson, 2007).

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Mareng (2010) states that the overall society children are raised in is a key contributing factor in determining the level of education girls will be able to achieve. In African communities, children are educated both at home and in schools. Therefore, by the time children enroll in a school, the community has influenced them in various aspects, including their perception of education and learning (Mudulia et al., 2017). Kenya has over 40 different tribes with different cultures and practices that adapt different attitudes towards common issues like education, especially women's and girl's education (Abdinoor, 2012; Siaya, 1999). The bride price system practiced in Kenya by all the tribes is seen as a source of wealth for a woman's family. Some tribes accept cash while others will accept a combination of cattle, cash, goats, and sheep (Kiluva-Ndunda, 2001). Bride price is something practiced across Africa, and there are different perceptions of it. There are those that see it as a token of appreciation to the woman's family, while others see it as a transaction to purchase a wife (Machira, 2013). In some cases, there is the perception that educated women who have attained high levels of education are difficult and do not easily submit to their husbands or make good wives. Therefore, such communities and societies will not encourage their girls and women to pursue further education (Omwami, 2015). The Maasai community in Kenya does not encourage their girls and women to pursue education and see them as a source of wealth, bringing them cattle in form of bride price (Munro, 1976; Sifuna, 2006).

Religion is a major building block and an integral part of any society in the world, influencing all spheres of life, from the government to schools to businesses to families (Nzioka, 2010; Sifuna, 2006). On average, Jewish people are the most educated of all those ascribing to a particular faith, averaging 13.4 years of formal education, followed by Christians, who have an average of 9.3 years. People who do not have an affiliation to any religion average at 8.8 years of formal education, followed by Buddhists, who average 7.9

years. Muslims and Hindus have the same average at 5.6 years of formal education Pew

Research Center, 2010).

Table 2.7: Average Years of Formal Schooling by Religion

Religion	Jewish	Christians	Unaffiliated	Buddhist	Muslims	Hindus
Average	13.4	9.3	8.8	7.9	5.6	5.6

Note. Jewish people have the highest average years of education, while Muslims and Hindus
have the lowest average years of education.

In the United States, religious minorities like the Hindus, Jewish people, and Muslims

are most likely to pursue college education, unlike Christians. The more educated a religious

group is, the less likely that it will have large gender gaps in terms of average years of

education. The Jews, who are associated with the highest average years of education amongst

people of faith, do not have a gender gap between averages for men and women; the

Christians have a gender gap of 0.4 years since the men have an average of 9.5 years while

the women have 9.1 average years of education. The Hindus have the highest gender gap of

2.7 years in terms of average years of education between men and women; the men have an

average of 6.9 years and the women have 4.2 years (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Table 2.8: Average Years of Formal Schooling among Religious Groups, by Gender

	Men	Women	Women Trail Men by
Jewish	13.4	13.4	0
Christians	9.5	9.1	0.4
Unaffiliated	9.2	8.3	0.9
Buddhist	8.5	7.4	1.1
Muslims	6.4	4.9	1.5
Hindus	6.9	4.2	2.7

Global Average	8.3	7.2	1.1

Note. This data is based on adults above 25 years of age as of 2010. The more educated a religious group, the less the gender gap; the less educated the religious group, the higher the gender gap.

In sub-Saharan Africa, Christian women have 5.1 average years of schooling in comparison to Christian men at 7.0. This can be attributed to various factors ranging from patriarchal, social, economic, political, self-efficacy, internal, and external, as well as geographical challenges. The Christian schools founded by the missionaries have continued to provide education, while the Christian churches have continued to build more schools. The students in these schools are affected by the factors affecting students in other schools, and they follow the same curriculum as dictated by the Ministry of Education (Chege et al., 2006; Lee et al., 2016).

Other social factors contributing to Kenyan women's ability to access higher education are health and diseases, like HIV and AIDS and other sicknesses (Abdinoor, 2012). School-going children in rural areas are affected by malnutrition more than children in urban areas, which may impact the girl child more than the boy child, as girls are often required to do domestic chores in addition to their schoolwork (Abuya, 2010). The results may be that girl children might develop stress-related diseases due to the inability to cope with the pressure, leading to poor school performance and potential school dropouts (Benta et al., 2015). The introduction of FPE and FSE may ease this challenge. However, these programs are faced with the challenges of funding and cost sharing between the Kenyan government and parents and may not provide adequate school feeding programs for the students (Mireri, 2015). Early pregnancies may lead to health complications, resulting in the girl child not pursuing her education. In most cases, once they get pregnant, they are often forced into early marriages, thus resulting in them terminating their education (Achoka et al., 2007; Benta et al., 2013; UNESCO, 2005, 2015).

Siaya (1999) observed that Kenya has 40 diverse ethnic groups. Therefore, it would be incorrect to categorize all Kenyan women as one homogenic group. These women are affected differently by different social factors while in pursuit of both basic and higher education. However, there are common national factors like religion, geographical factors, the role of patriarchy, gender roles, economic capabilities, the role of society and community in education, and the perception of educated women as marriage partners. The individual cultures have their customs and values affecting both men and women differently in pursuit of higher education (Abdinoor, 2012; Kaluyu, 2015; Williams-Black, 2008).

Economic Environment in Relation to Kenyan Women and Education

The Kenyan economy is market-based, meaning it has an open external trade structure and owns state enterprises providing some core and basic services and products for its citizens. The main economic industries in Kenya are agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, fishing, financial services, and forestry. Agriculture is the main economic activity, forming the greatest contribution to the country's GDP. Kenya produces and internationally sells premium coffee and tea and exports fresh farm produce like fruits and vegetables. Kenya is also a leading exporter of flowers and horticultural produce in the global market. On the other hand, Kenya imports petroleum and its byproducts, machinery, equipment, steel, iron, used vehicles that do not exceed eight years at any given time, and plastics (JICA, 2012).

The economic environment in Kenya has evolved from the pre-colonial period through the colonial era to the post-colonial period, though the diverse cultures have maintained their core economic activities. The economic activities that people engage in at a given area in Kenya are determined by various factors like infrastructure, technology, and the level of skills available, but climate is the key determining factor (Sifuna, 2006). The central regions focus on agricultural activities since the climatic conditions are favorable with reliable rainfall. The coastal area is a major tourist attraction because it is next to the Indian

ocean and offers diverse tourist sites and activities. Nyanza area engages in diverse activities. However, the people in that area majorly focus on fishing since they are bordered by Lake Victoria, a freshwater lake bordering Uganda. The Eastern area does a variation of activities ranging from trading to farming. However, some areas experience draught due to inconsistent rainfall (JICA, 2012; UNESCO, 2005).

In the precolonial period, the economic activities were based on gender lines. Women tilled the lands and concentrated on domestic chores like cooking and childbearing. Men, on the other hand, hunted and gathered, looked after livestock, traded with neighboring communities, and built huts for their multiple wives (Nzioka, 2010). The communities practiced batter trade, a system of trading where goods are exchanged without involving a medium of exchange like a currency. Such trade systems already existed in other African countries like Ghana, as well as the Malian and Songhai empires (Anderson, 1970). The colonial era introduced the taxation system, pushing Kenyan men to urbanize in order to meet the demands placed on them by the colonial government (Cuther, 2013; Sifuna, 2006). The introduction of formal education based on gender roles impacted women in a negative manner since the curriculum equipped men with skills that were highly demanded by the colonial government and the growing Kenyan economy at that period. Women, on the other hand, were trained on domestic skills that were deemed necessary to help the colonial women in their homes (Mathenge, 1988; Nkemdilim, 2012; Siaya, 1999).

Abuya (2010) observed that colonialism intensified the already existing gender inequality within the Kenyan communities deeply ingrained in patriarchal perspectives by hiring based on gender and race. Kenyan women were relegated to domestic spheres while the men were propelled to public and economic spheres, giving them economic opportunities women were not privy to (Munro, 1976). Since few Kenyan women received the opportunity to acquire formal training, most of them continued farming to supplement the income their

spouses were making. When Kenya gained independence in December 1963, the newly formed Kenyan government worked to change the narrative and introduced gender neutral policies (Abdinoor, 2012; Kiluva-Ndunda, 2001).

Nzioka (2010) states that Kenyan women were dependent on their parents and spouses to advance their educational goals and dreams. However, due to the prevailing economic challenges, tough financial decisions had to be made on whether to educate girls or boys. The introduction of cost sharing policies in government schools in 2003 greatly disadvantaged the girl child. Benta et al. (2015) states that countries in Sub-Saharan Africa opt to educate their sons and not their daughters due opportunity cost for education, since sons remain in the homestead while girls are married off, creating a perception of wasted investment. Parental survival determines the level of investment parents are willing to put into their daughter's education (Muganda-Onyando & Omondi, 2008).

As Kenya continues to grow, there have been several advances in the economic sector favoring women and their advancement in various areas, including economically, politically, socially, and educationally (Abdinoor, 2012; Sifuna 2006). Kenyan women have become more aggressive in their fight for equality, though the effects of colonialism still linger in the education sphere. Women favor training in more feminine careers like nursing, secretariat courses, business administration, and teaching, where they earn a significantly lower income than their male counterparts in male-dominated careers like engineering and manufacturing. Women in rural areas are likely to be more disadvantaged than women in urban areas because of a lack of formal education, in most cases including both basic and higher education (Odhiambo, 2016; Omwami, 2015).

Kenyan women are affected by socio-economic factors that are closely interlinked. Though they from over 51% of the population (KNBS, 2009), their economic empowerment and ability are determined by many factors. Many women are the sole bread winners, and

thus bear the burden of supporting their children, siblings, and parents. The Kenyan society is deeply patriarchal, with women facing barriers on many fronts. The continued fight for equality by Kenyan women and international organizations like the UN and UNESCO has continued to create more economic opportunities for Kenyan women. This ultimately opens doors for them to empower themselves by pursuing higher education (Kaluyu, 2015; Siaya, 1999; Sifuna, 2006; UNESCO, 2015).

The Role of Patriarchy in Kenyan Women as They Pursue University Education

Machira (2013) describes patriarchy as a social system giving dominance to the male gender, giving them more power than the female gender. Women are perceived as incapable of making their own decisions and therefore need male guidance. Maseno et al. (2011) further state that patriarchy is embedded in political, economic, religious, and social systems, which have perpetuated men dominating women. Patriarchy transcends cultures and boundaries and is a concept experienced globally in various fonts. Patriarchy is deeply embedded in institutions and processes, such as in the media, religion, education systems, and the law, thus causing it to, in some cases, be perceived as a normal part of life. In the family structures, patriarchy can sometimes be seen through domestic violence against women. Various feminist theories display patriarchy in different perspectives. The radical feminist theory regards patriarchy as a system where class men have dominance over women since women are sexually undervalued and are deeply influenced by paternal dominance. Globally, Patriarchal effects and intensity change over time, therefore the patriarchy effect in precolonial Kenya are not the same in present-day Kenya (Jones, 2000; Tong, 1989).

Jones (2000) states that the view that patriarchy is universal has been contested on various grounds. The universal perception assumes that all men want to dominate women because it is inherent and an inbuilt characteristic. This generalization portrays all men as enemies who oppress all women in the same manner, though societies exist in different

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contexts. Focusing on patriarchy deflects attention from addressing other issues affect women like racism, politics, sexuality, education, diseases, and women's empowerment, among others (Tong, 1989). The global complexities surrounding patriarchy also affect Kenya and are made more diverse because Kenya has over 40 tribes. These tribes have their own cultural practices that still govern their lives and attitudes towards various issues including the education of girls and women (Machira, 2013; Siaya, 1999; Sifuna, 2006).

Understanding and appreciating the context in which gender issues have evolved in Kenya and other African countries is important. The colonial government and the Christian missionaries claim that prior to their arrival in Kenya and Africa, the African women were treated as slaves whose sole existence was to provide labor and children based on patriarchal structures (Sifuna, 2006; Chege et al., 2006). Though the patriarchal influence and dominance existed, there was a relative balance where women were included in religious, economic, and, to some extent, the political life of their communities (Omwami, 2015). The colonial government and the missionaries introduced formal education that further divided the genders and put Kenyan women as inferior to men based on the curriculums used to educate them. This led to more marginalization of the Kenyan women in various aspects like economic empowerment and education (Sogunro, 2014). The traditional education systems were egalitarian, meaning they were equal in nature where women were trained in roles that were perceived as safe as farming, home keeping, and raising children, while men were trained in more labor-intensive roles like hunting and gathering, building huts, and clearing land for the women to farm (Moghadam, 2004). The missionaries and the colonial government gave men priority and opportunities to pursue education while the women were left behind to look after homes and the children, thus perpetuating the patriarchal structures further (Maseno et al., 2011).

Some cultures in Kenya still practice arranged marriages, seeking what they perceive as best partners for their daughters. All cultures in Kenyan practice bride prices, like many other cultures in Africa where the husband is given authority over the wife. This common practice is deeply ingrained and generally accepted as a socialization process which further drives patriarchal dominance (Okuro, 2010). These practices have become a norm in Kenya and are generally accepted as a way of life that is integrated into daily activities. This plays a big role in determining whether Kenyan women pursue higher education because there are many other competing factors for limited economic resources (Machira, 2013).

African homes are set in such a way that girls spend more time performing domestic chores as opposed to the boys (Cuther, 2013). In some cases, mostly in rural areas, the girls are often required to take care of their siblings as their parents go to work (UNESCO, 2008). The introduction of FPE and FSE programs that involves cost sharing between the Kenyan government and the parents does not ease the burden on parents, who sometimes struggle to make ends meet (Abuya et al.,2018). Often, boys are ultimately sent to school while girls are kept at home to take care of their siblings and the home. The parents also perceive girls will get married, thus the need to educate them might not be as important as compared to the boys, as they will likely be leaving the home anyway (Sifuna, 2006). In urban areas where women are more empowered and have access to better opportunities than the women in rural areas, they are still entrenched in the patriarchal system, opting to have a communal approach that assists the greater community and may forgo individualistic goals like pursuing higher education (Benta et al., 2013).

Cuther (2013) states that Kenyan women organize themselves in small groups, called chamas, to empower themselves and fight for their rights. These groups are supported by churches and other organizations like non-governmental organizations. Banks in Kenya also recognize them and offer microfinance services, including loans where members co-

guarantee each other (Tripp, Casimiro, Kwesiga, & Mungwa, 2009). This has enabled women to continue to grow and sponsor their sons and daughters for higher education (UNESCO, 2009; Wadende, 2011). The Kenyan government passed the Matrimonial Property Act in 2013, reinforcing equal rights to both spouses and giving women owning land more rights. However, cultural practices and lack of awareness still hinder this implementation. This act only covers land husbands and wives purchase together and does not include ancestral land normally inherited from parents.

Maseno et al. (2011) state that patriarchy in Kenya plays a noticeably big role in everyday life. The communal nature of life in Kenya further perpetuates it, deeply ingrained in many of the decisions made. The tribes in Kenya have their own councils, mainly made of men making decisions affecting entire communities. Though these councils ensure peace is maintained, it is important to integrate women in the decision-making process since they also contribute greatly to the community (Moghadam, 2004; Okuro, 2010). Machira (2013) states, "It would be essential for both men and women to embrace a paradigm shift in order to change these cultural beliefs" (p. 22).

What Motivates Kenyan Women to Pursue Higher University Education?

Various motivation theories can be applied to explain the desire women globally have to pursue higher education. Hertzberg's (1966) motivational hygiene theory premises that at any workplace, there are a set of factors leading to job satisfaction and another independent set of factors that lead to job dissatisfaction. The theory describes motivators like recognition, employee opportunities, and inclusion in decision making which lead to job satisfaction. Hygiene factors like salaries, favorable working conditions, and fringe benefits do not offer job satisfaction, though their absence creates dissatisfaction.

Vroom (1964) expectancy theory states that behavior is a consequence of choices between alternatives and is based on individual factors like abilities, personality, and skills. The theory is built on beliefs like valence, which is tied to rewards based on an outcome, expectancy, which relates to the level of expectation based an individual's capabilities, and instrumentality, which is the belief that one will actually receive the rewards promised. Relating this theory to what motivates Kenyan women to pursue higher education, different women will have different aspects driving them. Some may be driven by the desire for a promotion due to improved capabilities, an example of valence. Others will be driven by the level of commitment to their education, believing it will get them the reward they desire, which is expectancy. Others are driven by instrumentality, believing that completing higher education will secure better job opportunities, therefore having a higher quality of life (Knutsen, 2011; Sogunro, 2014).

Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs motivation theory stipulates that human needs are arranged on five different levels, where the latter cannot be fulfilled before the former. Additionally, the needs are all interrelated. The needs are physiological, safety, love or belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. The physiological needs are the most basic and most essential needs for human survival. They include food, water, shelter, and clothing. The second level of needs is characterized by the need to feel safe in diverse areas such as their career, within the family, health-wise, and with one's resources. The third level is about love and belonging, where a person looks for intimate friendships, works to establish a family, and seeks sexual satisfaction. The fourth level is esteem, and at this point an individual has already fulfilled the most basic needs and wants to build self-esteem, build confidence to be respected by others, and also respect others. The fifth and final level is the pinnacle of achievement and covers self-actualization needs, where the person wants to solve problems and help other people (Maslow, 1943, 1954).

According to Maslow (1954), higher education cannot be pursued if physiological, safety, and love needs are not achieved or fulfilled. Enrolling for higher education is a complex process involving looking for a college, going through the application and admission process, choosing classes, and attending them, a process individuals may not be able to undertake if their basic needs are not met. This is supported by Alderfer (1969) based on his existence relatedness growth (ERG) theory, an advancement of Maslow's theory. Alderfer (1969) compressed Maslow's (1943) needs into three categories: existence, relatedness, and growth. The physiological and safety needs are classified under existence, social needs fall under relatedness, and esteem and self-actualization fall under growth. Unlike Maslow's theory, ERG theory claims that needs do not need to be fulfilled in a particular order and differ from individual to individual. In cases where an individual perceives that higher needs are not being fulfilled; they can resort to lesser needs that they can easily fulfill. For example, if an individual cannot pursue higher education, they can look for lesser needs to fulfill like eating better quality food.

The motivation theories such as expectancy, ERG, and Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs relate to men and women in pursuit of higher education. Kenyan women may opt not to pursue higher education unless needs that are perceived as more urgent and critical are met. Knutsen (2011) states that nontraditional students in the USA may opt to pursue higher education based on either internal motivators or external motivators. Siaya (1999) further states that Kenyan women who opt to pursue higher education at later stages in their lives may also be driven by both internal and external factors similar in nature.

Socio-cultural factors play a key role in motivating women to pursue higher education. The desire to break regressive cultural practices that have existed in some cultures and hinder the advancement of women's growth and development may motivate women to pursue higher education. In Malawi, women pursue higher education in order to have a better

marriage and sexual partners, while in Zimbabwe, parents believe that educated daughters bring better bride price as opposed to uneducated daughters (Gondwe, 2016). Different cultures in Kenya hold different perceptions regarding educating women. The Maasai live a nomadic lifestyle and are not keen on educating their daughters but prefer to marry them off at an early age, a practice that has been challenged by the Kenyan government, churches, and NGOs, including the UN and UNESCO (Mackatiani et al., 2016; Siaya, 1999). The desire to overcome or minimize the patriarchal perspectives, which favor men more than women, giving them first priority and opportunity, may motivate the Kenyan women who have achieved higher education to advocate for the less privileged women (Sifuna, 2006; Chege et al., 2006).

Sogunro (2014) states that another motivating factor for Kenyan women to pursue higher education is the learning environment. The researcher found that there are eight motivating factors relating to learning institutions that encourage adult learners to pursue higher education: quality of instruction and curriculum, the relevance and practicality of courses offered, collaborative lectures and efficient management, continuous and progressive assessment with timely feedback, conducive learning environment, and academic advising guiding practices. Knutsen (2011) further states that women will be driven to pursue higher education if they can see the relevance in the courses offered, affecting both retention and completion rates. Siaya (1999) states that women learn differently from men, viewing the education process as a necessary process for the advancement of their careers. Women, on the other hand, personalize learning and are affected by all the factors mentioned above. Therefore, the learning environment applies to Hertzberg's (1966) hygiene and motivational theory, which states that hygiene factors will discourage while motivators will compel one to pursue their goals, which in this case are factors within institutions of higher learning motivating or demotivating Kenyan women to pursue higher education.

Other external factors that motivate Kenyan women to pursue higher education are female role models in the society who have achieved higher education and are positively impacting their communities. When Kenyan women see other educated Kenyan women, who have achieved higher education and are pursuing their dreams and goals, they will be motivated to pursue higher education (Namulundah, 2016; Nkemdilim, 2012). They may also be driven by the desire to acquire better material wealth like a better car, home, food, and clothing by getting better job opportunities after completing higher education. The perception that higher education equips one with better social status and improved social skills, potentially leading to an increased circle of friends and the prestige of becoming a member an institution of higher learning is a motivating factor (Knutsen, 2011; Mackatiani et al., 2016). Other factors are the desire to be respected and accepted by both family and friends while being appreciated and helping others (Jaumont, 2014; Knutsen, 2011; Nzioka, 2010).

Women are motivated by both internal and external factors to pursue higher education (Olusegun, 2014). The challenges surrounding them in this quest for higher education may form some motivation for endurance hence drive them in their goal of higher education. Some researchers attribute the ability to preserver through the challenges associated with pursuing higher education to emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2005; Knutsen, 2011; Schulze & Roberts 2005). The motivational theories indicate that women are driven by various factors to pursue higher education (Alderfer,1969; Hertzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1954; Vrooms, 1964). The desire to pursue higher education is a driving motivation for Kenyan women, igniting the willpower to achieve this goal (Olusegun, 2014).

Summary

This chapter extensively reviews the literature relating to women and education globally, narrowing it to women and education in Kenya. The researcher reviewed literature on global trends on women and education, the growth and development of women's

education in Kenya, and education systems in Kenya, which covers early childhood care and development education, primary school education, secondary school education, university education, as well as vocational and technical education. The researcher also conducted a gap analysis of FPE and FSE in Kenya. A review of literature on the social, political, and economic environment in Kenya in relation to Kenyan women and education is also included in this chapter. The researcher also reviewed literature on the role of patriarchy in Kenyan women as they pursue education and the factors motivating Kenyan women to pursue higher education. Chapter 3 discusses the research methodology detailing the processes and procedures applied in carrying out the study.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the social, economic, political, and cultural experiences and challenges Kenyan women must overcome to access university education. The study is also intended to explore the support they receive when pursuing higher education. The third purpose of the study is to find out the recommendations Kenyan women, who have attained either a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree, have for fellow Kenyan women to help them in pursuit of their higher educational goals. The intended purpose of this study is to add a new perspective to the existing body of knowledge on the experiences and perspectives of women from third-world countries in pursuit of higher education. These goals came out of a desire to add a new dimension to the existing literature by bringing to the fore the experiences of women from developing countries who are part of the elite because of their education. This chapter explains how this study was designed to give these Kenyan women an opportunity to discuss their experiences as they pursued higher education. The topics covered in this chapter are research design, context and setting, participants, instrumentation, reliability and validity, data collection, researcher bias, data analysis, and summary.

Research Design

In this qualitative study, the researcher uses intrinsic case study design, in which the focus is on the case itself to explore the topic of women and education in Kenya (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 1995). The researcher uses case studies to investigate various dynamics surrounding Kenyan women as they pursue higher education. These dynamics are political, social, economic, and cultural (Yin, 2014). Case studies provide a deeper perspective of the subjects studied by the researcher because it allows the participants to give their own

experiences in detail (Stake, 2005). The researcher has a choice of what is to be studied, within a bounded system by time and place, and can be viewed as an enquiry strategy or a comprehensive research strategy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Yin, 2014).

The study began by identifying the specific cases to be studied: women and education in Kenya. The cases were bound by time and set within certain parameters. The intent of the case studies was to understand the multi-dynamic issues facing Kenyan women as they pursued higher education at the university level. This kind of study is referred to as intrinsic case study (Creswell et al., 2018; Stake, 1995). The researcher collected qualitative data through in-depth interviews with candidates who fit the criteria of this study. The candidates for this study were selected through purposeful sampling.

Approaching this study from this perspective gave the researcher an opportunity to explore the central meaning of the experiences that defined both the outward appearance and inward consciousness based on recollections and meanings of the participants' responses (Creswell et al., 2018). The researcher adapted a holistic perspective by linking international trends, cultural perspectives, and sociopolitical attributes where possible. Adapting this perspective gave a wider view and allowed for a comprehensive interpretation, description, and evaluation of the education system both at a local and global level. A holistic perspective enables connections between the political, economic, social, and historical aspects of life (Eisner, 1991). Littlejohn (1996) states that systems are interdependent and describes them as interactions among parts that are entrenched within each other. These are critical points to note since the participants may have unique experiences, but these experiences are greatly influenced by the larger socioeconomic, educational, and political systems in which they exist. This study is also idiographic, whereby the researcher studied the participants as individuals focusing on understanding each one separately (Siaya, 1999). The researcher

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then compared the experiences of the participants, drawing themes linking their experiences by using narratives, thus giving the full account of the participants using their own words (Denzin et al., 2005; Merriam et al., 2015; Siaya, 1999; Yin, 2014).

Context and Setting

The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding of the multi-dynamic issues affecting Kenyan women as they pursue higher education at the university level. Various studies indicate Kenyan women are affected either negatively or positively by social, political, economic, and patriarchal factors (Kiluva-Ndunda, 2001; Machira, 2013; Siaya, 1999; Sifuna, 2006). The researcher carried out case studies and intended to conduct face to face interviews with the participants. The interviews were to be conducted in environments providing maximum comfort and privacy for the participants, thus creating an atmosphere posing minimum risk and enabling them to participate fully and share their experiences openly (Creswell et al., 2018). However, an adjustment was made due to the COVID -19 pandemic restricting movement and requiring social distancing practices along with wearing masks to prevent spread of the virus. The participants opted to participate in the study through telephone calls captured on a recording device.

Interviewing Kenyan women living in Houston, Texas is a research method often referred to as Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR). In CPBR, the participants are drawn from a group of people who belong to a community, in this case Kenyans living in Houston, Texas, (Sana, Mariano & Conway, 2012).

> The recruitment of community-based interviewers in CBPR is premised on the idea that reducing social distance between interviewer and respondent improves the validity of survey data by making the respondent feel that the interviewer is less of a stranger. While not directly known, the interviewer is at least local and potentially knowable through some network, a claim that cannot be equally applied to outsiders. More generally, both social theory and empirical work on social interaction suggest that truth-telling, intimacy, and trust are more likely to be characteristic of the relationship between parties who know each other, while deception is more likely to be the fate of stranger (Sana et al., 2016 p. 74).

Participants

The purpose of this study on women and education in Kenya is to gain a deeper understanding of the multi-dynamic issues affecting Kenyan women in pursuit of higher education. The researcher carried out case studies of Kenyan women who have achieved higher university education and either have a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree. The Kenyan women chosen to participate in this study were born in Kenya and spent at least 15 years in Kenya. An additional identifier for selecting the participants for the study was age to get a variation of the participants in the limited sample used (Creswell et al., 2018).

The researcher carried out purposeful sampling, whereby the candidates were recruited on a referral basis. The main purpose of selecting participants through purposeful sampling was to develop a deeper and better understanding of the subject being studied, in this case is women and education in Kenya (Denzin et al., 2005; Gall et al., 2006). All the Kenyan women who met the set criteria and were selected for the study agreed to participate voluntarily. Before the interviewing process begun, the researcher took the Kenyan women participating in this study through a briefing process that included full disclosure on the nature of study and signing of the consent form. The interviewees were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without incurring any penalties or retributions. The candidates selected for the study willingly participated, were truthful, and answered all the questions presented during the interview process without any acquiescence, nay-saying, or social desirability response bias (Creswell et al., 2018).

Instrumentation

The researcher intended to use face to face interviews as the main instrument of collecting data. Interviews are perceived as social interactions guided by conversations. Knowledge is created during an interaction between an interviewer and interviewee. In

quantitative research, interviews give researchers an opportunity to understand the subject under study from the participants' perspectives through their experiences (Creswell, 2016; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Face to face interviews may be applied as the primary source of collecting data and may be complemented by other methods like observations, artifacts, and reviewing of documents. In this study, the researcher intended to use interviews as the primary source of collecting data from the participants of the study. However, the COVID - 19 pandemic that affected the entire world caused some restrictions, and the candidates opted for telephone interviews because they wanted to mitigate the risk of infection from the virus.

The researcher phrased the interview questions in a manner the interviewees easily comprehended (Merriam et al., 2015). The demographic questions are available in Appendix A while the proposed research questions are in Appendix B. The proposed interview sessions were estimated to last for about sixty to ninety minutes. However, the average interview time was thirty minutes. The researcher used a questionnaire approved by her dissertation committee chair and the university's IRB committee. The questionnaire was designed to capture the three research questions guiding this study, with sub-questions capturing key themes. The answers were recorded using a recording device for transcription and further analysis and interpretation. The demographic and research questions were emailed to the interviewees before the actual interview. The researcher also printed out the questions and took notes during the interviews. Once the interviews were transcribed, they were sent to the interviewee for verification and clarification purposes (Kvale et al., 2015).

Reliability and Validity

Creswell (2016) describes reliability and validity as the deliberate effort to measure the accuracy of the research findings based on the researchers', participants', and reviewers' descriptions. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), a research study must be credible, authentic, transferable, dependable, and conform in order to establish trustworthiness. They

propose that a researcher should triangulate data sources to establish credibility. To achieve transferability of findings between the researcher and the study participants, there should be an in-depth description of the results of the study. The researcher included direct quotes of participant feedback where necessary. The researcher described the research methodology in this chapter, detailing key items like settings and context, the participants, the research design, and the instrumentation. The transferability of the results of this study is based on the interpretation and understanding of the person making the transfer and should be able to relate the experiences of Kenyan women and education (Trochim, 2002). The dependability of any study is achieved if the results are subject to changes and instability. This is achieved by auditing the research process. Lincoln et al., (2011) states that validity and reliability play a critical role in identifying underlying assumptions and establishes an ethical relationship with all the stakeholders involved in the study.

Creswell and Miller (2000) describe some strategies researchers can use for the validation and reliability process, organized in three categories: the researcher's lens, the participants' lens, and the reviewers' or reader's lens. A researcher should apply at least two of these strategies in any qualitative study (Creswell, 2016). The researcher in this study collaborated evidence by triangulating several data sources to confirm themes and interpretations in the study. These included various research studies and theories applying to the study topic, women and education in Kenya (Glesne, 2016). The researcher also reported any negative or contradicting evidence that arose, consequently presenting a truthful evaluation of the study. The contradicting information provided key points of discussion in the study (Yin, 2014). The researcher also acknowledged her bias in the study and used the reflexivity process to ensure that her experiences as a Kenyan female who has achieved higher university education did not interfere with the interpretation of the study. One of the main ways of achieving this was through presenting the participants' feedback in verbatim

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form. The researcher also presented the participants with the data analysis and interpretation to ensure their experiences were captured as accurately as they had stated them in the interviews. The researcher also used a recording device to ensure that the participants' feedback was captured as given.

Creswell (2016) states that participants play a critical role in the validation process. The researcher actively engages the participants' perspectives on the findings and interpretations (Lincoln et al., 1985; Merriam et al., 2015). The researcher presented the participants with both the initial and final drafts of the data analysis, the interpretation, and the conclusions of the study to confirm if the information captured represents their experiences. Glesne (2016) points out that the researcher may opt for prolonged engagement with the participants if the researcher is carrying out participant observation studies. The researcher did not engage in prolonged studies since this research study is bound by time and the researcher carried out case studies.

The researcher continued to collaborate with the participants during the data collection process, data analysis, and interpretation stage, thus creating participant support and applicability of the findings (Patton, 2011, 2015). The same research protocols were applied to all the participants in that they were presented with the same consent form and the same interview questions. The researcher actively involved her chair and committee members to obtain their input and feedback. They played a critical role by presenting the researcher with tough questions throughout the data collection, analysis, and interpretation stages (Lincoln et al., 1985).

Data Collection

Creswell et al. (2018) describe data collection as a series of interconnected activities aimed at gathering pertinent information to answer research questions. They describe a series of steps involved in the data collection process with ethics governing the entire process. The

steps involved in collecting the data include locating the site or individuals who will provide relevant data to the research topic under examination. The researcher then needs to gain access to the site, or the participants, and develop rapport with the research participants. The researcher must develop protocols to guide the data recording process, which are tested through a pilot study with adjustments made where necessary. The researcher must anticipate field-related challenges like insufficient data and the need to contribute to data that may be lost. The researcher also needs to consider steps to take to securely store the data, ensuring there is no risk of compromise.

The researcher submitted the completed Human Subjects Protection Form to the Houston Baptist University Institutional Review Board for approval prior to initiating the data collection process. The consent form was included with each survey to ensure that all the participants understood the context and the expectations of the study. Ethical issues like the exclusion of identifiable data and ensuring that all participants are exposed to minimum risk were put into consideration. The researcher used a recording device to capture the participants' responses to the open-ended questions presented in the interviews (Creswell et al., 2018). The researcher asked for clarification on any item that was not clear during the interview process. All interviews were transcribed shortly after the interview process and confirmation was sought by the researcher on any point unclear. The participants were given transcribed interviews to confirm the researcher captured their experiences as they described them, with the final transcripts became the data for this research study.

Researcher Bias

Heath (1997) states that a researcher needs to be aware and clear on their biases to give the readers a clear picture of the data presented. A researcher must disclose the experience they are bringing to the study, allowing the reader to understand the perspective the writer is presenting (Merriam et al., 2015). Milinki (1999) points out that quantitative

research is affected by researcher bias, therefore the researcher needs to apply reflexivity to diminish the bias factor. Reflexivity allowed the researcher to reflect on herself, allowing her to give neutral and effective analysis by examining and deliberately recognizing any preconceived perceptions that may affect the research, therefore shaping the final outcomes. The researcher is a Kenyan woman who is currently pursuing a terminal degree at Houston Baptist University and could have shared similar experiences that were described by the Kenyan women participating in this study. The researcher, therefore, presented the participants' responses in verbatim form, devoid of her feelings and perceptions, thus remaining open minded to the recipients' experiences. The researcher also presented the participants with the transcripts of their feedback to ensure it was devoid of the researcher's bias (Creswell et al., 2018; Lincoln et al., 1985).

The researcher considered the possibility of respondent bias, which occurs when respondents in a study are influenced by the presence of a researcher in their environment (Miyazaki &Taylor, 2008). Researchers and interviewers in face-to-face and telephone surveys can affect respondents' answers to questions. Interviewers observable demographic characteristics like race and gender may affect the response rate and feedback given. Social desirability may influence the participants to respond in a particular way to depict a certain image to the researcher (Healy & Malhotra, 2014). The researcher addressed this issue by diversifying the interview pool to include women of different ages, education levels, and different cultural backgrounds.

Bell and Bishai (2018) conducted a study indicating familiarity with a research participant does not affect the response to sensitive issues like abortion; instead, it improves the interviewing process. The researchers analyzed data collected from Dominican Republic on the issue of abortion and found that interviewer respondent familiarity did not affect the feedback given or the rate at which respondents participated. Sana, Stecklov, and Wienreb

(2016) supported this premise further through their study that demonstrated respondents react to familiar researchers in a friendly manner as opposed to unfamiliar researchers, though they still participated in the research study.

Breen (2018) stated that researchers who are not familiar with, or experienced a culture they are researching, may not understand it. However, an insider researcher who is a part of the community where the research is being conducted needs to maintain a bird's eye view in order to remain unbiased. Smetherham (1978) found that insider research places the participant in advantageous position in terms of assessing the kind of truth being told, though there is the risk of the approached participants developing a defense mechanism to protect themselves from the perceived intrusion. Kerstetter (2012) further stated that there exists a space in between outsider and insider researchers based on the context and setting. Participants appreciate an insider researcher who understands their culture, languages, and values, though they also appreciate the diversity, objectivity and legitimacy outside researchers bring.

Data Analysis

According to Bodgan and Biklen (2006), data analysis is the process of working with data, organizing it, breaking it down into controllable pieces, synthesizing, establishing themes and patterns, learning key findings, and presenting it to various stakeholders. The researcher used holistic analysis of the case studies (Yin, 2009). By collecting and analyzing the data, the researcher gained a detailed description of the cases being studied (Stake, 1995). The researcher was able to understand key aspects of the study and answer the three research questions guiding the study. The researcher focused on analyzing the themes in order to understand the complexities of the dynamic issues facing Kenyan women as they pursue higher education, whether in Kenya or abroad (Creswell et al., 2018; Merrian, 1988).

Since the researcher conducted in depth interviews with six Kenyan women who fit the criteria set for the study, the researcher first conducted a case analysis, providing a detailed description of each case and drawing out themes. This was followed by an analysis of themes across cases, which is also referred to as cross case analysis. The researcher drew out lessons learned from the cases by describing them as assertions (Creswell et al., 2018; Lincoln et al., 1985; Stake, 1995).

The researcher adapted the procedures recommended by Stake (1995) to present the data, whereby he stated that researchers need to present data with readers in mind. The recommended format is to begin the analysis and report with an introduction creating a context for the reader to understand the rationale, context, and settings of the study. The researcher included historical information relating to the study that is perceived as important to contextualize the study. The researcher used additional data sources for the interpretation of the data collected. The researcher concluded the analysis with a final experience, reminding the readers that the perspectives presented in this study are from the researcher's perspective after interacting with the study (Creswell et al., 2018).

Summary

This chapter detailed the specific methodology that the researcher applied in carrying out this study. The researcher described the research design, the context and settings, and the participants who took part in the case studies detailing the experiences of Kenyan women as they pursued higher education. The instrumentation section described the survey which included open ended questions, allowing the participants to share their experiences. The researcher described the processes taken to guarantee reliability and validity in the study. Data collection procedures applied confirm participants were exposed to minimal risks are also outlined. Chapter 4 presented the results of the study and discusses the findings.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to understand the multi-dynamic issues facing Kenyan women as they pursued higher education at the university. This chapter presents the findings of this research study. The researcher designed the interview questions around three research questions. This was necessary to capture the participants' feedback and detailed descriptions their experiences as they pursued higher university education. The three research questions guiding this study were:

1. What barriers do a Kenyan woman need to overcome in order to achieve higher education, namely either a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree?

2. What support is available to Kenyan women pursuing higher university education?

3. What advice do Kenyan women, who have achieved higher university education, have for other Kenyan women who want to pursue or are in the process of pursuing higher university education?

Three themes emerged from the analysis of the case studies: a) Barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women b) Support for Kenyan women pursuing university education c) Advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. Appendix D describes the constituents of each theme. The researcher also analyzed the participants demographic data. The participants were identified through snowball technique and on a referral basis. They needed to fit the criteria set for the research study, that is to have achieved higher university education, either have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate and must have been born in Kenya and lived there for at least 15 years. The participants were Kenya women living in Houston, Texas. The initial introductory contact to

the participants was made through a phone call. All the participants were given an adult consent form (Appendix C) that informed them of their rights and defined the scope of the study. They were also informed that they could withdraw from the research study at any point without being penalized. Once the proposed potential candidate agreed to participate in the study, an introductory email containing the demographic questioner and the research question was sent, and a time agreed for the interview.

The researcher first administered the demographic questioner (Appendix A) to qualify the participants followed by the main questioner (Appendix B). The open-ended questions allowed the participants to give their stories from their own perspectives and share their experiences. The interviews lasted for an average of thirty minutes. The interviews were captured on a recording device and transcribed precisely as spoken by the participants. The researcher involved the participants in the validation process and sent them the transcribed interviews. The participants were requested to verify if the transcribed interviews captured the response they wanted to give, if not to make amendments where necessary. All the participants confirmed affirmatively that the transcribed interviews captured their feedback as they would have desired to express it.

The researcher analyzed and interpreted the findings taking into consideration researcher bias, addressed through the reflexivity process (Milinki,1999). The researcher used direct quotes from the case studies to allow the participants to speak for themselves, therefore opening up the research study to new interpretations. The researcher presented the feedback as given by the participants and all participants were given the same opportunities in the interpretation process (Creswell et al., 2018; Lincoln et al., 1985). The researcher concluded the chapter by reminding readers that the perspectives in this research study were based on the researchers' interactions with the data presented (Creswell et al., 2018).

Participant Demographics

Five of the candidates did not want to have a face-to-face meeting due to the COVID -

19 pandemic, which required social distancing practices. These participants opted for phone

interviews, while one candidate was comfortable with a face-to-face interview in an open

area where social distancing could be maintained. One participant had an undergraduate

degree, two had master's degree, one had a doctorate in nursing (DNP), and two had Ph.Ds.

The table below demonstrates the level of education for each participant.

Table 2.9: Participants Level of Education

Level of Education	No. of Participants
Doctoral	3
Master's	2
Undergraduate	1
Total	6

The participants had diversified age brackets; two participants were between 31-40,

one was between 41-50, two were between 51-60 and one participant declined to answer the

question regarding age.

Table 3.0: Participants Age Brackets

Age Bracket	No. of Participants
31-40	2
41-50	1
51-60	2
Did Not answer	1
Total	6

In regard to the marital status, one participant was single, three were married, one was divorced, and one declined to answer the question.

Table 3.1: Participants Marital Status

Marital Status	No. of Participants
Single	1
Married	3
Divorced	1
Widowed	0
Did Not answer	1
Total	6

One participant had no children, two had one child, and one had three children while one chose not to answer the question.

Table 3.2: Number of Children of Participants

No. of Children	No. of Participants
0	1
1	2
2	1
3	1
Did Not answer	1
Total	6

Four fathers of the participants had different levels of education while one was illiterate. One had primary school education, one had secondary school education, two had achieved college education, and one had achieved university education at the undergraduate level.

Table 3.3: Participants Fathers' Level of Education

Level Of Education	No. of Fathers
Illiterate	1
Primary school education	1
Secondary school education	1
College education	2
University education	1
Did Not answer	0
Total	6

All the mothers to the participants were literate and had different levels of education. Two had primary school education, none had secondary school education, three had college education, and one had university education at the master's level.

Table 3.4: Participants Mothers' Level of Education

Level Of Education	No. of Fathers
Illiterate	0
Primary school education	2
Secondary school education	0
College education	3
University education	1

Did Not answer	0
Total	6

All the participants had sisters who had achieved some type of higher education. Participant one had one sister who had an undergraduate degree, participant two had five sisters who had college education, participant three had four sisters (two of whom had university education), and participant four had three sisters who all had university education. Participant five had four sisters and they all had university education. Participant six chose not to answer the question. The participants also had brothers who also had different levels of education. Participant one had two brothers who had undergraduate degrees, while participant two had three brothers who had completed college education. Participant three had two brothers who did not have university education. Participant four had three brothers, and only one had university education. Participant five had two brothers, and only one had university education. The sixth participant chose not to answer the question.

Participants Description

Participant 1

Participant 1 was born and raised in one of the major cities in Kenya. She relocated to the USA at 18 years, where she completed her undergraduate degree in a private university. She is married, has one child, and lies within the 35-40 years age bracket. She comes from a family where education is highly valued by both parents. She is the first born in the family, with one brother and one sister who both hold undergraduate degrees. Both parents have college diplomas. She was raised by the larger community in an African environment. Initially, she attended a day school at primary school level but in class four and five went to a boarding school and did not like it, so she went back to day school. She missed her parents

and siblings since they were allowed to visit her once only every three months. She describes herself as hard working, a mother, kind, selfless, ambitious, focused, and very driven.

Participant 2

Participant 2 holds a doctorate degree from one of the public universities in the USA. She is a Kenyan native, married, and has three children. She has lived outside Kenya for 18 years and is aged between 35-40 years. Her parents have primary school education level. She has five sisters and three brothers, and they all hold college diplomas. She is the fifth-born in the family. She perceives herself as an independent woman who is very motivated. If she wants something, she goes for it and gets it. She is satisfied with what she has achieved so far.

Participant 3

Participant 3 was born in Kenya and is a Ph. D holder from one of the private universities in the USA. She was raised in one of the rural towns in Kenya by her nuclear family and falls within 55-60 age bracket. She lived in Kenya for 44 years before relocating to the USA. She is married and has two children. She is a visionary, intelligent, focused, and a leader. Her parents valued education though her mother attained class three education, and her father is illiterate. She is the second born in the family, has four sisters (two of whom have higher university education) and two brothers (neither of whom have higher university education).

Participant 4

Participant 4 is a Kenyan native and completed her undergraduate degree in Kenya. She completed her master's and Ph. D in a public university in the USA. She has travelled and worked in several countries. She describes herself as hardworking, never giving up, more of a perfectionist, very goal-oriented, has a positive mindset, and is diligent and persistent. If she cannot accomplish tasks correctly, then she is not going to pursue them. If she does not

get it right, she will do it until she gets it right. Her parents completed some post-secondary education, and she is the first-born in her family. However, she opted not to disclose her age bracket or her marital status. She has three sisters who have higher university education and three brothers, but only one has higher university education.

Participant 5

Participant 5 was born in one of the urban towns in Kenya and was raised in a farm for most of her early childhood. She attended a public university in the USA and earned her master's degree. She is divorced, has one child, and falls within the 50-60 age bracket. She describes herself as being curious and tends to have multiple interests that change with time. She will do something for a certain number of years; and once she is done with it, she moves onto something different. Once she masters one pursuit, she gets restless and moves on to a new adventure. Her father managed to get some high school education, though he valued education and worked hard to ensure all his children got the best education. Her mother attended one of the colleges in Kenya, and Participant 5 considers her to be the practical parent. She is the last born, has two brothers, and has completed some university education. She has four sisters who all have university education.

Participant 6

Participant 6 was raised in an urban town in Kenya and falls within 40-50 age bracket. She holds a master's degree, which she received from a private university in Kenya. She is single and does not have children. Her father holds an undergraduate degree while her mother holds a master's degree. She is the first born and opted not to disclose if she has siblings and their level of education. She sees herself as determined and resourceful.

The diverse profiles, personalities, and experiences of the participants provided a background for diversified feedback on the research questions. Each of the participants had a unique background that differentiated them from the others. The participants had different

age ranges, different levels of education, graduated from different universities, and were of different marital statuses. They lived outside Kenya for varied number of years and had different ethnic backgrounds. Though some participants chose not to answer some demographical questions, their lack of response gave the researcher an opportunity to appreciate their different personalities and perspectives. The parents held different levels of education, which the participants described as a contributing factor to them pursuing higher university education. All the participants had siblings who had attained different levels of education. Though the study had defined criteria requiring the candidates to have lived in Kenya for at least 15 years, the least number of years across the six participants was 18 and the most was 44.

Barriers to Higher University Education for Kenyan Women

The participants were presented with several questions enabling them to provide detailed feedback on the challenges and barriers they overcame in their pursuit of higher university education. The participants had different experiences based on the feedback they gave. They described economic challenges, other challenges that Kenyan women experience while pursuing higher university education, intimidating experiences encountered in the process of pursuing university education, and societal challenges. The participants talked about their economic situations while pursuing higher education. The feedback was diverse, since each participant came from a different background. Two participants responded that their economic situation was good and that they did not experience financial challenges while pursuing university education, while the other four described their conditions as being economically tough. Though the two participants did not struggle, they financed their education through different channels. One of the participants was supported by everyone around her and applied for scholarships, while the other participant had prepared herself financially to provide for her university education.

Participant 1: "I was lucky to pursue my higher education in the USA and everyone was supportive of me going to school. I got an opportunity to go to school where there were scholarships and there were councilors who advised you on what to do."

Participant 6: "I financed the degree myself because I had prepared for it. It was not difficult."

The other four participants experienced some form of financial hardship when pursuing higher university education. Participant 2 believed that because she came to the USA immediately after high school, she had to take some time to discover who she was before specializing on a course. She ended up going to school in her 30s when she was married with children. It was especially tough because she had to move out of state and rent a house, which presented more financial challenges. She constantly moved back and forth between the university and back home to check on her family's welfare. Her course required her to move around and that was also an additional expense to the already strenuous financial situation. Participant 3 was also married when she decided to go the university. Though she holds a Ph. D from one of the private universities in USA, she pursued her undergraduate studies in Kenya which allowed her to work as she studied. She set up various businesses based on the community needs around her and she paid for her university education with the proceedings.

> Participant 2**: "**As a foreign supported student, it was very tough, and the culture was also different. It was tough financially because I could not work during that time. I came to the USA immediately after high school and thought I was going to pursue a health-related career. However, I did not have clarity to know what I was going to pursue and therefore I took some time to discover my personality and interest. I ended up going to school in my 30s and I was already married with children. I had to move to another State because so much was needed of me in the course I chose to pursue and if I had stayed with my family, it was going to be impossible to achieve my goals. I paid double what the other students were paying because I was an out of State student. I also had to rent another house for three years and therefore we had to pay rent for two houses. I did not have family or friends and had to travel for five hours back and forth because every two months, we were posted somewhere different and had to pay for a place to stay apart from your house back at the school area. As a woman, you have to find a decent hotel to stay in and that cost money."

Participant 3 "It was tough. I was married when I joined the university to do my undergraduate. My husband had university education, had a job and committed to pay for me to get a degree. I was a teacher and resigned from the career to pursue university education. When I went to university, I realized there were a lot of things which were not available to the community, so I set up a shop and started supplying books and other things people needed. I hired pieces of land and planted maize which I sold. I also made samosas that I sold to students. I did a lot of businesses and generated money for upkeep and fees."

One participant mentioned that pursuing higher university education took her time and money during that time. Her income was limited due to less working hours, but once the learning process was completed, there was positive change in the economic status.

Participant 4: "Well it takes a little bit of your time and money, so you cannot make as much money as you would like because you are working less. So, economically you are not where you are supposed to be, but after you complete, you have time to work your economic status goes up."

Another participant noted that she was just given an airline ticket by her parents and some money for the first semester by her sister. She was lucky to find a job as a graduate assistant, which supported her in paying her school fees. She constantly applied for scholarships, lived with roommates, carpooled to manage her expenses, and was assisted by well-wishers.

Participant 5: "My parents just gave me an airline ticket and one of my sisters gave me some money for my first semester. After that I went to school and worked at the same time. I was blessed enough to get a job at the university as a graduate assistant while was studying which really helped me. I would talk to other students to find out what scholarships were available and submit applications left, right and center. That is basically how I managed to educate myself., through scholarships, well-wishers, carpooling and living with roommates to keep bills down."

The participants described other challenges they experienced when pursuing university education. One participant considered her biggest challenge to be culture shock and a language barrier. With time, she adjusted, and life became easier for her. Another participant thought that she had taken a long time before doing her master's, she therefore felt the grace to complete her studies was sufficient and did not struggle. She was able to

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comfortably commute to the university after work, complete her assignments on time, and

sufficiently prepare for the exams.

> Participant 1: "Coming from a different country one initially experiences culture shock and language barrier which takes time to get used to it. At first it was challenging but with time you get used to it and then things become smooth".

> Participant 6: "I waited very many years after I had done my undergraduate to pursue my master's, but I think I did it at the right time because the grace to do it was available. Speaking from a Christian perspective there is a time for everything and so it was not a struggle. I was able to commute in the evenings to a private international university in Kenya, prepare for exams and do all the projects. The courses in this university are structured with a lot of group works and group presentation which I did without fail. The grace was available and so it was not a struggle."

Four of the participants acknowledged that financial constraints were their biggest

challenge. One remarked that she had underestimated the cost of pursuing her course and had

to go to a college for some prequalification courses before joining the university to do the

program she wanted. She was young when she came to the USA and did not fully understand

the diversity of her field of study. She also worried about exhausting her parents' financial

resources and denying her siblings the opportunity to pursue their studies as well.

Interestingly, a participant replied that although she struggled with paying tuition and buying

books, she had plenty of time.

> Participant 2: "I experienced a lot of challenges. The first challenge I got was the cost of doing pre-med when I joined one of the Universities here in the United States. It was expensive therefore I had to go to a regular college and attain my residency so that I can support myself as I prepared to go the university. It was impossible for my parents to support me up to completion because they did not have as much money to educate me while catering for my other siblings who I wanted them to get equal shares that I was getting from my parents as well. Secondly, I came to the USA at 18 years and did not have a clear understanding of the different programs. I ended up wasting almost two years unknowingly try ring to learn and understand the programs and fit myself into them. Looking back, I did not think it was tough, I guess it must have been at that time, it was a way of life, like a passage of life or something you had to do."

> Participant 4: "The biggest challenge was finances to pay for tuition and buy books. I struggled to catch up with my classmates because they had everything, and I did not. But time was not a challenge because I had it in plenty."

One of the four participant responded saying that studying had never been a challenge for her, but she had to come up with survival tactics. Semesters would end without her having a way forward on how she was going to pay school fees for the next one; therefore, she chose the universities depending on availability of scholarships, irrespective of the quality of programs they offered.

> Participant 5: "Studying has never been a challenge because I enjoy learning and participating in debates. My main challenge was finances since most semesters would end without knowing where the next semesters fee was coming from. However, challenges build someone because one tends not to learn much when things are too easy. However, I would have appreciated having money to make paying school fees easier. I had to be creative with the school fees to a point of deciding which university to attend depending on the availability of scholarships. Some universities offered better programs but did not offer scholarships while others did not have great programs but offered scholarships."

One participant observed that apart from the already existing financial challenges, she had to deal with the additional pressure of bearing children. The stereotypes and taboos also added a strain because as a woman, she was expected to attend to her matrimonial duties; however, she also wanted to grow and develop a career for herself.

> Participant 3: "Apart from financial challenges, I had to deal with the pressure of dealing with reproductive issues. When I was growing up a woman's place was in the kitchen; the woman had to cook clean, take care of the family, the children, the husband and everything in her home. I also wanted to go to school and develop a career, but I also had to make sure that my reproductive duties, those of a woman were taken care of. I had to make sure that I excelled in my career because it felt like a woman had to be twice as good as a man. I had to endure the pressure of trying to strike a balance between both worlds. Another challenge had to with the stereotypes, taboos and beliefs in the society on women pursuing university education."

The participants discussed other non-financial challenges women experience when pursuing higher university education. Various issues and concerns were raised based on individual experiences that they had gone through or observations regarding their surroundings. Lack of mentors was discussed by one of the participants as being a key

concern. The young girls often lack fellow educated Kenyan women to encourage and

motivate them to chase their dreams.

> Participant 1: "Having been born and raised in Kenya, I would say that girls majorly lack mentors. They do not have mentorship opportunities or people to look up who can encourage to do better and that is a challenge since society plays a big role in influencing women to do more and be better. Sometimes you will find an ambitious girl who is doing very well at school but is not getting encouragement from school, teachers and the society telling her "hey go for it" "you can do it"."

Four participants had similar notions on the stereotypes and norms their societies and

communities held in regard to women pursuing higher university education. They pointed out

that women tend to be regarded in inferior perspectives and are expected to settle down by a

particular age, get married, have children, and maybe find a career that gives some money.

Women are not supposed to pursue graduate studies and should be content with

undergraduate level or having a high school certificate. Property ownership is also a

challenge in most African societies, since properties are mostly registered under the men's

name, frequently negating the women's contributing roles. Inheritance also comes into play

because in Kenya, a woman is perceived as being owned by the man, sometimes hindering

women who do not have other resources from pursuing higher university education. The man

needs to endorse the idea of the woman going to school.

> Participant 3: "Depending on the community or society that you live in, there are stereotypes regarding women. In Kenya Africa, a woman is supposed to get married and have children. If a woman is 30 years and not married with children, society pressures them to settle down because they are getting old. Young women try to get husbands quickly and get married and have children. Women have to deal with pressure of developing a career and getting married at a certain age compared to the men who can marry at whatever age they want. They can even marry several wives, some as young as their own children if not their grandchildren and we have to deal with that. There is also the issue of property ownership whereby most of the properties in Kenya and in most African societies are owned by men even when the women have been contributing at home or working outside the home. The inheritance issue is also a barrier because the property is in the man's name. The man owns the woman, consequently the woman does not have resources to go to school. Man has to birth the idea of the woman going to school otherwise she will not get the opportunity. The woman has to deal with those attitudes and those challenges."

Participant 4: "The stigma is" why you are doing it?". It does not matter where you get, you are supposed to find a husband who has money and do something that just gives you a little bit of income. It is that bringing women down and telling them that they really do not need to do that. In the hierarchy of expectation of roles for women, higher education, especially graduate level is not necessary. Undergraduate is fine, do that, get a job, and get married start making babies and start taking care of your babies."

The stereotyping seems not to be restricted to the African societies, as one participant described her experience while pursuing her university education. She observed that women in her program, which she took in the USA, were treated differently from men. Another participant said she was pregnant when pursuing her doctoral program and there was high probability of her not completing her education. She had to make a sacrifice and choose between nurturing her child or completing her studies. Another participant observed that family culture may promote patriarchy over matriarchy, and this automatically limits women in pursuing higher university education. Less confident women opting for male-dominated courses in the university may be intimidated and drop those courses. Women feel the pressure of balancing all the roles they hold as students, parents, and spouses. There are also challenges associated with trying to conceive when one is in their 40s for the women who opt to complete their studies before having children.

Participant 2: "Women encounter a lot of problems and challenges while pursuing higher university education. First of all, I was pregnant and pursuing a doctoral program and so there was a high chance of not completing the program. Secondly, women are the assumed home keepers though it is not openly stated. I have two children and I had to move and leave them with my husband. Though he took care of the children to the best of his ability, women sometimes tend to be more vulnerable to their young children than the men. It was difficult leaving my two-month-old baby and therefore she did not get an opportunity to breastfeed. I believe in mothers breastfeeding and nurturing their babies. Unfortunately, I had to deny my baby that initial love that forms a close attachment with the mother for the reason that I was pursuing higher university education. Thirdly, there were not many women in the programs I chose to pursue, and this was also a discouraging factor. Women were also treated differently from the men; with higher education, a woman gets less respect than a man."

Participant 5: "Some of the challenges experienced include the culture of the family one is coming from, which favors educating boys and not girls. Concentrating on

majors that are predominantly male oriented may lead one to be intimidated if for whatever reason confidence was not built in them in formative years. Coming to study in the United States, there are people with different accents and skin color which may feel a bit weird. However, that did not affect me because I went to a black school and also, I did classes elsewhere and confidence had been instilled back home. I worked and studied but I can imagine a woman pursuing a major like engineering or a specific area or IT, can be a bit overwhelming. Balancing between higher education and not settling down and having children or having children late leads to society frowning on you. Women are told they need to settle down and have children before their sell by date is done. I think that pressure is bearable to others but to some having children while at school is a challenging balancing act. Trying to have children in your 40s is also a challenge because some women struggle to get pregnant."

A participant acknowledged the challenge of balancing roles that married ladies endure while pursuing higher university education. The need for spousal support is critical, as it eliminates feelings of inferiority that may arise when the woman is more qualified than the man.

Participant 6: "It can be really challenging juggling all the balls especially for women with families irrespective of the degree they are doing. The other challenge is that in marriage one needs a supportive spouse who can support you and not feel any kind of weight because you are going to have a higher degree and he is not. I think those are potentially some of the challenges women face when they are doing their master's degree."

The participants were asked to share their experiences on any form of harassment they may have encountered when pursuing higher university education. Out of the six participants, only one participant explicitly declared that she had not encountered any form of harassment when pursuing higher university education. Her response was a simple no. Another participant confirmed that she did not experienced any form of harassment, though she acknowledges it may have happened and may not have recognized it. She disclosed that she had matured as a person and knew how to handle different situations tactfully by the time she relocated to the USA. She attributes pursuing her first degree in Kenya and working for five years as a process that equipped with those skills.

Participant 6: "No."

Participant 5: "I did not experience that. In some ways I felt having been raised in Kenya, did my first degree there and worked for five year, I had already come into who I am therefore issues did not affect me. If you come to the USA at a younger age, you might experience other issues because you are still trying to figure out who you are. The older you are, the more mature you are, and those issues do not affect you. It may have happened, but I may have not recognized it because I had already figured out how to navigate and be diplomatic."

Out of the remaining four participants, only one confirmed that she was harassed by a male teacher, who wanted to be compensated for assisting her in understanding some challenging concepts during the semester. He approached her privately and demanded to meet her at the end of semester.

Participant 3: "I experienced harassment from a male teacher at one level. I was taking a particular class that was not in my area of specialization and was experiencing some challenges. The teacher took time to explain some of those challenging areas and I was grateful. But he later came privately and told me he wanted to meet me when the semester was over. He explained those concepts in class, so I needed to pay him back. It was outright harassment."

The other three participants unanimously agreed that they would not directly reference their experiences as harassment but proceeded to describe them as challenges that they had to dealt and overcame. One participant noted that being a foreign multilingual student who gets recognized for performing well may not sit well with local students. Another participant felt that she had to make deliberate effort to get along with a large number of people she interacted with at the various sites she was required to attend as part of her program. These people were responsible for grading her, which put her under pressure to maintain good working relationships with them. The other participant she was a minority in a minority group, which may have made her doubt her capability. She said that as a black student, she had to put a lot of effort to score top grades in comparison to the other races because she was already predisposed to being awarded lower grades because of her of race.

Participant 1: "I would not call it harassment but when you are in the university and get recognition for better grades, other students may not like it because you are from another country. They may also not like that you can also speak multiple language."

Participant 2: "I will not call it harassment but there was a lot of pressure because there was a lot of studying and you are expected to score 88% and above to pass. You are also expected to do well in the clinical site since you cannot pass Theory only. You also have to move a lot from one site to another and you need time to catch up. You are also working with different site clinical employees and need to make sure you get along with whoever you are working with, since at the end of the day they are going to evaluate you with a pass or fail. It was that kind of pressure, just the threat that you do not believe you are going to pass until you complete."

Participant 4: "Nothing was overt. You get the feeling as a black person, completing your PhD amongst fewer black people, that maybe you are less than the other races. Not harassment, nobody talked about you or harassed you, but it is very typical if you are black there is a higher probability of getting a C or B even though you have worked twice as hard. You really work triple as hard to make an A."

Participants discussed the role of society and how it influenced them when pursuing higher university education. Each participant had a different view of how societal factors contributed to them pursuing university education. One participant admitted the society had a double influence on her. Positively, society provided role models to emulate, while negatively, society ostracizes women and did not offer her the same opportunities as men. She struggled to get higher university education.

Participant 3: "The society contributed both positively and negatively. On the positive side, the society contributed by providing role models. I saw some women who had degrees and they earned better money and their careers were secure. On the other hand, the society is unfair because of the marginalization and stigmatization of women. I had to fight and get a higher education."

The notion that women were underrated was supported by another participant who observed that society appreciated men more than women and people were willing to spend more on educating men as opposed to women. The women were largely ignored and expected to get married after completing high school, become homemakers, and start bearing children. She wanted to be among the few women in her surroundings who achieved higher university education.

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Participant 1: "Few people in society pursue higher education, therefore it motivates you to get out and do more because if you stay in that environment, you tend to think you are of less value. It was always in me to get out, do more and pursue higher university education because very few women had achieved that. More men pursued higher university education in comparison to the women. Everybody paid more attention to the men and paid more school fees for them to go to school. But for the women, once you finished form four, that was the end of your education. You were supposed to get married, have children and life goes on. So, for the women, nobody is motivating you about going out and getting more or getting higher university education. It is more of "Hey when are you going to get married?", "When are you going to move out?" "When are you going to get pregnant?".

Society offered one of the participants various opportunities while pursuing higher university education. She observed that lack of family inheritance opened her mind to the possibilities around her and made her realize that she could achieve anything she desired through education.

Participant 5: "Society has been there cheering me on and showing me the different opportunities available when you get higher university education especially if you do not have a huge inheritance where your parents give you a huge company to run. Education opens you to the idea that you can change your life to any direction you want. I think society has been on my side and playing a key role in just showing me that there are options in everything."

The societal pressure to be at the same educational level with the people around her was the main contributing factor in pursuing higher university education for one of the participants. She wanted to advance her career through pursuing her master's degree.

Participant 6: "There was a certain level of pressure for me to do my master's just because a lot of people in my circle were doing their master's degree. There were also a lot of people taking evening classes where I was working. The pressure was partly because of career progression and the other bit was pressure from the people around me.

Dual influence from the Kenyan and American society shaped one of the participants' perspectives on the role of society in women and higher university education. The Kenyan society esteems individuals with higher university education while American society rewards individuals who are highly educated. She also mentioned that some societies do not place

such high regards on education and that not everyone has the ability to pursue higher

university education.

> Participant 2: "I have been influenced by the Kenyan and the American society
> because I lived half of my life in Kenya and the other half in America. In Kenya, we
> believe in higher university education. The more educated you are, the better you are
> in society. When I came to America, I found higher standards places on education. It
> is clearer in America than in Kenya that the higher the education you have, the better
> your is life is. So, both of those societies have worked together to influence me. But
> in other societies you do not need to have higher education to handle some things.
> When I was growing up, I realized that education is not something you will
> automatically pursue, one has to be capable of achieving higher education. I was
> blessed enough to realize that I am capable of achieving higher university education."

The perspective that Kenyan and American societies esteem people with high levels

of education was supported by another participant. She pointed out that black people with

terminal degrees are a minority, a fact that sets them apart.

> Participant 4: "Society has a high esteem for individuals who have attained those high
> levels of study, especially the Kenyan community whereby you have higher standards
> because of your education. In the United States, obviously there are very few African
> American or black people with PhDs so that is an added advantage."

To better understand their journeys while pursuing higher university education, the

participants described a typical day at the university, detailing the obstacles they had to

overcome. The participants described their days as busy, requiring them to fill different roles

apart from being university students. For five of the participants, it involved going to work

early in the mornings and then either driving or commuting to the universities in the evening

after work. One participant chose to stay back after her evening classes to complete

assignments before going home, while another participant completed some assignments at

home after classes and did the rest over the weekend.

> Participant 1: "I used to work in the mornings and then take a bus to go for evening
> classes from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. After that I went to the library to do my homework and
> then went home**."**

> Participant 4: "I woke up, went to work at 3:00 p.m. after work I drove to school, took
> my classes until 8.30 p.m., drove back home, completed some assignments, and
> studied and then working on assignments over the weekends."

The desire to interact and learn from her classmates who have diverse backgrounds made the commute to school after work worth the while for one participant. Surprisingly, she was the only participant who did not delve into more details on the sequence of activities but chose to focus on what she gained from the experience.

> Participant 6: **"**It was a lot of group work. We were all doing the evening classes, all of us were working. It was interesting meeting different people, know more about what they do at their places of work, just the kind of discussions taking place in class and people just bringing different perspectives from their experiences at work, that was interesting for me."

One participant compared the experiences she had when pursuing two degrees. One degree was relatively effortless, and she managed her daily schedule with ease. She worked and did her assignments during the day and attended her classes in the evening. The experience of obtaining the other degree was completely opposite. She struggled to stay afloat in her first year, lamenting that she was focused on her studying, which also affected her weight.

> Participant 5: "One was evening classes, in the day I worked as a graduate assistant and in the evening, I went to classes. That was not stressful or highly demanding program. It was an area that came very naturally to me. A typical day was going to the counseling department, work there the whole day and then in the evening go to class from 5.30 p.m. to 9.00 p.m. I was able to do my homework while in school. Law school first year was a complete nightmare in the sense that you are reading volumes upon volumes of work. A typical day was you are in class and you are reading then you get home to reading for the whole night and this went on year-round. First year had no social life we were buried in books. I thought I was a fast reader and I thought there are people in this pool that do not ever read. So, I wondered how they do it. The volume of reading is high especially the first year. So, you either gained weight or lost t weight depending on your diet in your sedentary life. I lost weight because when am busy I forget to eat."

Two participants were married while pursuing their university education and needed to juggle an additional ball of taking care of the family needs. One of the participants was not working. However, she remarked that her program was demanding and took away her family time. She had to study long hours, take long lectures that lasted for a whole day, and

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sometimes barely slept because she had to complete tasks. The other participant said that her life revolved around her family, school, and work.

> Participant 3: "At PhD level, a typical day would involve going to work and then attending classes. When not in class, I would be working to make ends meet, cooking, cleaning or taking care of my family. It was always schoolwork, working outside the home or doing something at home. That was my life."

> Participant 2: "You wake up between 4.30 a.m. and 5.30 a.m.; go through your day schedule to see what you missed from the previous night and get to school by 7: 00 a.m. The lectures would last for ten hours with little breaks in between. Lunch would last for 30 minutes because you have to walk from one hall to another for the next lecture. After the long hours you get home by 7:30 p.m. because of traffic, cook and try to spend some time with the family. You do not have much time to catch up with them and as soon you finish eating you go back to your books and that is the end of socialization with your family. You typically have three to four hours of sleep in those three years. Studying never ends because there are a many tests, a lot of homework and sometimes you do not finish the material you are supposed to cover before the next task. On clinical days, you are supposed to be at the clinical site by 6 :00 a.m. and leave at 6.30 p.m. Most often you would go home and start the care plans which can last up to 4 :00 a.m. and you have to start the day. Even during the weekend, you have so much homework that is the life you have."

All the participant remarked that they had to make sacrifices and endure long days and sometimes nights to achieve their educational goals. They also had to juggle several roles while studying, being mothers, wives, workers, and students. The common similarity between all the six participants is that even if they were pursuing different programs at different levels, they chose to persevere in order to accomplish their university education. None of the participants indicated that their days were idle, but they did all make sacrifices in their schedules. Participant 2 was the only one who was not working while studying, though she still remarked that her days were hectic, and she sometimes lacked sleep. This indicates that all the six participants were focused on their studies and were not afraid to make the sacrifice as indicated from them describing what they went through in a typical day while they were studying at the university.

The participants discussed in depth about the challenges that Kenyan women endure and overcome in the process of pursuing higher university education. These participants had

different journeys while pursuing higher university education, but their experiences had similar underlying themes. These challenges ranged from cultural differences, marital and motherhood related responsibilities, limited time, financial constraints, lack of mentors, and negative stereotypes and perceptions against women pursuing higher university education. The issue of land and property ownership was raised by one of the participants.

Based on the feedback given, the participants had differing views on what they would label as harassment. Participant 3 openly admitted that she experienced direct harassment while one explicitly stated that she had not experienced any form of harassment while pursuing higher university education. Three participants held the perspective that they would not label their experiences as harassment but as situations they encountered and maneuvered around. Participant 5 may have encountered harassment but did not recognize it because she had already matured based on the experience she had previously. The feedback given by the participants indicates that society does play a key role in influencing Kenyan women in the pursuit of higher university education. The participants noted that their environments - whether in Kenya or America - influenced them either positively or negatively, reinforcing their beliefs and desires to pursue and achieve university education.

Support for Kenyan Women Pursuing University Education

This research study investigated the support available to Kenyan women pursuing higher university education. The researcher presented the participants with various questions, providing them the opportunity to discuss the support they received while pursuing higher university education. The participants were asked to describe the support they received from the Kenyan government when pursuing higher university education. Five of the six the participants frankly asserted that the Kenyan government did not support them in any way when pursuing higher university education as demonstrated in their feedback below.

Participant 1: "Honestly, I never received any support from the government., they never played any role, none at all**".**

Participant 2: "I did not receive any support from Kenyan government".

Participant 6: "I did not receive any support from the government".

Participant 4: "None."

Participant 5: "I went to a private religious university in Kenya for my first degree and did not receive any government assistance. After that I came to the USA and looked for various scholarships to support me in paying my school fees".

One participant acknowledged that the Kenyan government-maintained peace in the country, a factor that contributed to her venturing into various businesses while she studied in the university. However, she did not receive any other form of support.

Participant 3: "The only help I received from the Kenyan government is that it ensured peace prevailed which enabled me to work and pursue various business opportunities as I studied. However, I did not receive financial assistance, guidance or any other form of support."

The participants felt that the Kenyan government did not contribute to their pursuit of a higher university education. The answers to this question were short, brief, and to the point.

The participants were requested to discuss the role their mothers or other female figures played in them pursuing higher university education. Matriarchal support was a key factor that greatly influenced the participants while pursuing higher university education. The participants spoke fondly of their mothers and described them as being exceptionally supportive of them pursuing higher university education. They were described as mentors, key support systems, and role models. One participant described her mother as her mentor and role model who inspired her by her active role in encouraging other women. She believed women are equally as capable as men and can achieve anything.

Participant 1: "My mother played a mentorship role and was very encouraging. She is the kind of woman who is always supporting women. She encouraged me to get out and do more. She says anything a man can do; a woman can do better. I am entirely grateful because she is supportive, always encouraging. She has been my role model. "

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The perspective of the mother being a role model was shared by another participant. She said that her mother was a great source of support since she had pursued her university education while married with children.

> Participant 6: "My mother was exceptionally supportive because she did her master's when she was married and had some children."

Physical distance did not hinder a participant's mother from supporting her. Her mother was a critical support system, and she would reach out to her whenever she was overwhelmed and needed someone to encourage her. The mother would use her experiences to encourage her to persevere.

> Participant 2: "My mother was not physically close when I was pursuing higher university education, but she encouraged me and offered verbal support. Whenever I talked to her and poured all my frustrations, she would remind me what she had gone through which helped me. She offered more emotional than physical support."

One of the mothers insisted that education was key in fighting poverty. Education would enable the participant to have a solid career, and that would enable her to cater for her needs.

> Participant 3: "My mother instilled the learning attitude in me when I was young. She told me I needed to go to school, get a career, become a teacher or a doctor. Getting an education helped in fighting poverty and ensured that I do not go hungry. Therefore, my desire to solidify my career was because my mother had told me from the beginning and at a young age to go to school and get a career."

A participant acknowledged the sacrifice her mother made for her and her siblings. The mother was a teacher and made the effort to teach them basic reading and writing at home so that she could take them to school with her instead of engaging domestic help. The mother took a practical approach to their education and championed for them to get higher university education.

> Participant 5: "She was the practical one from the beginning. Being a teacher, she taught us how to read and write at home because she wanted us to go to school from an early age and avoid dealing with the challenges associated with house helps. She fought for our education; anytime there was something she could do she did; enrolling

us in schools and universities, she made it happen education wise for us. Once you have children, you realize how much she gave up for us.

One mother was keen to ensure her daughters were given the same educational opportunities as the boys since that had not been the case for her. Her brothers were given educational preference over the girls due to limited resources. The girls were encouraged to get married while the boys were given the opportunity to study.

> Participant 4: "She was a big supporter particularly because girls from her side of the family were not pushed to go to school since they were extremely poor and the money that was available was to educate the boys. My uncle was a professor in one of the top public universities in Kenya though he passed on a while back while the other one was an accountant who worked in one of the capital cities in Kenya. The girls were not encouraged to pursue education instead they were pushed to get married."

The participants unanimously agreed that their mothers played significant roles in encouraging their daughters to pursue higher university education. The mothers had different levels of education, but that did not deter any of them from taking on the role of being a key support system in their daughters' lives as they pursued higher university education. The mothers' perspectives influenced and shaped the participants in regard to higher university education. The mothers believed that education was key for the daughters having better futures.

The participants described the role their fathers or other male figures in their lives played in relation to them pursuing higher university education. The participants discussed how the patriarchal factor was instrumental in them pursuing higher university education. One participant revealed that her father paid her first-year university fees despite the fact that it was expensive.

> Participant 1: "My father has always been incredibly supportive and continually wanted the best for his children and I am eternally grateful for that. He paid my first-year school fees here in the USA which is actually expensive. "

Another participant emphasized that her father championed sending her the USA to pursue university education and that his belief in her pushed her to work hard. The parents set

the expectation that all the children would be educated, and that belief was inculcated in them.

> Participant 2: "My parents were at the forefront in sending me the USA to pursue higher university education. I had not dreamt of coming to the USA since I was not financially capable. My parents decided everyone in my family was expected to go to school. There were no questions asked and that created a foundation that education is important. I believed in it and that brought the purpose to attain the level of education I have now. If you happen to have a parent who believes in you, then you work so hard to prove that he was right."

One participant indicated that regardless of the fact that her father did not pay her school fees because she was already married, he chose to defy village norms of not educating girls and sent her to school, enabling her to go the university.

> Participant 3: "My father did not really contribute much because I was already married. The only way my father contributed to my higher education was indirect. He sacrificed his life; he was ridiculed by other villagers for educating a woman up to form 6. He put his foot down and said I had to get an education. This background allowed me to pursue higher university education."

Three participants credit their fathers with being instrumental in them pursuing university education. Participant 4 attributes her father to instilling the value of education in her, an attribute she intends to pass on to her children. Participant 3 said that her father chose to defy commonly held African beliefs where the woman was automatically relegated to specific roles but instead chose to support them in their pursuit of higher university education and career choices. Participant 5 noted that though her father was extreme in the measures he took to motivate them, he encouraged them to read broadly and was continuously buying them books. However, she notes that her mother adapted a practical approach when it came to education as opposed to her father. She encouraged them to work hard and get good grades that would enable them to be admitted to reputable high schools.

> Participant 4: "He was very instrumental, was a stickler for good grades and really pushed us to work hard. I think this was more from his family's side, his father was a teacher and being in that line of people who value education, your children and grandchildren get to value education. I will get to do the same, push it on to the younger generation and make sure they know the value of education."

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Participant 6: "He was supportive, never held us back in terms of our careers and our pursuit of higher education. The typical African dad would be, "as a woman" but he never, adapted that perspective."

Participant 5: "My father preached the value of education from as young as I can remember and would go on and on about how one is nothing without education. He was a bit extreme to a point of telling us how we would become toilet sweepers if we did not get an education. He encouraged us to study all subjects, read broadly and write. There was no other option, if we were in his household we were going to get educated. My mother was a practical person as far as education was concerned; she would take us to schools that she thought would give us the best education. All the girls went to one boarding high school, she would camp at the principal's office and seek admission. She would tell us to make sure that we got the grades required for admittance so that she does not have to beg to get us admitted to schools that we did not qualify for. She wore the principal of one of the best high schools in Kenya, by constantly telling her my next one is about to finish and will be coming to this school to join her sister. All my older sisters were in boarding and that made her feel comfortable knowing they are in a secure place."

Participants talked about the role models motivating them to pursue higher university education, as well as their particular traits. Four participants said they were motivated by family members, either the mother, the father, or siblings. Though the participants were motivated by family, each of them had a different reason why they chose those role models. One participant boldly said that her mother was her role model and wanted to win her mother's approval. The fact that she used her university education to empower others by teaching children in the village and mentoring young girls and women inspired her to go the university.

Participant 1: "It was my mother. The fact that she went to college and did a counseling degree and taught   the village children English. She also counselled and e mentored the women, and girls which motivated me. I wanted to do more because she does more for the society and make her proud."

The desire to fulfill her parents desire for higher education was a motivating factor that drove one participant to pursue higher university education. Though they were many siblings, the parents who had little education ensured the children received an education.

Participant 2: "Definitely my parents. Even though they had little education and many children, we did not lack anything. We may not have had things other children had,

but they put education first. They would remind me that they did not get the opportunity to pursue higher university higher education so I should do it for them."

Though the parents and siblings were role models, she also had a desire to travel and see the world. Her siblings had travelled to other countries while pursuing higher university education and she followed the same path.

> Participant 5: "Different people, my parents and my siblings especially being a second last born you could already see the trend. Personally, I felt higher education was a ticket to travel because all of them managed to travel when they were pursuing their education. I felt that was the best way to go to the Philippines and South Africa. It is hard to tell your parents to buy you a ticket to go to some exotic place but when you have a college admission its different. They will be supportive, and you will see a different part of the world."

Personal desire to do better, and a drive that was instilled by the parents, was a major motivating factor for one of the participants. Admittedly, she did not have any specific person she revered, but the family setting played a key role in her pursuing higher university education.

> Participant 4: "I was not looking at anyone in particular as a model. I think the flames were fueled by my parents to keep going, to get up and go higher. Maybe because my uncle was a professor as well. But I had the opportunity to pursue something better than what I had so I just did.

The desire for better career prospects and opportunities motivated one participant. She noted that colleagues who had degrees were highly mobile and had better salaries while she was restricted to one place.

> Participant 3: "My colleagues at work were my role models. The ones that had trained and had degrees earned more money and could transfer from one school to another. Without a degree and training, you are stuck in the school where you have been given a job because you are untrained."

One participant did not have a role model but says she was persuaded by a relative to develop herself further.

> Participant 6: "I would not say there was a role model, but my sister in-law pushed me the most and kept reminding me that I needed to advance my education."

The participants may have been driven by different factors to pursue higher university education, but the underlying theme was that they were majorly influenced by their surroundings, whether family, friends, colleagues, or the community they lived within. They all aspired for more and wanted better for themselves, as well as for their immediate and extended families. Their role models ranged from their parents, siblings, extended family, colleagues, and members of the community who had worked to achieve higher university education. Feedback given by the participants showed that their fathers' support was instrumental in them pursuing higher university education. Their fathers were their mentors, made sacrifices for them, and choose to go against commonly held beliefs and stereotypes that relegated women to inferior roles in the society and encouraged them to pursue higher university education.

Advice for Kenyan Women on Pursuing University Education

The participants reflected on their experiences and some of the lessons they learned in the process of pursuing higher university education to advise other Kenyan women who desire to follow in their paths or are in the process of pursuing university education. One participant advocated for mentoring young girls and encouraged them to work hard despite of the societal settings they were born in because they are capable of achieving more.

> Participant 1: "As someone who was raised in Kenya, I always support mentoring young girls. Society does not determine where our life goes, so go for it, work hard there is always more."

Another participant also supported the need for young girls to be mentored and guided when making career decisions and choosing their majors in universities to avoid wasting precious resources and time, a fact that can make them not finish their university education. She pointed out that women endure more and should not be discouraged by obstacles encountered in the process of pursuing higher university education.

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Participant 2: "I may not be able to speak for the girls born in the USA, but I would like to advice young girls. They need to take their time and understand their personalities because that helps them in choosing their careers. Young girls finish high school and go to college without being clear on what they want to focus on, and they end up wasting time and get discouraged or confused therefore end up not pursuing higher university education. They should talk to counselors or advisors in the universities who can guide them and help them in managing stress levels associated with pursuing higher university education. Women may be looked at lowly when they go to the university, however they are strong. They can endure more hence they should not get discouraged because they are capable of achieving higher university education. It may be rough, but they can do it."

Interestingly, there was similar feedback from the participants on the need for mentors

and role models for women and young girls who are in the process of pursuing higher

university education or desire to do so. A participant mentioned that determination is

important in dealing with any challenges that may come along the way.

Participant 3: "Go for it, you can do it. If someone is determined, obstacles can be dealt with. It helps to talk to others who have gone before you."

The need to break societal barriers and overcome existing stereotypes was alluded to

by one of the participants. Women are relegated to bearing children and home keeping in

some societies. She encouraged the young girls to pursue their dreams as the opportunities

were not limited to the men only. She commented that achieving a terminal degree is

fulfilling and equips one with skills and knowledge that enable them to analyze things and

not take them at face value.

Participant 4: "It is rewarding to complete a doctorate degree or a PhD degree. You get to be among a few people who have worked really hard to be where they are. You probably have a different mindset in terms of filtering every single thing you were told because now you have to think about it and do some research. Your mindset in interpreting everything you see out there will be a little bit different. To the young girls, I would say it is worth doing it. A lot of times you find women are put down and education is not revered, it is intended for the men, especially in Africa. The woman is supposed to get married and be a housewife. Her importance is in raising the children, fixing the house and so on. So, for the young girls, anybody can do it, it is not just a man's territory, it is a woman's territory as well."

A participant emphasized that the experience of pursuing higher university education

is important in creating social networks that can last a lifetime, even if the qualifications

acquired do not open up job prospects. One meets people with different skills and can reach

out to them in the future when the need arises.

> Participant 5: "The whole higher education opens up your horizons since there is also the social aspect of college experience. Have fun and make friends because in college the value of connections made is invaluable. After college you all go in different directions but the people you meet there end up being key people you can pick up your phone and call when one needs maybe financial advice and that is not your area, but you know somebody who can help or give advice., I would encourage everybody to get the university experience if it is possible even if it does not translate to a job afterwards."

A different perspective was presented by one of the participants, who advised further

studies should be pursued for the correct reasons. She thought it is futile to acquire loans to

finance a master's degree if the field of study does not offer career prospects for that

qualification. She cautioned against acquiring crippling debts one struggles to pay afterwards.

> Participant 6: "Study for the right reasons. I do not think there is a reason to pump a lot of money, unless your line of work requires a master's degree in which case you can go ahead and one. But if you are doing a master's degree with the hope that it is going to give you career progression, for the most part, I do not think that is how it works. I think this is more applicable to the USA than anywhere else. If one is going to get a student's loan to pursue a master's degree, they need to be careful of the area of study they are moving into. They need to consider whether or not there are opportunities as far as jobs and careers the master's is going to avail. Is it going to enable you to pay off that loan quickly enough? Otherwise, I have seen people go in, do master's, and then accumulate student debt and then struggle paying that debt. One really needs to look at their motives of doing it, because a lot of people are doing it for the wrong reason."

The participants encouraged other Kenyan women who desired to pursue higher

university education or were in the process to not give up. Their varied experiences enabled

them to have wide and differing perspectives, though they all centered on advising the

Kenyan women to endure challenges and obstacles and pursue higher university education.

The learning experiences not only equip one with skills, but they also offer an individual

holistic development.

Participants spoke about the motivating factors that led them to pursue higher

university education. The motivating factors driving the participants to pursue higher

university education were different, though the common underlying goal was the desire to create a better life for themselves. The participants were influenced by their surroundings to pursue higher university education and build better lives for their families. A participant noted that the drive to go a university was fueled by the desire to live the kind of lifestyle she saw the few people in her village who had gone to a university living. She also wanted to use her higher university education to impact her community positively.

> Participant 1: "I come from a village whereby there not a lot of people have pursued higher university education. We were motivated to pursue higher university education by the kind of life the few people that went to college and universities had. We wanted to get out of the country, try to do a little bit more especially for yourself and at least try to better your community."

The role of the family and community was reinforced by another participant who said she was influenced to pursue higher university education from her early years. All the children went to school and respect was accorded based on one's education level. That motivated her to work hard and earn good grades, a fact that motivated her father to send her to the USA for further studies.

> Participant 2: "My motivation for higher university education is from a childhood influence. The family or the society I was born in believe in education. Every child goes to school and the more education you have the more the respect and more financial stability. Due to that, it was an automatic thing to go to school and then college. It kind of grew in me that I needed to work harder. I did very well in high school, so my father decided to send me to the USA to get a better education."

Ending family poverty was sighted as the basic motivation by one of the participants. She came from an extremely poor background and wanted to liberate her family through education. Another motivating factor was that she was driven by the desire to improve her teaching career, and higher university education created an avenue for her to teach at all levels of educational institutions. She also wanted to get the of experience pursuing a terminal degree.

> Participant 3: "There were two main things. I wanted to train as a teacher and that is why I went to the university. After completing form 6, I started teaching in high

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school as an untrained teacher. Of course, I knew that I did not have a teaching certificate and needed one. I wanted to solidify my career as a teacher so later on I got a master's and a PhD just because I wanted to envision teaching from high school to college and university. Number two was curiosity; I just wanted to see what it is people learn at the terminal level of education. Another motivating factor was because I was born in an extremely poor family and growing up was a big financial struggle, I wanted to liberate myself and my family. So, the basic motivation was to fight poverty."

Intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivated another participant; she had an internal drive to pursue higher university education and improve her financial status while gaining admiration from her parents.

Participant 4: **"**There were both internal and external factors. I just had an internal motivation to push myself and do higher educational levels. Externally income goes up and parents appreciate you."

Pursuing higher university education in a foreign land provides an opportunity to explore and learn. This was one of the motivating factors that inspired a candidate to pursue higher university education. She also noted the role her family played in inspiring her, citing her father as key motivator who insisted that education introduces someone to new ideas and thought processes.

Participant 5: "I have always enjoyed learning, reading, and I was always in school as far back as I can remember. My mother was a teacher and my father instilled in us the value of education. He preached it stating it was the only ticket to changing your life to whatever direction you wanted. He would say money comes and goes but when you are educated it opens up the horizons. Even if you do not have the money, it gives you so many other things. He always bought secondhand books and novels on the streets and therefore we were always reading. My older siblings all went to college, some have degrees, master's and PhD. It was an opportunity for me to travel and provides a good way to see the world especially when you are going to school somewhere else."

A participant blatantly stated that her decision to pursue higher university education was purely based on advancing her profession.

Participant 6: "It was just for career progression."

The participants were asked if they would have opted for alternative learning if they had not had the opportunity to pursue higher university education. They all seemed to concur

that they would have opted for this option because they felt basic high school education was not adequate. One candidate noted that she would have liked to have some skills that enabled her to take care of herself and her family while another one noted that she always wanted to do more in life and would have done the trainings in vocational school while looking for opportunities to pursue higher university education.

> Participant 1: "Yes, I would have definitely pursued some vocational training because I always wanted to do more in everything whether in school or outside. So, either way I would have done training and I would have looked for opportunities to pursue my higher education."

> Participant 3: "Yes, I would have gone for vocational training because I would want some skills that would help me in taking care of myself. If I did not have higher university education, I would want to learn a skill that I could use to provide for my myself and my family."

One participant believed a person is more productive if they are more knowledgeable. The other participants would have opted for vocational training as a contingency option while one another participant would have pursued more training after high school.

> Participant 2: "Of course. I believe in knowledge in general and the more knowledge you have in anything you do, the more productive you are. So, if I had not had the opportunity to go to the university and I had the opportunity to go to vocation training, I definitely would have taken the opportunity."

> Participant 4: "Yes. I would have still tried to do something beyond secondary certificate."

> Participant 6: "Probably, it would have been my fallback plan."

One participant felt that university education is not meant for everyone and people should be allowed to explore their perceived strengths. The participant noted that universities have general requirements like mathematics, which can be a challenge to some people and discourage them from pursuing university education. People should be given the option of pursuing vocational gifts if they feel higher university education is not an option for them.

> Participant 5: "Yes. I believe that college education is not for everybody and it is good to explore other things in life. University education is not necessarily good for everybody; many curriculums have general requirements and there are people who

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really struggle with subjects like mathematics. If somebody is good with woodwork and they have a gift and interest in that area maybe they should not be forced to go to the University. A lot of people should not be pushed into University because it is a disservice to them. University is good if you are all rounded and can deal with all subjects then dive into the area you like. When pursuing my O- levels, I met people who slacked in their studies, but they were great and talented musicians, so they went to vocational schools and studied music. University would have been a complete disservice to them, subjects like mathematics, statistics, psychology would have just been torture to them since they were not interested."

Alternative education was an option that all the participants felt they would have explored if they had not had the opportunity to pursue higher university education. They would have liked to acquire some level of training beyond their high school certification, and alternative education would have offered them that opportunity.

Perhaps due to the vast experiences the participants encountered when pursuing higher university education, their feedback was split in the middle when asked if they would have done anything differently. Three participants confidently affirmed that they would not have altered anything, while three would have made some adjustments. The three that were happy with the choices they had made in their journey towards higher education had varying reasons. One participant repeatedly declared she was happy with the choices she made because she learned to be independent and became more mature. The second participant was content she ended up where she was meant to be based on the opportunities available to her then. The third participant chose to see life as a journey and stated that everything happens at its set time. She followed a similar path like her sisters who delayed having children because they wanted to achieve academic goals. When she compared herself with her peers, she recognized that they had older children pursuing college education while she had a young child and acknowledged that each person had their own path to follow. There was also the issue of not finding a partner to settle down with at the desired time, so she chose to venture into other interests.

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Participant 1: "No, I would not have done anything differently because I love the experience that I got in school; going to school, working for yourself, paying for your education which teaches you to grow up extremely fast. I would not change anything."

Participant 2: "Based on my life experience, I do not think I would have done anything differently. When I look at all the options I had, I think it was meant to be. And whatever you do, even if it gets hard and you do not see the end, you just keep going. I do not think there is anything I could have changed."

Participant 5: "No, life is an adventure whatever happens at whatever time happens. I love school and I went to school for a long time, I am one of those people that literally gave birth and turned 40 the next month just like all my sisters. I think we were focused on pursuing higher university education instead of settling down. Some of my friends had children immediately after university and talking of taking their children to college while I was talking about diapers. They have empty nests and I still have a child at home. There is no right or wrong way because some of them are going back to school now while some of us are dealing with children. The order of things may not come the way you want but sometimes you may not get a partner at the time you need one, so you pursue other things."

The other three participants that would have done things differently in regard to their higher university education had similar thoughts on the educational choices they made. One commented that, in retrospect, she would have researched more on what the people needed and would have focused on that area instead of just considering her interests. Though she admitted she loved her career, she lamented the renumeration was not as competitive in comparison to other careers.

Participant 3: "Not quiet, the only thing is, I would have looked at the needs of the society and pursue my higher education in an area that will give me the skill and training to address those needs. Though I am a trained teacher, it has been difficult getting jobs. You do not get the kind of a job you want. You are not well paid like other careers but again that was my calling and I love teaching. I should have balanced my interest with the needs of the society so that I specialize in the areas that are needed in the society."

One participant observed she should have pursued diverse degree programs in the university for better career prospects. She admitted that the diversified skills and qualifications would have been instrumental in availing more opportunities.

Participant 4: "Not really, maybe the only thing I would have done differently is not have a master's level and PhD level at the same area. I would have split it to become a

little more marketable. Other than that, no, I would not change anything, I would still do it all over again."

A participant observed that lack of career progression based on the master's degree she had obtained was a factor making her wish she had done things differently. She stated that she had not seen any changes in her life or career after investing in the process.

> Participant 6: "In hindsight, I do not know if would have still done my master's. I know it is a strange comment, but it is a true comment. Like I said, it did not move a needle where my career was concerned and really with hindsight, I probably would not have done my master's."

Five participants acknowledged that higher university education made positive impacts in their lives, while one was adamant that additional university education did not have any impact on her career. Irrespective of the paths that each took to attain their qualifications and the distinct perspectives on what they would or would not have done differently, the feedback shows that each participant is fully aware of their current situation based on the choices they made. Overall, the participants are aware of the outcomes of the choices they made and how it has impacted their lives.

Participants reflected on whether higher university education set them apart from their female friends who did not get the same educational opportunities. Four participants shared similar collective perceptions that there was a significant difference in various aspects of their lives in comparison to their female friends who did not get the chance to pursue higher university education. One participant held mixed perspectives while one participant had a completely different view and was of the opinion that the education and the qualifications, she got at the university did not give her any distinguishing traits but majorly attributes that perspective to her career choice.

> Participant 6: "I honestly do not feel necessarily that higher education gives somebody an edge. Maybe it is just applicable to my career. I do not necessarily feel it gave me an edge of any sort. Even where I was working previously in Kenya, there were a lot of people pursuing master's degrees for the wrong reasons. So, I do not feel it necessarily gives one an edge, at least not where their careers are concerned."

The four participants that felt they were better placed in relation to their female friends who did not pursue higher university education gave their accounts regarding why they held such perspectives. One participant commented that the difference is significant in all areas of their lives. The friends settled down just after completing secondary education and started having children without having jobs to facilitate taking care of themselves. They end up depending on their parents, and this creates a noticeable difference. This perspective was shared by another participant who thought that most of the friends who had not had the opportunity to pursue higher university education are not able to educate their children to that level. Their living conditions were also wanting.

> Participant 1: "I would say that there is a noticeably big difference because most of them they got married immediately after high school and had children. They do not have a job, so they are forced to live with their parents who take care of them. You can see that the education level they have does not open up better jobs opportunities for them. In other words, I would say, it becomes quite different because you are not on the same level of education and work therefore everything is quite different."

> Participant 3: "Well majority of them now are in difficult situations economically and otherwise. Also, in social immobility in that they are not even able to educate their own children to achieve higher university education. If I compare myself with them financially, you can see their standard of living is not good. Most of them who did not get higher university education are not able to educate their children up to the university level."

A participant observed that higher university education enabled her to spend more time with her family as opposed to her friends who did not get the opportunity to pursue higher university education. She also had to settle the financial obligations accrued in the learning process, but she feels it is worth it. Another participant felt that the friends lost more than an opportunity for better career prospects; they missed out on developing social skills that would have strengthened their characters. She views going to the university as a holistic experience which equips people with vital life skills.

> Participant 2: "I have a few friends who did not get the opportunity to pursue higher education but, in comparison I feel like I have more family time than them.

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Financially, I have to pay the loans I accumulated during the program though, I feel like in the end, it will be worth it. I am happy, I enjoy my job, I am content with what I am right now because it is what I wanted**."**

Participant 5: "I feel they missed an opportunity, and it is not just the better jobs and opportunities that education offers one. It also gives you more confidence and opens your horizons on the possibilities in life. For me, education is much more than the job it may translate to. You meet different people doing and learning different things at the university level which builds character and a certain confidence. I know some who feel they are doing much better financially and in many other ways but there is always that feeling of slight inadequacy just because of that. I feel it is a sad fact."

One candidate had mixed views and felt that the relationship between her and her friends who had not pursued higher university education had not changed. She however felt that she was better situated financially and had more disposable time to pursue other interests.

Participant 4: "My education status did not change anything about the relationships I had with them. I retained all my friends, colleagues, family members, so nothing really changed in terms of how I relate to them and how I compare myself to them. For those we started on the same level obviously economically I am higher, so income wise I am higher than they are. Time wise I have more time to pursue more additional things beyond what I was doing before. So financially I would say higher."

Overall, the participants held contrasting perspectives on whether higher university education set them apart from their female friends who did not get the same educational opportunities. Five participants felt that there were significant differences while one felt that there was absolutely no difference. The five participants who felt that there was a significant difference pointed out that some of the reasons include lack of sustaining income, inability to educate their children to a university level, lack of opportunity to develop other important life skills, and differences in lifestyle.

Emerging Themes

The researcher provided the participants with an opportunity to share their observations on the inclusiveness of the research study by asking them if there were other areas that had been overlooked but could have added value to this research study. The researcher had intended to learn of areas that might be on interest to the participants and form

a basis for future research studies on the progressive issue of women and education, not only in Kenya but globally. Five of the participants said that the study was inclusive, and three of the participants said they would be interested in reading the experiences of other Kenyan women while they were pursuing higher university education.

> Participant 6: "No, I do not think so."

> Participant 5: "Nothing. It would be nice to read your research findings on what other people say. I think you have covered all the basics."

One of the three participants said she wanted to read the research findings, noting she was keen on understanding the challenges women endure to achieve higher university education in the 21st century because she pursued her higher university education in the 80s and 90s. She also noted the changes in society may present different challenges.

> Participant 3: "The only thing is that I am curious and want to read about the experiences of the Kenyan women. What obstacles and challenges they experienced. Personally, I went to school in the late 80's and 90's and of course society is not static. It changes and I do not know what challenges are experienced in the 21st century as women pursue higher university education. I am looking forward to reading your results."

The other participant who also acknowledged the inclusiveness of the study and would be interested in seeing the results of the study suggested an area that could be considered in future studies. She mentioned that future scholars should consider researching on the rewards of pursuing higher university education - specifically a Ph. D - since black and white women encounter diverse experiences after obtaining a terminal degree.

> Participant 4: "Not really, talking about the rewards. The experience beyond getting PhD because the experiences are vastly different for black women than for white women. But since you are interviewing all Kenyans that is something interesting to find out."

Mentorship as an area needing to be pursued further - globally and in Kenya - is an issue that was raised by one of the participants. Women who have achieved higher university education need to encourage other women and young girls and guide them in the process.

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There is a huge disparity in leadership roles, whereby the number of leaders who are men is

higher compared to the women, and this can be reversed when women encourage each other.

> Participant 1: "I think you have covered everything. The only thing that I would add is for us women to mentor the young girls to be better and pursue higher education. The more we talk to them, the more we encourage them, and they can look up to us and see that it is not hard for them to continue with higher university education. I think challenges associated with women pursuing higher university education are experienced everywhere, not just in Kenya but also in the USA and so many other countries. This is because when you look at the leaders, there are more men than women. So, I would say the best thing for us to do as women is to encourage each other and support each other. That is about it."

One participant pointed out that she believes women are equally as strong as men and

they should aim to pursue higher university education just like the men.

> Participant 2: "I wish there were ways we could have prepared women better. As a gender, we are believed to be weaker though we are strong, and our expectations are not less than those of men. The expectation for us to pursue higher university education is extremely high and we should do it."

The participants felt that the research study and the research questioner was extensive

and included all the areas they felt were important to the study. The areas suggested for future

studies and research are women and girls' mentorship and comparing the rewards of Ph.D.

education between black and white women. A majority of the participants expressed an

interest in the experiences of the other Kenyan women who participated in the study.

Summary

This chapter presents the results and findings of the study, analyzing each case study

individually and then comparing the cases to draw similar themes. The researcher uses direct

quotes from the participants, letting them speak for themselves and share their stories, which

also opened up the findings to further interpretations by the readers. The researcher analyzes

the demographics, including age bracket, participants' level of education, marital status,

number of children, parents' level of education, and a description of their siblings and their

levels of education. The researcher then gave a description of each participant based on the

order in which they participated in the study. The findings and results were presented in accordance with the three themes that emerged. They were as follows: a) barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women, b) support for Kenyan women pursuing university education, and c) advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. The components for each theme are described in Appendix D.

Several barriers limiting Kenyan women from accessing higher university education were discussed. They included economic challenges, lack of support from the Kenyan government, the role of society and challenges related to managing multiple roles. Limited time and resources, lack of mentors, marital and motherhood responsibilities, marginalization, stigmatization, stereotyping and negative societal norms against women were also some of the challenges discussed by the participants. Role models, patriarchal and matriarchal roles and support, support from mentors, siblings, and the larger community are some of the contributing elements to the second theme of support for Kenyan women pursuing university education. Advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education included finding mentors and role models, dealing with barriers and obstacles, networking, considering alternative education and diversify fields of study for better career prospects. In chapter five, the themes and their implications were discussed further. The researcher's recommendations and the conclusions are presented.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion

This chapter concludes this research study on women and education in Kenya. The purpose of this study is to identify and explore various factors affecting Kenya women as they pursued higher university education to attain either a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate. The researcher used case studies to collect data from six participants who fit the set criteria guiding the study. The researcher reviewed individual feedback from each participant then compared and contrasted the case studies to draw out themes. The participants needed to fit the set criteria, that is to have achieved higher university education, either have a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate and must have been born in Kenya and lived there for at least 15 years. The three research questions guiding this study were:

1. What barriers do a Kenyan woman need to overcome in order to achieve higher education, namely either a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree?

2. What support is available to Kenyan women pursuing higher university education?

3. What advice do Kenyan women who have achieved higher university education have for other Kenyan women who want to pursue or are in the process of pursuing higher university education?

The following three themes emerged from the analysis of the case studies: a) barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women b) support for Kenyan women pursuing university education c) advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. The

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discussion will link these themes to the literature review in relation to the research topic and bring out the relevance of the findings on the issue of women and education in Kenya.

Barriers to Higher University Education for Kenyan Women

Participants in the research study discussed various challenges Kenyan women need to overcome as they pursue university education at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Financial capability is one the main factors that determine the level of education a Kenyan woman will attain (Abdinoor, 2012; Cuther, 2013; Kerio, 2017). Most of the participants consistently mentioned financial challenges as one of the key barriers that they had to overcome as they pursued their university education. Nzioka (2010) indicated that most Kenyan women are dependent on their parents and spouses to support them financially as they pursue their academic goals, a fact that was affirmed by the participants in this study. Some were supported by their parents while others were financially dependent on their spouses while pursuing their higher university education. The issue of men owning the matrimonial property was mentioned by a participant as one of the key barriers hindering Kenyan women from achieving their higher educational goals.

Ominde (1964) implied that the Kenyan government had continually made deliberate effort to support Kenyan women in matters related to education. Commissions were set up immediately after Kenya gained independence in 1963, and recommendations were made to correct the injustices imposed by the colonial government (Wadende, 2011). The Kenyan constitution was amended to include gender quotas which was aimed at favoring women representation in parliament and ultimately have Kenyan women leaders advocating for fellow Kenyan women in matters affecting them (Lincoln et al., 2011). This study's participants held a contrasting perspective and felt that the Kenyan government had not supported them in any way when pursuing their university education.

Jaumont (2014) observed that geographical factors contribute to the ability of young Kenyan girls going to school due to the long distance that they are sometimes required to walk to get to school. Though the participants grew up in different geographical regions, they did not mention geographical factors as being a limitation because they were able to access their learning institutions.

Parental level of education is a contributing factor to Kenyan women pursuing and attaining higher university education (Abuya et al., 2018 Jensen, 2010). The participants' parents had different levels of education, the lowest level being illiterate and the highest level being a master's degree. All the participants stated that their parents unanimously supported and encouraged them to pursue higher university education despite their levels of education. This contradicts some of the findings from that indicated the patriarchal perspectives favored educating men over women (Cuther, 2013; Foulds, 2014). This may indicate a progressive evolution on the traditionally held perspectives of giving preference to educating boys and men over girls and women.

Literature review for this study indicated contrasting perspectives on this issue with the proponents (Abuya et al.,2018; Kaluyu, 2015) arguing that educated mothers advocate strongly for their daughters to pursue higher university education and have the resources to help them actualize their desires, unlike uneducated mothers who may lack the resources. This view was opposed by scholars who felt that uneducated mothers are more likely to spend more time at home with their children and therefore encourage them to pursue higher university education (Behrman & Rosenzweig, 2005; Magnuson, 2007). The participants attributed the greater part of their academic success to their parents irrespective of their level of education.

The society within which one is raised contributes to the attitudes and perceptions that one adapts towards higher university education (Mareng, 2010; Mudulia et al., 2017). The

participants acknowledged that society had indeed contributed, both positively and negatively in their pursuit of higher university education. The attitudes, stereotypes, and practices a community adapts in relation to women pursuing higher university education fundamentally determines the level of education attained by girls and women in that community (Machira, 2013; Siaya, 1999). The participants discussed in length the role that their societies played either in motivating or discouraging them while pursuing higher university education.

From a negative perspective, some of the participants mentioned that some societies tend to adapt some negative societal norms against women where they experience marginalization, stigmatization, and stereotyping relegating them to inferior roles. Some of the participants perceived that Kenyan women are not expected to be ambitious in matters relating to higher university education but should instead settle down, get married, and have children by a particular age. Omwami (2015) discussed these issues in his study and noted that some communities tend to perceive educated women as unfavorable and difficult marriage spouses, which may discourage the girls and women from those communities in pursuing higher university education (Munro, 1976; Sifuna, 2006). The participants indicated stigma may be associated with a Kenyan woman aspiring for higher levels of education instead of settling for basic education and looking for basic employment that supplements the husband's salary.

Some communities practice patriarchy and favor educating boys and men over women and girls (Namulundah, 2016). The history of Kenya implies that women were often relegated to feminine roles and systematically denied opportunities to pursue educational goals, something that still affects Kenyan women to date (Ogot, 1974; Sifuna, 2006). Some participants in this study acknowledged that their larger communities practiced patriarchy, however all the participants explicitly stated that their fathers were their key support systems and encouraged them to pursue higher university education. The participants spoke of the

impact their fathers had on their lives and the important supportive roles they had in them pursuing higher university education. These findings create a contrast with the existing literature on the role of patriarchy and women pursuing higher university education.

According to Gondwe (2016), some Kenyan communities perceive highly educated Kenyan women as difficult and may not easily submit to their husbands or lack skills to be good wives. This perception affects the amount of bride price offered by suitors; therefore, these societies tend to not encourage their girls to pursue higher university education (Omwami 2015). The participants in this study acknowledged that they had various roles while pursuing their university education; however, the ones who were married while pursuing university studies said they were deliberate in taking care of their marital responsibilities. They balanced their time between taking care of their homes and families and completing the course work associated with their degrees, contradicting the notion that highly educated women may not prioritize the needs of their families.

Kenyan women adopt various other roles and responsibilities, not only when pursuing university education, but in life. They have careers and are spouses, mothers, and caregivers to their parents and siblings. These roles tend to be attached to needs that compete for the limited financial resources which in turn may affect the Kenyan woman's ability to pursue university education and sometimes may delay the actualization of university education (Newman, 2017). The participants in this study were able to attain their university education while meeting the needs associated with their other roles.

Kenyan female role models who have achieved university education are important in motivating other Kenyan women to take up university education (Namulundah, 2016; Nkemdilim, 2012). The participants affirmed the importance of role models in their lives and those of other Kenyan women. They collectively agreed that there were few role models to

emulate and female mentors to guide them, which then becomes a barrier to Kenyan women attaining university education.

Sexual harassment or intimidating experiences tend to affect women and may sometimes hinder them from completing their university education (Muasya, 2014; Okeyo, 2014). These experiences may affect a woman's self-esteem and lead to diminished self-confidence, limiting them from fully exploiting the opportunities available to them due to feelings of insecurity (Rintaugu et al., 2014). Only one participant in this study confirmed having experienced sexual harassment while studying at the university while the rest said they were not harassed.

Religion is a key component of most communities, influencing their beliefs, perceptions, practices, and overall outlook in life including education. Some religions tend to favor educating one gender over the other (Nzioka, 2010; Sifuna, 2006). Interestingly, the participants did not refer to their religions or how their religious beliefs impacted them and influenced their decisions to pursue university education.

Abdinoor (2012) asserted that diseases like HIV and AIDS and other sicknesses may have negative impacts on Kenyan women's ability to acquire basic and university education. This may affect girls and women in rural settings as opposed to urban settings (Abuya, 2010). None of the participants alluded to sicknesses and diseases as being part of the challenges they dealt with when pursuing university education.

Achoka et al., (2007) stated that early pregnancies may sometimes result in health complications which in turn result to young girls and women not completing their education, a perspective that was supported by (Benta et al., 2013). These assertions did not apply to the participants that already had children or had children when pursuing their education. They completed their university education while managing the responsibilities associated with childcare. UNESCO (2005, 2015) report indicated that once girls or young women get

pregnant when pursuing university education, they are sometimes forced into marriages. None of the participants spoke of being forced into marriages due to early and unwanted pregnancies.

Participant feedback either collaborated or contradicted literature review on the challenges facing Kenyan women in the process of pursuing higher university education. These participants had different journeys while pursuing higher university education, but their experiences had similar underlying challenges. These challenges ranged from marital and motherhood related responsibilities, limited time, financial constraints, lack of mentors and role models, and negative stereotypes and perceptions against women pursuing higher university education. The participants noted that their environments influenced them, either positively or negatively reinforcing their beliefs and desires to pursue and achieve university education. This may be an indication that Kenyan communities are evolving, and the barriers have been hindering Kenyan women from pursuing higher university education have also evolved. The Kenyan women may have learnt how to navigate the barriers and actively pursue their dreams of achieving higher university education.

Support for Kenyan Women Pursuing University Education

Participants talked about the support systems and structures available while pursuing university education. The Kenyan government introduced FPE and FSE programs in line with MDG and to offer educational opportunities to children who were unable to attend primary school based on costs associated with primary and secondary school education (Asena et al., 2016; UNESCO, 1990). The FPE program's main goal to was decrease the social gaps between the poor and the rich and build equity through education. FPE and FSE programs were supposed to ease financial challenges and costs associated with attaining basic education; however, these programs have faced many challenges, with the main one being funding. The Kenyan government implemented cost sharing structures with the parents to

meet the funding deficit. However, this intervention has not been sufficient (Benta et al., 2013; Mireri, 2015). The participants did not refer to feeling the impact of these programs and did not infer to them at all. This may be associated with the timelines of reintroducing these programs in 2003 by the Kenyan government; the participants were adults, and most had relocated to the USA by that year. For the participants who have children, they are enrolled in American schools and therefore do not have an interaction with either FPE or FSE.

Society provides role models who inspire people to pursue their dreams and goals, and in this case, Kenyan women to pursue higher university education (Jaumont, 2014; Knutsen, 2011; Nzioka, 2010). Society provided role models for the participants in forms of their parents, colleagues, siblings, and extended family members and members of the community who had achieved higher university education. Mareng (2010) indicated that the society one is born into influences the level of education one can attain. This perception was supported by the participants who stated that mentoring young girls to overcome societal barriers and challenges is important and that the women who have achieved higher university education should endeavor to mentor others. Mudulia et al. (2017) stated that Kenyan children's perspective on education are influenced by the community. Therefore, if a community perceives educated women as difficult and not adding value, then the girls and women will not aspire to pursue higher university education. The participants acknowledged this aspect and noted that existing societal stereotypes against women who aspire to or have achieved higher education should not be a hinderance. Instead, Kenyan women should fight to overcome them.

Machira (2013) asserted that patriarchal influence tends to limit women from being educated at the university level. This notion was supported further by Maseno et al. (2011), who observed that patriarchy in Kenya influences many aspects of everyday life. Different

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tribes in Kenya adapt different patriarchal attitudes towards education, and existing literature alluded that these attitudes limited Kenyan women, particularly in pursuing higher university education (Moghadam, 2004; Okuro, 2010; Sifuna, 2006). Participants contradicted the notion that patriarchy limited them and instead affirmed that their fathers encouraged them to pursue university education. The participants' fathers played critical roles and were main support systems for their daughters, in some cases paying their school fees and guiding them where necessary. Some participants described their fathers as role models who guided them and influenced them to pursue university education. This feedback from the participants on the important roles of their fathers and how these roles influenced them collaborates the assertions by Jones (2000) that patriarchal effects and intensity change over time; therefore, the patriarchy effect in precolonial Kenya is not the same in present-day Kenya.

Abuya et al. (2018) asserted that mothers who are educated support their daughters more and advocate for them in matters relating to university education as opposed to mothers who have little to no education. Lee and Jonson-Reid (2016) supported this notion and asserted that educated mothers may have better jobs and resources which contribute to them educating their daughters to a greater extent, as opposed to uneducated mothers. The participants described their mothers as mentors, key support systems, and role models who significantly influenced them pursuing university education. This is despite the fact that the mothers had different levels of education, the lowest level being primary school education and the highest level being a master's degree. These viewpoints contradict notions and assertions that maternal level of education influences maternal support and advocacy for their daughters to pursue university education. The participants were also supported and encouraged by their brothers and sisters who either contributed financially or acted as role models, inspiring some of the participants to pursue higher university education.

Colleagues were also support systems for some participants who decided to pursue higher university education based on their influence. This supports the assertion by Namulundah (2016) that a desire to live a better life in comparison to the ones peers who have achieved higher university education contributes to one's decisions in pursuing higher university education. M'mbaha et al. (2018) argued that women who have higher levels of education advocate better for their own rights and those of their fellow women. Political representation of Kenyan women in arenas where important decisions are made concerning them is significant, and Kenyan women leaders act as advocates for the rest the Kenyan women (Lincoln et al., 2018). Participants' feedback supported these assertions based on the desire to see other Kenyan women achieve higher university education, which would have a positive impacts on their lives. This supports the assertion by Okuro (2010) that women should be included in the decision-making process because they also contribute to their communities.

The learning environment is also a source of support for women to pursue university education (Sogunro, 2014). The relevance of the courses offered is also a motivating factor and affects retention and completion rates (Knutsen, 2011). One participant stated that she had experienced sexual harassment within the learning environment; however, that did not discourage her from pursuing university education. Another participant stated that as a student of color in a foreign land, she had to work harder compared to the local students, and there was the possibility of being graded unfairly. Hertzberg (1966) premised that hygiene factors are issues or situations that do not necessarily create a satisfying environment however, a lack of them creates a sense of dissatisfaction while the presence of motivating factors leads to satisfaction. Some of the participants went through experiences in their learning institutions that were dissatisfying however they did not deter them from achieving

their academic goals. Motivating factors like the desire to achieve a degree, the desire to learn and conducive learning environment inspired them to venture on.

The motivational theories (Alderfer,1969; Hertzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1954; Vrooms, 1964) discuss internal and external factors which contribute to the motivations of women and men globally to pursue higher university education, including those of Kenyan women. Participants' feedback on the motivating factors leading them to pursue higher university education aligned with these assertions because they had different internal and external reasons inspiring them. Hygiene theory (Hertzberg, 1966) describes career achievements as being a key factor for women to pursue university education. Participants wanted to have good careers and believed that university education would provide an avenue to achieve that goal. Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) states that valence, expectancy, and instrumentality are factors influencing women to pursue university education. Participants were motivated by the desire for promotions, which is also referred to as valence. Others were motivated by expectancy, the belief that being committed to their education would lead to rewards like a better life while others were driven by instrumentality, the assumption that university education leads to better financial status hence a higher quality of life.

Existing literature and participant feedback alluded to various support structures and systems for Kenyan women to attain university education. The participant feedback either reinforced or contradicted current literature, adding to the existing and progressive knowledge on the research topic, women, and education in Kenya. The support ranged from role of government, the role of society, patriarchal and matriarchal influences, internal and external motivational factors, as well as support from siblings and extended family and colleagues. The learning environment is either a motivation or demotivating factor. The motivational theories also form a support structure for Kenyan women and are interlinked in

the end goal and reasons for pursuing university education. They ranged from a desire for a better life, continuing family tradition of pursuing higher university education, gaining parental approval, an opportunity to travel and explore the world, and career growth.

Advice for Kenyan Women on Pursuing University Education

The participants reflected on the lessons they had learnt while pursuing university education and use those lessons to advice Kenyan girls and women who are in the process of pursuing higher university education or aspire to do so in the future. The participants stated that role models and mentors are important because they are a source of guidance and support. The role models could be parents, siblings, colleagues, relatives, and the larger community. The role models who have achieved university education offer practical lessons that motivate Kenyan women who aspire to follow in their footsteps, aligning with assertions by Namulundah (2016) and Nkemdilim (2012).

Building a support system that motivates and encourages one when pursuing university education is essential for successful completion. Kenyan women sometimes may need to depend on the people surrounding them to assist them financially to cater for fees or other related costs, and also support them in other ways (Mareng, 2010). Support structures could be from parents, siblings, spouses, community, relatives, colleagues, government, and the church. Women pursuing university education encounter numerous challenges and ought to develop coping strategies and mechanisms or they may not attain their academic goals (Newman, 2017). Some of the challenges are lack or limited finances, negative stereotypes that limit women, societal pressure to get married by a certain age and have children, lack of government support, patriarchy, and sexual harassment in learning institutions.

Pursuing alternative education should be an option for Kenyan women who are unable to attain university education. All the participants alluded that they would have opted for vocational training if the option to pursue university education was not available. This

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contradicts Nishimura's and Orodho's (1999) assertion that the Kenyan society perceived vocational and technical training as a lower form of education. The participants appreciated the importance of having skills beyond high school education, which would have enabled them to have better lives. Education enables one to learn skills and knowledge that can be applied to improve the quality of their lives and those of their dependents (Olusegun, 2014).

The participants affirmed they were influenced by intrinsic and extrinsic motivating factors to pursue university education, reinforcing literature review findings which asserted that internal and external factors have a role in influencing Kenyan women to pursue university education (Goleman, 2005; Knutsen, 2011; Schulze & Roberts, 2005). The participants indicated that were driven by various intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Some wanted a better life for themselves their families while some wanted to have appreciation from family and friends and acquire a higher social status,

The motivational theories (Alderfer,1969; Hertzberg, 1966; Maslow, 1943; Maslow, 1954; Vrooms, 1964) outlined the intrinsic and extrinsic factors that tend to inspire individuals to pursue a university education. These reasons include desire to emulate role models, better social status and improved social skills, or the desire to overcome or minimize the patriarchal perspectives A participant reinforced these assertions and advised Kenyan women not to incur unnecessary financial liabilities for additional degree programs that may not result to career progression. The participant further stated that there are more opportunities in the USA than in Kenya, and she also asserted that the likelihood of being rewarded for acquiring additional qualifications is higher in the United States than in other countries.

Knutsen (2011) found that attending a university equips one with social skills which enables a person to build better networks and affiliations. These relationships and networks are important and can be a great source of support (Mackatiani et al., 2016). A participant

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collaborated these assertions and stated that the networks and friendships one develops in the university last for a lifetime and a great resource to call upon when in need. Machira (2013) observed that limited resources are a barrier to achieving university education. A participant supported these assertions and stated that women should seek to explore and understand areas in which they are interested so that they can utilize the limited resources well to avoid wasted time, effort, and resources.

Participants compared themselves to their female friends who had not pursued university education or any other form of training after high school and made some similar observations. Some of them settled in early marriages immediately after high school, leading to early pregnancies and the need to depend on their spouses and parents. They in turn were unable to educate their children, creating a perpetual cycle of poverty. This aligned with assertions by Benta et al. (2013) and UNESCO (2005, 2015), which indicated that young girls and women tend to terminate their educational goals once they marry and have children, limiting their ability to secure better jobs and better opportunities.

The process of pursuing university education is tedious and consumes resources and time, but the rewards like more time with family, better quality of life, better career prospects and building important networks make it worth it (Gondwe, 2016; Sifuna, 2006). This conjecture was agreed upon by the participants, who admitted that they made sacrifices while pursuing university education; however, they enjoy the benefits of their academic achievement. The participants concluded that university education exposes one to different people from different cultures who share their experiences, which builds character and instills confidence. It opens one's mind to the possibilities and options, an opportunity that may not be available to Kenyan women and girls who may not pursue university education.

Interestingly, a participant stated that university education - specifically a master's degree - does not give one a competitive edge and may not have any significant contribution

in career progression. This contradicts findings by Jaumont (2014), Knutsen (2011), and Sogunro (2014), who alluded there are benefits associated with pursuing university education like career progression, better social skills, better homes, and the prestige of being associated with an institution of higher learning.

Vroom's (1964) expectancy theory alludes to instrumentality, whereby a person believes that once they complete university education, they will be able to get better jobs which leads to better living standards. This assertion was agreed upon by a participant who stated that one should consider diversifying areas of study to increase marketability and better career prospects. Maslow (1943, 1954) described needs motivating one to attain any goal, in this case pursue university education. They are needs for physiological wellbeing, safety, love or belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. This assertion was agreed upon by a participant who stated that taking the time to learn about the areas in which one has an interest helps in choosing the correct degree programs. It reduces dropout rates and saves money and time associated with changing degree programs.

Implications

The intended purpose of this research study was to add new perspectives to the existing research on the experiences of Kenyan women in pursuit of university education. The participants fit the set criteria, having achieved higher university education (either having earned a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a doctorate), having been born in Kenya, and having lived there for at least 15 years. The research study was guided by three research questions that sought to investigate barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women, support for Kenyan women pursuing university education, and advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. Findings in this research study have implications for various stakeholders, forming a basis to advocate for progressive change and improvement in matters relating to women and education in Kenya.

According to Kerio (2017), the Kenyan government has continuously made intentional effort to create an inclusive education system. The government introduced FPE and FSE programs to enable children from poor backgrounds to access basic education. However, the participants said they did not get any form of government support when pursuing their education. This assertion implies that the Kenyan government in conjunction with Ministry of Education may need to develop inclusion strategies enabling Kenyan women to maximize any form of government support available. The Ministry of Education can collaborate with local governments to design programs that address region specific needs and therefore create more government support. Key stakeholders and policy makers can adopt insights shared by the participants to develop policies that address the challenges hindering Kenyan women from pursuing university education.

Financial challenges were referenced as one of the main obstacles that prevents Kenyan women from pursuing university education. These stakeholders could offer scholarships, more accessible and subsidized educational loans, and sponsorship opportunities to assist Kenyan women in attaining university education. Developing retention strategies would lead to higher completion rates, which would in turn create more and better opportunities for Kenyan women. This would also impact their families and communities positively. The participants indicated that role models are important in inspiring and motivating Kenyan women to aspire to and achieve university education; however, they are few in the community. The Kenyan government can fill this gap by developing mentoring programs that are tailored to inspire young Kenyan girls and women by collaborating with churches and women leaders in Kenya and globally.

Support systems and structures are essential when pursuing university education, essentially determining if one will be complete the process (Asena et al., 2016). Participants spoke of various sources of support they had and the impact these support systems had on

them. Patriarchal support and advocacy were cited as having significant impact, influencing the participants to pursue university education. This contradicts the perception of patriarchy being a hinderance and demonstrates that long held traditions of not educating Kenyan girl and women or offering them equal education opportunities as boys and men are evolving. Matriarchal support is important; the participants spoke of their mothers desiring better lives for their daughters, irrespective of the level of education that the mothers had obtained. This implies that parental support for Kenyan women is not necessarily based in parental levels of education.

The feedback in this research study will be shared in publications and conferences to create awareness on the barriers Kenyan women face in seeking university education, the support available to the Kenyan women as they pursue university education, and the advice that Kenyan women who have achieved university education have for other Kenyan women to inspire and motivate them to follow the same paths. Kenyan women leaders can use the findings in this research study to create advocacy strategies for Kenyan women. They could also lobby for allocation of more funds and scholarships designed to help more Kenyan women attain university education. NGOs providing support for Kenyan women can apply the findings in this research study to develop practical strategies that enable Kenyan girls and women to access university education and ultimately improve their lives.

The participants were given an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and advice other Kenyan women who would desire to pursue a university education or were in the process of doing so. They talked about the need to have mentors and role models, implying that Kenyan women should take active roles in seeking out role models to emulate and mentors to guide them. Mentors offer guidance when choosing the degree programs to pursue in the university. Support systems are a source of encouragement when pursuing university education; therefore, Kenyan women should build networks and social circles for this

purpose. Developing coping mechanisms is necessary in dealing with societal barriers and stereotypes against women pursuing university education, implying that there are regressive societal norms hindering women from achieving university education that will take time to be eliminated.

Alternative education was perceived as a lower form of education in comparison to university education (Nishimura & Orodho, 1999). All the participants, however, alluded that they would have opted for alternative education if the opportunity to pursue university education had not been available. This implies that perceptions towards alternative education in Kenyan have evolved, which could be attributed to these institutions offering competitive programs. This may also be attributed to the fact that Kenyan women realize that having qualifications beyond a high school certificate creates greater prospects for a better life.

The implications relating to the findings in this research study can be adapted and applied in various areas to address the challenges that face Kenyan women as they pursue university education. Some of these challenges include financial limitations, stereotypes and stigmatization, few mentors and role models, and lack of government support.

Recommendations for Future Research

The researcher used case studies to conduct in-depth interviews with six Kenyan who had either acquired a bachelor's, master's, or doctorate degree. These participants lived in Houston, Texas, but had spent at least 15 years in Kenya. Future researchers could consider diversifying the respondents to include Kenyan women who have achieved various degrees and living in Kenya and other parts of the world. The feedback from the participants would be a source of enlightening discussion, and the conclusions would form a basis for future research.

Machira (2013) found that sexual harassment is a major deterrent to Kenyan women in attaining university education. Participants in this research study contradicted this assertion

and indicated that they had some intimidating experiences but would not label them as sexual harassment, except for one participant. Future research could explore the perceptions women have towards sexual harassment, how they distinguish between overt and perceived sexual harassment, and how this affects them while pursuing university education.

The impact of patriarchal influence on Kenyan women and their academic achievement has been studied extensively (Machira, 2013; Ogot 1974; Omwami, 2015; Siaya,1999, Sifuna, 2006). Most of the assertions and findings in these studies alluded to patriarchy being a hinderance to Kenyan women pursuing university education. The findings in this research study however contradicted those assertions since all the participants affirmed that they had patriarchal support when pursuing university education. Their fathers encouraged them, in some cases acting against societal norms of not educating women. They also supported them financially, enabling the participants to attain university education. Further research is needed on the evolution of patriarchy in Kenya and how this has impacted Kenyan girls and women in relation to education and other social issues. Future researchers could examine how this evolution on patriarchy is influencing attitudes towards property ownership and inheritance in Kenya in relation to women.

The participants spoke of the important role of matriarchal influence and support, irrespective of the level of education. Future research could explore how matriarchal support has evolved over time to advocate for equal rights particularly in matters relating to educating girls. Future research is needed on the benefits and rewards of a terminal degree, focusing on the experiences on women of different races. Religion is an integral element in any society and influences the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes people adapt towards various issues including education (Nzioka, 2010; Sifuna, 2006). Further studies could investigate how religious perspectives affect education for girls and women in the 21st century. Further

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research is needed to examine the effects of pursuing university education on female friendships particularly between friends who have different levels of education.

Jaumont (2014) found that geographical factors may hinder Kenyan girls from accessing basic education which then denies them the opportunity to attain university education. This scenario creates a cycle for these young girls who settle in early marriages and have children that they cannot take to schools. The participants grew up in different geographical areas in Kenya but were able to go to school contradicting these findings. This contradiction creates room for further research, looking at how different regions in Kenya have adapted to enable the children to access education despite some areas having unfavorable geographical terrain and infrastructural limitations.

Conclusions

This research study was designed to investigate the experiences of Kenyan women as they pursued university education. The researcher used open-ended questions to collect data from six participants who fit the criteria defined for this study. The case studies were analyzed individually then compared to bring out themes. The themes were a) barriers to higher university education for Kenyan women b) support for Kenyan women pursuing university education c) advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education. The participants described the barriers they experienced when pursuing university education and most of them stated economic challenges as a key limitation. They also stated that lack of government support, lack of mentors and few role models, as well as marital and family responsibilities for participants who were married and had children as some of the barriers. The participants were supported by parents, siblings, colleagues who were instrumental in them in completing the process. The participants reflected on their experiences and advised other Kenyan women who desire to pursue university education. The participants encouraged the Kenyan women to find mentors and role models and develop coping strategies to cope

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with negative stereotypes against women pursuing university education. The participants also recommended diversifying areas of study as they progress academically and also considering the needs of the community while choosing the area of specialization for better career opportunities. This research study has added new perspectives to the evolving subject of women and education in Kenya. Recommendations were made for future research based on gaps that emerged during the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

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APPENDIX A

Demographic questions

1. What is your level of education? _____
2. Were you born in Kenya? Yes ___ NO__. If NO, where you born? _____
3. How many years did you live in Kenya?
4. What is your age bracket?
5. Where did you complete your university education?
6. Did you attend a public or a private university?
7. What is your marital status?
8. Do you have children? Yes_____ NO_____. If Yes, how many? _____
9. How many years have you lived outside Kenya?
10. How many years have you been in Texas?
11. Which tribe in Kenya do you come from?
12. What is your father's' level of education?
13. What is your mother's level of education?
14. What born are you in your family?
15. How many sisters do you have? __ Do they all have higher university education? ____
16. How many brothers do you have? __ Do they all have higher university education? __

APPENDIX B

Research Questions

1. Would you kindly tell me about yourself? (Where you were born and raised, your early childhood and a bit about your family)
2. What factors motivated you to pursue higher education?
3. How has the Kenyan government played a role or what government support did you receive when pursuing higher education?
4. How has society played a role in your pursuit of higher education?
5. How would you describe the economic situation while pursuing higher education?
6. How would you compare yourself with your female friends who did not get the opportunity to pursue higher education at university level?
7. If you were to describe yourself, what words would you use?
8. What advice do you have for girls and women who desire to pursue higher education or are in the process of pursuing higher education?
9. What role did your father play in you pursuing higher education? If your father was not around, did you have male figures around you, if yes, what role did they play?
10. What challenges did you experience when pursuing your education?
11. Apart from financial challenges, what other challenges do women experience in pursuit of higher education?
12. Is there anything you would have done differently in your pursuit of higher education?
13. What role did your mother play in you pursuing higher education? If your mother was not around, did you have female figures around you, if yes, what role did they play?
14. Who was the role model that inspired you to pursue higher education? what was it about them that made you want to pursue higher education?
15 Describe a typical day for you while at the university?
16. Did you experience any form of harassment while pursuing higher education? If so, would kindly share your experience?
17. If you did not have the opportunity to pursue university education, would you have opted for vocational training? Please explain your yes or no.
18.. Is there anything else I may have missed that could contribute to this research?

APPENDIX C

ADULT SUBJECT CONSENT FORM AND INTRODUCTION LETTER

You are invited to participate in a research study entitled "Women and education in Kenya,", a study that builds on existing research on the obstacles that Kenyan women need to overcome in pursuit of higher education. You were selected as a candidate for this study because you fit the criteria of being a Kenyan woman who has successfully achieved higher education at university level. This form allows you to understand the nature of the study before you take part in it. The study is being conducted by Seraphine Muthoka, a student at Houston Baptist University, pursuing a Doctorate in Executive Educational Leadership

Background Information

The purpose of this study is to build on the body of knowledge on the challenges that Kenyan women need to overcome, politically, economically, and socially as they pursue higher education at the university level, whether in Kenya or abroad. The Kenyan women participating in this study are women who have acquired either a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, or a Doctorate.
.

Procedures

Should you agree to be a participant in this study, you will be requested to participate in a face-to-face interview that will last for approximately 60-90 minutes at a place of your convenience. The interview will include open ended questions and the interviewer will use a tape recorder and take notes during the interview. You will be required to sign two copies of this adult consent form, indicating that you have read and understood its contents and you will retain one copy.

Voluntary Nature of the Study

Participation in this research study is voluntary, meaning that should you choose not to participate, you will not be victimized by the researcher or by the institution, Houston Baptist University. Should you join the study, you are free to change your mind at any point during the study. You can also choose not to answer any of the research questions if you feel they are too personal or are causing you stress.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study

The potential risks involved in this study are minimal, meaning the participants will not be exposed to any risks that they do not encounter in their daily lives. In case the participant experiences some uneasiness while describing an event or experience that occurred while pursuing her education, they may choose to discontinue or to take a break.

The benefits of participating in this study are adding to the growing body of knowledge on the experiences and perspectives of women from third world countries in pursuit of higher education. These goals come out of a desire to add a new dimension to the existing literature by bringing to the fore the experiences of women from developing countries who are part of the elite because of their education.

Compensation

The nature of this study is voluntary; therefore, participants will not be offered any form of payment or compensation to participate in it.

Confidentiality

All the information provided in this interview is private and confidential and will always be kept secure. The information provided will only be used for research purposes. The researcher will not include any identifiable information like names, email addresses, physical addresses, and telephone numbers. The data will be safely stored in locked cabinets and at the end of the stipulated storage time of the research documents, the researcher will dispose the data in a responsible manner.

Researcher Contacts and Questions

As a participant, you may ask the researcher any questions you have before the study begins, during the study or after the study. Her email address is muthokasm@hbu.edu. You may also contact her supervisor, Dr. James Bevers at jbevers@hbu.edu for any clarifications on your rights as a participant. The researcher will provide you with a copy of this signed consent form for your records.

Primary Investigator: _____

Student Researcher(s): _____

Title of Project: Women and Education in Kenya

I acknowledge that on (date), I was informed by (name) of (institution or department) of a project having to do with the following:

I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project and the possible risks involved or arising from it. I understand that I may withdraw my participation in this project at any time without prejudice or penalty of any kind. I hereby agree to participate in the project.

_____
Participant's Name

_____   _____
Participant's Signature   Date

    *Subject should sign two copies of this form. Keep one copy and return the other to the investigator.

APPENDIX D

Components of the Emerged Themes

I. Barriers to higher university education for Kenya women

    a) Economic challenges and competing needs for limited resources.
    b) Lack of support from the Kenyan government.
    c) Role of society-marginalization, stigmatization, stereotyping against women.
    d) Marital responsibilities while pursuing University education.
    e) Pressure for women to get married and bear children.
    f) Managing several roles- workers, students, parents and spouses.
    g) Limited time- balancing course work requirements with career responsibilities.
    h) Culture shock and language barrier.
    i) Lack of information on the desired field of study.
    j) Few or lack of mentors.
    k) Inheritance and property ownership favoring men.
    l) Patriarchy over matriarchy.
    m) Harassment or intimidating experiences while pursuing University education.
    n) Geographical factors.
    o) Religion.

II. Support for Kenyan women pursuing university education.

    a) The Kenyan Government.
    b) Patriarchal role and support.
    c) Matriarchal role and support.
    d) Perceptions on higher university education by parents.
    e) Role models and mentors.
    f) Siblings and extended family members.
    g) Colleagues from the work.
    h) The larger community and society.
    i) Motivating factors – internal and external.
    j) Parental level of education.
    k) Learning environment.

III. Advice for Kenyan women on pursuing university education.

    a) Find mentors for guidance and support.
    b) The importance of role models.
    c) Dealing with challenges.
    d) Overcoming societal barriers against women pursuing university education.
    e) Building lifetime networks at the university.
    f) Different mindset after pursuing university education.
    g) Diverse possibilities after university education.
    h) Pursue university education for the correct reasons.
    i) Alternative education as an option if university education is unattainable.
    j) Diversifying fields of study for better career prospects.
    k) Various benefits associated with pursuing university education.

Sample questioner.

1.Would you kindly tell me about yourself? (Where you were born and raised, your early childhood and a bit about your family)

> I was born and raised in Kenya. I lived in a rural area with my nuclear family. My parents were farmers. That is my beginning.

2. What factors motivated you to pursue higher education?

> There were two main things. I wanted to train as a teacher and that is why I went to the university. After completing form 6, I started teaching in high school as an untrained teacher. Of course, I knew that I did not have a teaching certificate and needed one. I wanted to solidify my career as a teacher so later on I got a master's and a PhD just because I wanted to envision teaching from high school to college and university. Number two was curiosity; I just wanted to see what it is people learn at the terminal level of education. Another motivating factor was because I was born in an extremely poor family and growing up was a big financial struggle, I wanted to liberate myself and my family. So, the basic motivation was to fight poverty.

3. How has the Kenyan government played a role or what government support did you receive when pursuing higher education?

> The only help I received from the Kenyan government is that it ensured peace prevailed which enabled me to work and pursue various business opportunities as I studied. However, I did not receive financial assistance, guidance or any other form of support.

4. How has society played a role in your pursuit of higher education?

> The society has contributed in a positive and a negative way. One, the society has contributed by providing role models, I saw some women who have degrees speaking with me and they earned better money and their careers were secure. On the other hand, because of the marginalization of women and stigmatization, I had to fight and get a higher education. The unfairness that I saw in the society, the society contributed both positively and negatively.

5. How would you describe the economic situation while pursuing higher education?

> It was tough. I was married when I joined the university to do my undergraduate. My husband had university education, had a job and committed to pay for me to get a degree. I was a teacher and resigned from the career to pursue university education. When I went to university, I realized there were a lot of things which were not available to the community, so I set up a shop and started supplying books and other things people needed. I hired pieces of land and planted maize which I sold. I also made samosas that I sold to students. I did a lot of businesses and generated money for upkeep and fees.

6. How would you compare yourself with your female friends who did not get the opportunity to pursue higher education at university level?

Well majority of them now are in difficult situations economically and otherwise. Also, in social immobility in that they are not even able to educate their own children to achieve higher university education. If I compare myself with them financially, you can see their standard of living is not good. Most of them who did not get higher university education are not able to educate their children up to the university level.

7. If you were to describe yourself, what words would you use?

A visionary, intelligent, focused, mitigated and a leader.

8. What advice do you have for girls and women who desire to pursue higher education or are in the process of pursuing higher education?

Go for it, you can do it. If someone is determined, obstacles can be dealt with. It helps to talk to others who have gone before you.

9. What role did your father play in you pursuing higher education? If your father was not around, did you have male figures around you, if yes, what role did they play?

My father did not really contribute much because I was already married. The only way my father contributed to my higher education was indirect. He sacrificed his life; he was ridiculed by other villagers for educating a woman up to form 6. He put his foot down and said I had to get an education. This background allowed me to pursue higher university education.
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10. What challenges did you experience when pursuing your education?

Apart from financial challenges, I had to deal with the pressure of dealing with reproductive issues. When I was growing up a woman's place was in the kitchen; the woman had to cook clean, take care of the family, the children, the husband and everything in her home. I also wanted to go to school and develop a career, but I also had to make sure that my reproductive duties, those of a woman were taken care of. I had to make sure that I excelled in my career because it felt like a woman had to be twice as good as a man. I had to endure the pressure of trying to strike a balance between both worlds. Another challenge had to with the stereotypes, taboos and beliefs in the society on women pursuing university education.

11. Apart from financial challenges, what other challenges do women experience in pursuit of higher education?

Depending on the community or society that you live in, there are stereotypes regarding women. In Kenya Africa, a woman is supposed to get married and have children. If a woman is 30 years and not married with children, society pressures them to settle down because they are getting old. Young women try to get husbands quickly and get married and have children. Women have to deal with pressure of developing a career and getting married at a certain age compared to the men who can marry at

whatever age they want. They can even marry several wives, some as young as their own children if not their grandchildren and we have to deal with that. There is also the issue of property ownership whereby most of the properties in Kenya and in most African societies are owned by men even when the women have been contributing at home or working outside the home. The inheritance issue is also a barrier because the property is in the man's name. The man owns the woman, consequently the woman does not have resources to go to school. Man has to birth the idea of the woman going to school otherwise she will not get the opportunity. The woman has to deal with those attitudes and those challenges.
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12. Is there anything you would have done differently in your pursuit of higher education?

Not quiet, the only thing is, I would have looked at the needs of the society and pursue my higher education in an area that will give me the skill and training to address those needs. Though I am a trained teacher, it has been difficult getting jobs. You do not get the kind of a job you want. You are not well paid like other careers but again that was my calling and I love teaching. I should have balanced my interest with the needs of the society so that I specialize in the areas that are needed in the society.

13. What role did your mother play in you pursuing higher education? If your mother was not around, did you have female figures around you, if yes, what role did they play?

My mother instilled the learning attitude in me when I was young. She told me I needed to go to school, get a career, become a teacher or a doctor. Getting an education helped in fighting poverty and ensured that I do not go hungry. Therefore, my desire to solidify my career was because my mother had told me from the beginning and at a young age to go to school and get a career.

14. Who was the role model that inspired you to pursue higher education? what was it about them that made you want to pursue higher education?

My colleagues at work were my role models. The ones that had trained and had degrees earned more money and could transfer from one school to another. Without a degree and training, you are stuck in the school where you have been given a job because you are untrained.

15 Describe a typical day for you while at the university?

At PhD level, a typical day would involve going to work and then attending classes. When not in class, I would be working to make ends meet, cooking, cleaning or taking care of my family. It was always schoolwork, working outside the home or doing something at home. That was my life.

16. Did you experience any form of harassment while pursuing higher education? If so, would kindly share your experience?

I experienced harassment from a male teacher at one level. I was taking a particular class that was not in my area of specialization and was experiencing some challenges.

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The teacher took time to explain some of those challenging areas and I was grateful. But he later came privately and told me he wanted to meet me when the semester was over. He explained those concepts in class, so I needed to pay him back. It was outright harassment.

17. If you did not have the opportunity to pursue university education, would you have opted for vocational training? Please explain your yes or no.

Yes, I would have gone for vocational training because I would want some skills that would help me in taking care of myself. If I did not have higher university education, I would want to learn a skill that I could use to provide for my myself and my family.

18.. Is there anything else I may have missed that could contribute to this research?

The only thing is that I am curious and want to read about the experiences of the Kenyan women. What obstacles and challenges they experienced. Personally, I went to school in the late 80's and 90's and of course society is not static. It changes and I do not know what challenges are experienced in the 21st century as women pursue higher university education. I am looking forward to reading your results.

VITA

Seraphine Mwikali Muthoka graduated from Mbooni Girls High School in Kenya in 1999. She immediately began her career working with various local and international organizations holding multiple leadership roles. Some of these roles included Customer Call Center Manager at NIC Bank and Spire Bank, Sales Manager at Barclays Bank and Bancassurance Cluster Manager at Chase Bank- Kenya. She attended United States International University- Africa and received her First-class Bachelor of Science Degree in International Business Administration in 2015. She became Senior Customer Experience Manager, Sidian Bank in 2015.She pursued her Master of Science in Management and Organizational Development at the United States International University- Africa and was conferred in August 2017. She was accepted into the 2018 Doctoral program at Houston Baptist University, where she earned a Doctor of Educational Leadership in 2021.

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