



## EDUCATION OPPORTUNITY EFFECTS ON SUBJECTIVE WELL-BEING AMONG FEMALE EMPLOYEES IN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KAKAMEGA, KENYA.

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### ABSTRACT

The fifth Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5) communicates that by 2030 all countries, Kenya included, need to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Despite the efforts and the progress in the promotion of women education in Kenya, the gap between boys and girls is still too large in education. In Kenya out of every 100 girls, 76 complete their primary education as compared to 87 boys. This study sought to assess education opportunities effect on subjective well-being among women employees in the County Government of Kakamega, Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey design, which guaranteed ease in understanding the insight about the problem under study. Primary data from a sample of women employees and members of the County Assembly of Kakamega making a total of 1,078 formed the target population. A sample size of 291 respondents was used to represent the target population. A self-administered questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire was pilot tested on 5% of the sample size to ensure that it was manageable, relevant and effective. The collected data was analyzed using inferential as well as descriptive statistics. The study applied chi-square technique to assess education opportunities effect on subjective well-being among women employees in the County Government of Kakamega. The study findings showed a significant relationship between education opportunities effect on subjective well-being. It was thus recommended that the County Government of Kakamega needs to enhance education opportunities for women employees so as to enhance subjective well-being among its female employees.

**Keywords:** Education Opportunities, Female Employees, Subjective Well-being

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Women experience multiple forms of deprivations such as longer working days, women specific ill health, low levels of education relative to men, and lack of adequate representation in leadership and decision making positions (Ogato, 2013). Developing countries show considerably lower literacy rate where women are the most disadvantaged. Adult literacy rate is 76% and 99% in developing and developed countries, respectively, indicating that the latter contribute only about 1% to the world's illiterate people (UNFPA, 2005). Latin America and the Caribbean and East Asia and the Pacific have literacy rates of 89% and 91%, respectively. The lowest adult literacy rates are observed in South and West Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the

Arab States with respective figures of 58%, 62%, and 62%, respectively. Adult illiterate women account for 55% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 61% in sub-Saharan Africa, and 64% in both Arab states and South and West Asia (UNFPA, 2005)). Regarding youth illiteracy, among 137 million illiterate youth in the world, 63% of them are females. Intervention programmes have been adopted such as creation of Pesa Mashinani, Women Enterprise Fund among others. But land ownership, formal collateral requirements and high interest rates are constraints that hamper women from benefiting from the programmes (Bary, 2015). The enrolment rate for boys and girls is almost 1:1 in pre-primary and primary but reduces for females as they progress to higher levels due to unemployment rates and poverty stricken families (MOE, 2015).

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Constitution of Kenya 2010, guarantees equal rights and freedom for women and men, and upholds the principles of non-discrimination and equality and provides for no more than two thirds representation of one gender in elective and appointive positions as a way of bridging the gender gap (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Previous studies on gender equality practices have used variables such as access to credit, employment opportunities, political representation, health, gender violence, access to and control over resources, participation in economic and child-related decisions, self-esteem, mobility, freedom from domestic violence, and political awareness and participation (Mudi & Waswa, 2018; Waswa & Mukanzi, 2018; Mudi, Waswa & Nabwayo, 2018; Blumberg, 1994; Morgan & Niraula, 1995; Hashemi, Schuler & Riley, 1996; Jejeebhoy, 2000; Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2001). While these proxy variables are vital and are ideally associated with well-being, they may not capture all facets of the multidimensional concept of subjective well-being. In spite of these studies and their recommendations, subjective well-being remains a challenge, suggesting that there is still extra that needs to be done. There is inadequate research relating to women education opportunities effect on subjective wellbeing in Kakamega County Government, Kenya. This study sought to fill this knowledge gap.

## **1.3 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY**

The objective of this study was to assess education opportunity effects on subjective well-being among women employees in the County Government of Kakamega.

### **2.1.1 CAPABILITY THEORY**

Sen (1985), defines capabilities as what people are able to do or able to be - the opportunity they have to achieve various lifestyles and as a result, the ability to live a good life. Central to the capability approach is the concept of functioning. This encompasses various states of human beings and activities that a person can undertake (Sen 1979). Examples are; being well nourished, being housed in a particular kind of house, having obtained a specific education, being literate, consuming a specific amount goods, choosing particular leisure activities, consumption of energy for heating, and participating in the labor market. Relevant to this study is the fact that education opportunity is considered an integral part of the above listed functioning's and if well provided for then the Sustainable Development Goal 5 of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls may be realized.

Sugden (1993) asserts that although Sen is not entirely clear in some of his writings, a reasonable interpretation might be that a normative evaluation of well-being should depend upon both the individual's achieved functioning's and his or her capability sets, where the capability set represents the extent of freedom, whereas the achieved functioning's measure aspects of welfare

other than freedom. The concept of freedom emphasizes the importance of empowering people to help themselves, and of focusing on individuals as the actors of their own development (Stiglitz *et al.*, 2009).

Capability refers to the real opportunity that we have to accomplish what we value. It is the various combinations of functionings that the person can achieve. Capability is, thus, a set of vectors of functionings, reflecting the person's freedom to lead one type of life or another (Sen, 1992). Sen's capability approach is widely regarded to be at once novel and of substantive importance for the conceptualization of multidimensional poverty and well-being (Anand, 2008). The capability approach appreciates all changes in a person's quality of life: from knowledge to relationships to employment opportunities and inner peace, to self-confidence and the various valued activities (Sabina, 2005). Sen has been clear that well being influences the selection of relevant capabilities (Sen, 1984).

Additional principles or procedural considerations such as equity, efficiency, stability across time, sustainability, voice and participation, as well as additional information, for example pertaining to human rights and responsibility, might also be considered in an evaluation that fully reflects the capability approach (Sen, 2000). Sen argues that, in analyzing well-being, we should shift our focus from 'the means of living', such as income, to the 'actual opportunities a person has', namely their functionings and capabilities (Sen, 2009). Capability theory is closely linked to this study since education opportunities provides opportunity for subjective wellbeing.

### **2.1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

Equal access to education by both men and women gives them a level playground on the job market leading to their enhanced subjective wellbeing (Sugina, 2016). Women therefore need to be educated not only to develop the country but also improve their subjective wellbeing. Gender equality practices implies improved levels of household income leading to greater enrollment rates and better outcomes, positive effects for the study time of females as well as increased number of years that females attend school (Kern *et al.*, 2014).

Despite the efforts and the progress in the promotion of women education in Kenya, the gap between boys and girls is still too large in education (Odhiambo, 2012). According to Wamahiu (2011) in Kenya out of every 100 girls, 76 complete their primary education as compared to 87 boys. With the gender disparities in education, it makes women ill prepared to compete equally with their male counterparts for jobs that require formal education or high level technological skills and professionalism (Chege & Sifuna, 2006).

The World Bank has recognized that there is no investment more effective for achieving development goals than educating girls. In fact educating women is one of the most cost effective ways of spurring development (Tembon & Fort, 2008). Dollar and Gatti (1999) report the findings of a study that indicated that increasing the share of women with secondary education by 1 percent boosts annual per capital income growth by 0.3 percent on average. Filmer (2000) reports that each additional year of formal education completed by a mother translates into her children remaining in school for an additional one-thirds to one half year. Women education is thus beneficial to oncoming generations as well. Sen (1999) postulates that educated women are likely to participate more in house hold decisions and to stand for

themselves thus reducing their vulnerability to domestic violence. De Walque (2004) reports a study that found out that Ugandan woman with secondary education were three times less likely to be HIV positive than those with no education.

Ward et al. (2010) explain that gender equality has proven to enhance human capital as educated women can undertake higher-value economic activities. Their study shows that countries that have poor gender equality in education are seldom rich and that economic growth in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and Latin America since 1960 would have appreciably increased if these regions had adopted gender equality in education; same is the case in East Asia and the Pacific.

### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Descriptive research design was used in this study. According to Creswell (2003), descriptive research designs are used to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present data, and interpret it for the purpose of clarification. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or groups for instance women employees (Kothari & Garg, 2014). This design is appropriate for this study since Zikmund (2003) note that descriptive research design is intended to produce statistical information about the aspects of the research issue (in this case subjective well-being) that may interest policy makers.

### 3.2 TARGET POPULATION

Target population includes all the members real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects to which researchers wish to generalize the results of their research (Singleton & Strait, 2010). The target population for this study included 1078 female employees in the county government of Kakamega drawn from different departments.

### 3.4 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

According to Kothari (2010), a sample is a section of a population that is selected for examination and analyses and used to make inferences to the population from which it is obtained. Sampling technique is the process of selecting respondents that constitute a sample (Kothari & Garg, 2014). In deriving the sample from the sample frame, Yamane (1967) statistical formula was employed as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where;

- n:** Sample size
- N:** Population under study
- e:** Margin error (0.05)
- 1:** Constant

A margin error of 0.05 was used to compute the sample size, which according to Yamane (1967) gives the largest sample size at a given confidence level. Substituting the margin error of 0.05 and the target population of 1,078 in the formula above gives a sample size of 291. The proportionate sample sizes for each stratum were computed on the basis of the size of the stratum and the target population. This study therefore used a sample population of 291 respondents for data collection. This sample size was considered sufficient since Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) proposes that a sample of 10 percent of population is considered the minimum for a descriptive research.

### **3.5 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS**

Data collection instrument refers to the device used to collect data such as a paper questionnaire or computer assisted interviewing system (Sekara & Bougie, 2010). The instrument that was used for primary data collection was a structured questionnaire. This provided respondents with a fixed set of choices commonly referred to as closed questions. The closed-ended questions consist alternative answers expressed in a Likert scale style.

#### **3.5.1 TEST OF RELIABILITY**

Sekaran (2003) observes that reliability is established by testing for both consistency and stability. Reliability refers to the accuracy and precision of a measurement procedure (Kothari & Garg, 2014). The questionnaire was therefore administered twice to respondents. The instruments were also piloted using a small representative sample identical to, but not including the group going to be surveyed (Orodho, 2005). The results obtained, were coded and entered into a computer program (Statistical Package for Social Sciences - version 25) after which a reliability index was calculated using the Cronchbach's alpha.

### **3.6 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data was converted to quantifiable forms by coding using SPSS text editor (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Data collected was sorted, cleaned and coded and then analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25). To measure the level of well-being of the women households, a welfare index where wellbeing is explained as the amount of consumption expenditure per adult equivalent was used. Descriptive statistics was calculated and tabulated using frequency distribution tables. To test for the strength of the model and the relationship between gender equality practices and subjective wellbeing, the researcher conducted an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study was tested at 95% confidence level and 5% significance levels.

### **5.1 FINDINGS**

This study was conducted on the hypotheses that education opportunity effects have a significant relationship to subjective well-being of women employees in the county government of Kakamega. Descriptive results revealed that majority of the respondents (53%) agreed that there are equal opportunities for both gender in accessing education. That there was enhanced possession of assets for women whose education qualifications were higher as well as improved livelihood. The inferential results showed education opportunities creates control over the family size and subsequently affect consumption quality as shown in Table 4.1 below. We therefore did not reject the alternative hypothesis since the study revealed that education had a significant relationship on subjective well-being.

**Table 4.1: Relationship between Access to Education and the Quality of Food in the Household**

<b>Symmetric Measures</b>		<b>Value</b>	<b>Asymp. Error<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>Std. T<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>Approx. Sig.</b>
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.287	.066	4.253	.000 <sup>c</sup>
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.223	.068	3.365	.001 <sup>c</sup>
N of Valid Cases		219			

A. Not assuming the null hypothesis.

B. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

C. Based on normal approximation.

## 5.2 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of the study was hypothesized that there is significant relationship between education opportunities and subjective well-being. Hence, the study concluded that access to education opportunity is a significant predictor of subjective well-being among women employees in the county government of Kakamega.

## 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The study findings call for improvement in education opportunities for females. In order to possess equal qualifications for opportunities as their male counterparts, women need to be given a chance for further studies through sponsorship by their employer as well as being given time to study. Education will improve women capability, self-esteem and bargaining power. Improvement in education investment will improve women's knowledge on the best family size and their health and also quality of food in their households.

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