

**WOMEN AND ADMINISTRATIVE LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN LOCAL
GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES IN TANZANIA**

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania recognizes that gender equality and female empowerment are important for development of the country. Despite the government efforts in employment laws, policies and gender strategies to remove inequality, still there are under representation of female employees in senior leadership positions in many public sectors including Local Government Authorities. This paper aimed at examining factors that affect women's representation in top Administrative leadership positions in local government authorities in Mpanda District Councils. The study employed qualitative design to understand the barriers hindering female into top leadership positions. Mpanda District was used as a study case where by thirty (30) participants were selected purposively from senior positions, junior positions. Interview and focus group discussion methods for data collection were employed to collect primary data and secondary data were collected through documentary review. The study used thematic analysis in data analysis. The findings show that academic qualification, low self-confidence, overburdens with domestic responsibilities, number of working days per year and poor institutional arrangements are among the challenges to have blocked women's penetration into top administrative leadership positions. Basing on the findings, its recommended that, there should be community mentorship at the family level to raise children with a mentality of equality, inspire young girls by inviting notable female leaders to address the students, encourage women and give them the chance for a higher degree, and provide frequent leadership training to young women in order to build their capacity. Generally, the study contributes to the addition of knowledge and literature on barriers facing women penetration in top leadership position which has been under-researched, specifically in Mpanda District

Keyword: Women, Leadership Position, Local Government Authority, Working Environment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally there are different leadership spaces available to women in the local government including the involvement in decisions that affects the needs and interests of the public (ESCAP, 2019). Participation of women in local decision-making structures has widely been stated to be useful in ensuring reasonable societies and inclusive governance necessarily required to ensure improved living standards, improved community services and equal opportunities in decision-making organs (Swai, 2017; Makalanga et al, 2022; Munissy and Tarimo, 2023).

The presence of women in top leadership positions aids in the formulation of laws and regulations that protect and smooth the working environment for women. For example, the Zambian

government has established a law that provides women a day off once a month for their periods (ILO, 2018). In South Africa and Rwanda, indication shows that local leaders influenced changes in laws related to asserting ownership for women (Mushi, 2010). In Uganda and Zimbabwe, decisions of women resulted in the allocation of funds in the local committees (Stiftung & Foundation, 2016).

Despite the fact that, every gender understands its situation well, and so women know their situation better than their counterpart men, therefore, they should participate as men do to have their views and perceptions effectively incorporated at all levels of decision-making from the local to the global perspective there are still underrepresented of women in administrative leadership positions in many sectors (Munissy and Tarimo, 2023). Women are still underrepresented in many public sectors, despite efforts by governments around the world to achieve various targeted targets of increasing the number of women in leadership and management. According to Sadie (2015), the 30% goal for female leadership presentation was not attained in most African countries, with the exception of South Africa and Zimbabwe, which were above the target

In developing countries, both public and commercial institutions have taken steps to boost women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions. Legislation, regulation, governance/institutional arrangements, new policies and procedures, bias education, and empowerment initiatives are only a few of these measures. In certain nations, the policies make a significant difference in terms of women's participation in political leadership (Swai and Masue, 2019).

In Tanzania, women employment in public institutions is still a challenge; statistics show that the government sector employs less of women as compared to their counterpart men (National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). For instance, the fact and figures of 2017 shows that only 49 percent of employees in all sectors were women while the rest 51 percent were men. Furthermore, the government itself absorbed women by only 42 percent of total employees. However, the Tanzania population structure shows that female makes the majority of the population (URT, 2022).

Looking at the situation in leadership and managerial positions held by men and women, the study conducted by Razack, et al. (2016) on Social Policy, Gender and Labour in Tanzania shows that 17.7% only of the total number of employees holding the leadership and managerial positions in public sector are women while the majority (82.3 %) are men. This reveals that the higher positions in the public institutions are dominated by men and thus the decisions and policies formulated become biased towards men than women.

This paper focused on the challenges women faces when trying to access top administrative leadership positions in the local government authority. This paper focused on Local Government Authorities that was represented by Mpanda District Councils which is in Katavi Region. This paper would help to increase the awareness of the society about the existing situation about women and leadership in local government authority since there is no specific study that has been conducted to capture the situation in Mpanda District Councils. The paper also finds out the factors that hinder women to hold various leadership positions and suggest on the solutions that would help to solve the problem. The questions were designed to capture out barriers for women engagement in decision making processes and holding the higher rank positions and therefore, the final results would be useful for policy actions as well as the public awareness and the other

stakeholders.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Trait Theory Trait

The trait theory of leadership is tied to the "great man" theory of leadership first proposed by Thomas Carlyle in the mid-1800s (Spector, 2016). Theory emphasizes upon the traits or qualities of leaders, which lead to their effectiveness. The Trait Theory, however, could not establish the traits that should be common to all leaders, it gives an example of great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru, and their personalities had distinctly different characteristics.

Therefore while certain traits such as confidence, charisma, knowledge, may determine the leaders to become more effective, relying entirely on those traits may not always help to motivate their people, to achieve the stated goal in local government. The theory implies that, leadership effectiveness resides in attributes and characteristics of the individual which explains that to be a leader, one must possess good characteristics but not either economic capability, socio-cultural dimension and other factors related.

The theory, is criticized as having a predictive environment as argued that the situational variables are more influential in determining behavior than traits are, other psychologists argue that, a combination of traits and situational variables influences behavior of a leader, Such critics argue that, the patterns of variability over different situations are crucial to determine the personality of the leader and that averaging over such situations to find an overarching trait. Again it doesn't explain how one behaves such a way.

One of the major strength of the trait perspectives, is the ability to categorize observable behaviors of an individual. Researchers have found out that, examining the aggregate behaviors of women leaders provides a strong correlation with traits, observing the behaviors of the leader over time and in varying circumstances provides an evidence for the personality traits to be categorized as an effective leader in local authorities. The theory reveals that, what matters is not the fact that one has strong affiliation and ambitious to obtain a position in leadership but the objective criteria for categorizing and measuring behavior of leaders.

2.2 Empirical Review

Nuru (2019) conducted a study to examining factors that affect women participation in leadership and managerial positions in public institutions in Temeke Municipality. The findings showed that lack of education qualifications, overburden with domestic responsibilities, and poor institutional arrangement are among the factors perceived to have blocked the women penetration into top decision making positions. Based on the findings, the study recommended that there should be a community mentorship at family level to raise children with mentality of equality, inspiring young girls by inviting notable female leaders to address the students, women to be encouraged and being given chance for higher degrees and frequent leadership trainings to young women in order to build their capacity.

Tarimo, (2019) conducted a study to examine factors that affects career progression of female

academics to senior positions in Public Universities. The findings revealed that family work conflict, culture and gender, lack of mentor and mentoring program, lack of role model, low self-confidence, limited opportunities and networking were factors that discourage career progression of female academicians to senior positions. The findings implied that few female academicians managed to reach senior positions and majorities are struggling to move up. Their failures were associated with traditional gender role, society believes and gender stereotype.

Mushi and Mazana (2021), conducted a study to investigate factors contributing to gender disparities in leadership and managerial positions in the selected higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The study revealed that family commitment, patriarchy culture, motherhood and men tending to be decision makers contribute to gender disparity in leadership positions in higher learning institutions. The study is significant to women because it addresses the factors that are pushing them back from holding leadership positions and their solutions. Also it is significant to policy makers because it will direct them towards making policies that touch gender inclusion in all levels as well as institutions to improve their efforts towards woman empowerment at working place.

Hora (2014) conducted a study on Factors affecting women participation in leadership and decision making position in Ethiopia. The findings indicated that most women in public institutions had less education and had non-decision-making leadership roles. Therefore, it was determined that education was the main barrier. In most countries, male children receive preference in enrollment over female children, and this segregation continues throughout adulthood, resulting in differences in leadership and development potential. Also social-cultural attitudes, a lack of necessary experience, being overburdened with home duties, and a lack of role models for young girls and women were mentioned as the barriers too.

Ifanda (2016), conducted a study aiming at examining women leadership in the local councils in a case of Mkalama District council intending to provide an overview of magnitude of participation and performance in the local councils, determine the extent of their effective performance, the contributions of women in developing the local councils, the levels to which women occupied in leadership and challenges that women encountered, in participating and in performing their leadership duties in the local council.

Findings shown that, more challenges pertaining to socio-cultural factor were the core challenge to women leaders, from performing well their duties. In FGD's with women more than (80%) have argued that, low education and cultural values hindered them from engaging in leadership. Gender discrimination, social responsibility and family workload and stereotype to women were also revealed.

There is a little literature on women's engagement in the local government authority in Tanzania. The literature that has been reviewed focus on broader gender issues. Studies dealing exclusively with women in the local government authority in Tanzania are scarce which call for a need of current study. Moreover the number of female leaders in senior leadership positions is low despite the increase of the number on lower positions; this makes Mpanda District to be a good study area

for this research.

3. METHODOLOGIES

The paper was carried out at Mpanda District local authorities (Mpanda Municipal and Nsimbo District Councils) where explanatory research design was adopted. The unit of analysis in this study was employees at all levels within Mpanda Municipal and Nsimbo District Local Authorities which consists a population of 2171 employees of which Women were 1215 (56%) and Male 956 (44%). The paper used a sample size of 33 respondents who were divided into different strata and purposive sampling technique was also applied. Since two councils were studied, therefore, two top leaders (Municipal District Executive Directors) were interviewed. Thereafter, eleven selected head of departments were also interviewed. Furthermore ten primary school head teachers and secondary school heads were interviewed. Two focus group discussion which comprise five member each were conducted to gain insight from employees who hold non leadership positions. Data was analyzed manually because it allowed re-reading and several listening to the tape-recorded information to know whether there are still several new patterns of themes coming in up to when the researcher sees no new patterns of themes coming in. The interview protocol and interview guide questions were used to ensure that research questions were covered. All interviews were recorded in audio tape which provide the advantage of played later for more understanding of conversations. Crosscheck and verification of the data collected were done. Ethical issues were also considered by observing ethical standards and privacy of the participants.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Status of Leadership Positions within Mpanda Municipal and Nsimbo District Councils

There are a total of forty (40) top administrative leadership positions in the area under study. Only six of these positions were held by women, covering only 15% of the portion. Men, who held 85% of the total number of positions, held the remaining thirty four positions. The ratio between men and women who hold leadership positions (85:15) is contrary to the ratio of men and women employees (2071) working in the councils, which was (44:56), showing that in the population of the study women employees are many compared to men, but in the case of holding top leadership positions it turns upside down. The women's underrepresentation was also noticed in positions of the heads of schools (both primary and secondary) and ward education officers, where there were only twenty three (23) head teachers, eight (08) headmasters or mistresses, and six (06) ward education officers among one hundred and five (105) primary schools, thirty one (31) secondary schools, and twenty seven (27) wards, respectively. This demonstrates how women are frequently underrepresented, lack decision-making authority, and have their needs met by men rather than by women who are more familiar with their circumstances.

4.3 Factors hindering women participation in leadership and decision making positions

The paper sought to determine the factors hindering women participation in leadership and decision making positions in Local Government Authorities in Tanzania. It was found that the factors include low level of education, low confidence, lack of appropriate leadership skills, poor succession plan, overburden of domestic activities, and mistrust are among the factors that hinder women participation in leadership and decision making positions.

4.3.1 Academic qualification

Education is an investment in human capital since it enhances one's capacity for critical thought and decision-making as a manager, leader, or senior officer. The degree of education is inversely associated to resolving problems with professionalism and correctness. The majority of emerging nations have gender-biased educational systems. Most societies place a higher importance on male education than female education, which causes girls to have lower levels of education than males. Primary enrollment levels in Tanzania demonstrate that more females than males are enrolled. Surprisingly, however, the dropout rate for females is higher than the male dropout rate at every stage, resulting in fewer female graduates than male graduates.

One of the questions in the interview asked for an approximate breakdown of the employee population's gender and educational attainment. It was discovered that whereas most females had diploma and certificate levels and just a small number had degree levels, the majority of males had higher education levels (master's and degree). When expressing his opinion on how women's participation in managerial and leadership positions is influenced by education level, participant 1 was quoted saying:

"A number of higher positions are pre-determined by the level of education that an employee possesses; for instance, the positions of heads of department are always considered for those employees with degree level, and the master's degree becomes an added advantage." (Interview, Participant 1, MMC, 10/13/2022).

This implies that academic qualification is the major influence to be selected or appointed to hold leadership position.

Men are more likely to be considered for positions since they make up the majority of workers with at least a bachelor's degree, and they also occupy the majority of higher managerial positions in these local government authorities. An individual having a profession connected to the tasks carried out inside that department is expected to serve as the department head.

During the interview, the majority supported the idea that education level and holding leadership and managerial positions relate. Participants 14 said that:

"Education level is very important in determining the possibility of someone being considered for the higher positions; we don't contest, but we are nominated for consideration; ... the majority of male employees have gone for higher degrees and specializations; therefore, the majority of them have been appointed to hold higher positions unlike their counterpart females" (Interview, Participant 14, MMC, 29 September 2022).

These quotes together attest to the value of education in assuming administrative and executive roles. However, this goes hand in hand with the level of experience, so in the case of two people with the same level of experience who have been nominated, the education and other factors will be taken into consideration for further qualifications. Those with higher education are most likely to be considered for higher positions. The findings were supported by Nuru (2019), Hora (2014) and Ifanda (2016) who found the same.

4.3.2 Self-confidence

Self-confidence is an internal force or a person's attitude toward themselves. Self-esteem, or how other people perceive you, is directly tied to self-confidence. A person who exudes confidence will attempt tasks that are viewed as challenging, inspiring others and fostering a sense of trust in the community. Therefore, women's self-assurance might inspire the management team's cabinet members, who are in charge of nominating staff, to develop an interest and a sense of trust in them, leading to consideration for higher managerial and leadership roles. As a result, one of the most crucial qualities of an effective leader is confidence.

There is a mix of male and female leaders and those who occupy various managerial positions in Mpanda Municipality. Several questions were posed to the top executives throughout the interview to get their opinions on the disparities between male and female confidence levels. Most often when they are in those positions, it is usually considered that there is little difference between the two groups' levels of confidence. Prior to acceptance of leadership roles, men display their curiosity while concealing their apprehension. This is the only difference that can be seen. By declaring that, they are incapable of performing the responsibilities, women make it simple for society to see their dread and to become more pessimistic.

During the interview, participant 11 gave a scenario, claiming that at one time they had two candidates qualified to be considered for the headship position in one of the departments in the municipality; they both had academic qualifications and the years of experience needed. The only difference is that one was a male and the other was female, and in that case, in order to promote gender equality in representation, they were supposed to consider the female candidate for the position; however, they did not do so.

"We noticed one thing that I can say misled us during nomination: the male candidate was talkative, and he could talk a lot and looked charming when he was with colleagues within their department while the lady was not" (Interview, Participant 11, MMC, 3/10/2022).

The committee incorrectly determined that the female applicant could not be able to lead the department since it requires extra work in talking and making follow-up because they generalized the idea that men can present themselves better than women. This isn't always the case, though. People typically associate fear with women, however there are certain males who are extremely weak when it comes to public speaking; some men may even be unable to speak when presenting to their superiors or the congregation.

"During the meeting when this man is supposed to present, he trembles and with full of fear, sometimes he gets off track just because of fear, despite the fact that he is knowledgeable and prepares for presentation" (Interview, Participant 11, MMC, 3/10/2022).

The generalization that men are always more confident than women is inaccurate in this situation. Regardless of gender, a person's confidence largely depends on how they were reared and educated. The treatment of the boys and girls at home and at school would determine this. Therefore, both boys and girls would develop confidence and their performance would be differentiated by other characteristics rather than gender if the opportunity to lead is offered equally within families and schools and when the parents treat them equally. The findings are supported

by Tarimo and Swai (2020), Mutarubukwa and Mzomwe (2017), and Meena *et al* (2017) who found the same.

4.3.3 Domestic Responsibilities

Women face a significant challenge in juggling career and family obligations. When it comes to striking a balance between the two, women are more burdened. The progress of the career is hindered by being a working parent (mother) with children under the age of 18. In the majority of African nations, moms are responsible for looking after the entire family, including the husband, kids, and other relatives for those extended families. Since they spend less time at work than men do, they accumulate less experience and exposure to some crucial factors, which could contribute to their being respected as excellent leaders and decision-makers. Because of this, women are perceived negatively in society as being less capable than men in the workplace, and people are hesitant to promote them to the top management and leadership positions within a business. Women encounter a range of professional interruptions due to parental obligations. Domestic duties in this situation act as a barrier for women seeking leadership and managerial roles.

During an interview, the majority of participants mentioned domestic responsibility as one of the factors that act as barriers to women's participation in high managerial and leadership positions. Participant 15 argued that,

"Women have more activities to perform at home than men; ... when some of the domestic tasks are not performed, the society throws stones at the woman in that house even if the task could be even performed by a man." (Interview, Participant 15, NDC, September 24, 2022).

The view was also supported by Participant 10 who said:

"We are the first people to wake up and the last to get to bed; all the domestic activities, including washing, cooking, cleanliness, rearing, and many others, are left to us; ... our men only need reports, and sometimes they don't even bother to ask if things went well." (Interview, Participant 10, MMC, 3/10/2022).

This means that the situation limits the time for women's reproductive development. They do not get extra time to develop themselves and practice the knowledge they possess, unlike men, who devote their time to self-development. Participant 29 confessed that:

"We men have more time to spend on office work than women, and that enables us to become experts than women of the same level, despite both being hard workers." (Interview, Participant 29, NDC, 10/18/2022).

A woman who worked in the finance and accounts department was also complaining that she hadn't finished the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) professional tests, which she described as a crucial phase in her career advancement. She has attempted the exam for the past four years without success. The time required for independent study before taking the tests was one of the main factors she cited. She is busy during the day with her regular work obligations, and when she returns home in the evening, she learns that she must complete all household chores alone, without the husband's assistance. In most cases, those families who cannot afford to employ housekeepers for domestic tasks find it difficult to manage to perform all the domestic activities and at the same time perform

the job-related activities perfectly. Therefore, female are reported to have many family responsibilities that slow down their progress to acquire competence needed. The family overburden were supported by the following studies; Ifanda (2016), Meena et al. (2017), Tarimo (2019), Hora(2014) Mushi and Mazana (2021), Nuru (2019).

4.3.4 Number of working days per year

The likelihood is higher that women use fewer working days on average annually than do males. This is due to the numerous biological circumstances that women encounter, such as childbirth, breastfeeding, recurrent reproduction, and many more circumstances. Due to maternity leave and other rest days provided to women due to some biological challenges for their health, all these biological circumstances lead to a decreased number of working days. In reality, the majority of these are outside forces over which women have little direct control. Although this is a serious issue, it has been stated that it does not directly influence whether or not women are given consideration for administrative and leadership roles in public institutions. In fact, in some other countries, women are even encouraged to take a day off every month in order to be free of pain during their menstrual cycle; among the countries that practice this is Zambia. The majority of the participants pointed out that, though biological duties do not affect one's thinking capacity, they reduce one's ability by making one inactive and prohibiting their continuous learning as men do. Participant 30 aired that,

"You won't compare the capacity of male and female employees who are committed to work as female employees are subjected to several biological breaks, giving a chance to the counterpart male to demonstrate his ability and competency." (Interview, Participant 30, MMC, 10/18/2022).

Few participants also pointed out that we still there are some institutions that don't provide equal employment opportunity secretly between male and female, segregating women due to their biological responsibilities, which reduces the number of working days. As Participant 26 added,

"I was searching for a job for my sister; one of my friends advertised the job that my sister qualifies for, but the institution's manager friend told me that their institution does not employ women as they have a lot of excuses like maternity leave, bad rest, and others, and they are not ready to pay an employee who does not produce" (Interview, Participant 26, NDC, 9/10/2022).

Apart from that, participant 20 aired out that;

"Mind you that something that is never disclosed is that people like the person who would fulfill their duties almost the whole 365 days of the year but female must have the rest, especially during maternity leave and other biologically related leaves." (Interview, Participant 20, NDC, 10/17/2022).

It was further commented on by participant 16, who said that:

"It once happened to me; I had five subordinates, and by coincidence, four of them got pregnant and had to leave the office for maternity; ... I do remember my supervisor complaining about that situation, so I think this also forces the appointing authority to minimize the number of women leaders in top leadership in order to keep the office open during such situations." (Interview, Participant 16, MMC, 10/12/2022)

This implies that biological responsibility sometimes affects their work performance as they led to a decreased number of working days that affecting their learning process consistency unlike males who devote their entire time in personal development. The study findings were supported by Mushi and Muzana (2019), Mutarubukwa and Mzomwe (2017), and Islam *et al* (2017).

4.3.5. The mistrust by the community towards women

The community's mistrust towards women's abilities in leadership and management was also reported not to prevail in the workplaces of Mpanda Municipality and Nsimbo District Council. Participant 18 was quoted as saying that the quality of performance of works within the council that are performed by men and women can only be differentiated by other factors rather than the gender. He said that

"There are women who perform better than many other men, and likewise, there are men who perform better than other women, so in this situation, the gender difference can't be the factor but rather other things like experience, exposure, education, skills, and many other factors." (Interview, Participant 18, NDC, 10/17/2022).

Therefore, there is no doubt about women's performance once they take the chance. However, the level of performance of an individual does not depend on his or her sex but rather on personal commitments and motives. Participant 19 having aired that out,

"The mistrust of society towards women leaders is also contributed by the low confidentiality nature of women, as most of us won't keep the secret properly compared to men." (Interview, Participant 19, MMC, 17/10/2022).

Participant 11, added that:

"Gender stereotypes are the main barrier, as they have both affected men in that they don't trust us, and women themselves don't trust each other." (Interview, Participant 11, MMC, 3/10/2022)

This opinion was supported by participant 6, who confessed that:

"Apart from having academic qualifications, being a hard worker, and having a reasonable amount of confidence, the trust that my supervisor had towards me fastened my appointment as she gave me a chance to demonstrate my competence." (Interview, Participant 6, MMC, 30/09/2022).

This implies that there are misconception attitudes toward women capacity in leadership that their failures were associated with traditional gender roles, what society believes, and gender stereotypes resulting into Mistrust from men and among themselves. This findings were supported by Ifanda (2016), Mutarubukwa and Mzomwe (2017), Hora (2014) and Tarimo (2020).

4.3.6. Informal institutional arrangements

The institution is in place to promote women's leadership and participation in managerial positions. However, the informal arrangements are done; for instance, the issue of delegation of powers to women and giving them a chance to act in those positions is done informally, and there is no policy or law that puts the actions into enforcement. In turn, as the leadership positions are limited, it forces the candidates to scramble for the few available positions and hence provides a chance for leaders to be obtained by the technicians who know who instead of the technicians who know how,

which is the right way to go through.

Few participants cemented this argument during focus group discussion sessions, where participant 28 aired out that;

To appoint someone to hold a leadership position, one does not only base it on academic qualifications but also on the trust they have in the candidate, and therefore, people trust the one they know personally, which is why bias in the appointment process will never end. (Interview, Participant 28, NDC, 10/16/2022).

Furthermore, in addition to the required qualifications, the appointing authority may, from time to time, have bias. Participant 8 lamented that,

"I have witnessed two officers who were junior to me in the same office with the entry grade being appointed to hold top leadership positions, unlike the top leadership appointment criteria; ...that proved to me that some time bias can rule out basic criteria for selection or appointment." (Interview, Participant 8, MMC, 30/09/2022).

This implies that their appointing authority or system is biased.

On the other hand, the opinion above was strongly disagreed with by the majority of the participants, who believe that having academic qualifications, being hardworking, having confidence, and having commitment is the backbone for somebody to be appointed to hold top leadership positions, though sometimes bias might be present due to scarce chances with high demands. Where one participant (21), said that,

"After graduation, I get back to my working station to proceed with my duties, and you cannot believe it, I was merely a class teacher who was appointed to become the headmistress, and by that time I was the only woman holding a bachelor's degree in the whole district." (Interview, Participant 21, MMC, 10/11/2022).

Poor institutional arrangements that enhances on job training, personnel development, promotion on merit and succession planning are questionable. Few of the participant lamented that female's chance to excel in leadership positions is minimized by the presence of unstable system that supports biasness during appointment or delegation. This finding was evidenced by Nuru (2019), and Islam *et al*, (2017).

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

Women are frequently underrepresented in society. Because they lack decision-making authority, males address and plan for their needs instead of women who are more familiar with their circumstances. In some situations, people must vote on issues depending on their popularity. Men make decisions for women in these situations, however it should be recognized that women's priorities differ from men's, making women's participation in deciding what should be implemented necessary. To ensure that women have equal opportunities for representation in all sectors, measures have been launched both individually and throughout the institution.

5.2 Recommendations

Women should receive regular leadership training, regardless of whether they currently hold

managerial or leadership positions or not. As a result, women's ability within the Mpanda Municipal and Nsimbo District Councils may increase. Also, women should be encouraged to enroll in graduate programs. Women will find it easier to fit into various departments or professions for higher-level decision-making jobs as more people enroll in higher degrees with a variety of vocations.

5.3 Policy implications

The issues with the underrepresentation of women in top leadership positions call for immediate policy actions as an intervention to boost women's representation in top leadership positions. To achieve gender parity in top leadership positions and empower women with the expectation that they will speak for women's interests and influence career choices, there must be a greater representation of women in top leadership positions. There is a need for career development policies that will assist in the advancement of women's representation in top leadership positions by addressing the issues that impede their professional development. Even though the nation has an employment policy from 2008 and Women's and Gender Policy from 2000. Therefore, these policies still need to be reviewed and implementation strategies developed.

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