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The Experience of Female Administrators at a Private, Kenyan University

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THE EXPERIENCE OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATORS AT A PRIVATE, KENYAN
UNIVERSITY

A thesis

Presented to

The School of Graduate Studies

Department of Higher Education and Student Development

Taylor University

Upland, Indiana

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Higher Education and Student Development

by

Elizabeth Lyon

May 2011

**Higher Education and Student Development
Taylor University
Upland, IN**

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTERS THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Elizabeth Lyon

entitled

The Experience of Female Administrators at a Private, Kenyan University
has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the
Master of Arts degree

In Higher Education and Student Development
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ABSTRACT

The ability of women to achieve leadership positions is often constricted in comparison to males, especially within higher education. Although these limitations exist as a global phenomenon, they are a reality specifically within African higher education (Arnfred & Afrikainstituet, 2004). Some women break through barriers such as cultural traditions and enter into leadership, but numbers remain uneven between male and female managers (Burn, 2005). Much can be learned from the experiences of the women who achieve managerial positions within higher education. Currently, literature exists on women serving in the public academic world, but little to no research exists on female administrators in the private, faith-based universities (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Thaver, 2008). In hopes of addressing this issue by using a phenomenological, qualitative research method, this study reports on the experiences of women serving on the management board of a private, Kenyan institution. The study found that though women have an overall positive experience, the expectations upon them are too high and make it difficult to progress into higher administration. Participants also discussed their personality and strengths playing a huge role in their success. The participants offer advice through their stories as encouragement to others who will follow in their footsteps.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Cultural images of women rarely represent the true challenges they face working and living in a male-dominated society. Although images of powerful businesswomen may be more normative in America, such images in developing countries remain a rarity. Moseley (2007) states,

The image most widely used to capture the “plight” of Third World women is that of an African peasant woman toting an improbably large and unwieldy bundle of firewood on her head...the image is always meant to convey that she has traveled a great distance to gather her load. As a metaphor, this feminine icon suggests the incredible burdens women shoulder, and the great lengths they go to, to satisfy the multiple and competing demands society and their families place on them. (p. 265)

These images not only generalize the challenges that women face in breaking through societal barriers but also depict an inaccurate picture of Third World women in their effort to attain education and leadership because such images are carried over into education, specifically higher education.

The lack of female representation in higher education administration is a global dilemma. Cubillo and Brown (2003) report that women are under-represented in virtually all countries. Across all higher educational systems, women are a minority in administration and faculty positions, even though an increasing number of female students are enrolling at the undergraduate level (Oanda, Chege, & Wesonga, 2008;

Partnership for Higher Education in Africa & Mwiria, 2007). When women do serve in these capacities gender stereotypes often hinder their ability to perform their best or achieve promotions (Hughes & Mwiria, 1989). Culturally-defined gender stereotypes across higher education generally dictate a woman's ability to achieve positions of decision-making (Webuye, 1993).

Internationally, higher education is viewed as a private good and not a public responsibility (Atbach & Knight, 2007). Since it is seen as a private good, "the role of a good education should be to equip the individual with the knowledge and skills that will empower him or her...to achieve a positive self-image" (Mathipa & Tsoka, 2001, p. 325). If this is the role of higher education, then women worldwide should be able to achieve higher status through their education. However, culturally defined traditions such as assigning women the lion's share of housework have limited women from achieving leadership positions (Webuye, 1993).

Culturally defined roles are not the only reason women have not achieved positions in leadership. There is a lack of role models who can mentor women into leadership. Ojeda (2005) writes, "Ambition and achievement are contagious, and we all need role models to encourage our dreams" (p.75-76). Without role models showing women how to balance cultural expectations and a professional career, women are less inclined to pursue such positions.

In many African countries, women's roles are viewed as subordinate to men's roles (Onsongo, 2004). The gender imbalance within higher education "reflects a complex combination of historical, social-economic, social-cultural, and past and present policy factors" (Gumo & Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2003, p. 30). A majority

of women in Eastern and Southern Africa make their livelihood through agricultural means (Dirasse, 1991) and are not as encouraged to pursue other options. This may be why women's representation is lacking in positions of decision-making within the educational realm (Dirasse). Domestic responsibilities limit the amount of time women can give to participation in leadership because finding male partners who will share in domestic duties such as childcare is rare (Chisholm, 2001).

Statement of the Problem

In many developing countries, specifically Kenya, traditional perceptions that men are superior to women prevail (Onsongo, 2004) because Kenya is a male-dominated society (Hughes & Mwiria, 1989). However, the Kenyan government supports the participation of women by providing avenues such as allowing them to work and become educated (Onsongo). Although the cultural view in Kenya is that females are subordinate, women have been permitted access to such things as formal education (Kanake, 1997). Within the higher education system, men still hold more positions of leadership, especially in public institutions. A majority of the student population in public universities is male, while females have a stronger presence in private universities (Partnership for Higher Education in Africa & Mwiria, 2007). Like the majority of educational institutions around the world, the administration breakdown by gender within the private sector does not represent the student population (Oanda, Chege, & Wesonga, 2008).

This study seeks to better understand the experiences of female administrators working at a private, faith-based institution in Kenya and to recognize how cultural views affect women currently serving in these roles. Past studies have reported on how Kenyan

societal views affect women in public universities in faculty and administrative positions (Kamau, 2004), but little research has been conducted within private higher education (Thaver, 2008).

Since little research currently exists on female administrators at private institutions, the study seeks to give a voice to their experiences at one faith-based university in Kenya. Cubillo and Brown (2003) note, “All coherent life portraits and stories are tales of personal identity. Therefore, personal narratives must be understood within particular social, historical, cultural, and political moments” (p. 283). Through personal conversations with women in management at a private Kenyan university, the women received the opportunity to discuss their role in relation to culture. Thus, the purpose behind the research is to provide insight to a unique group by answering the following question: What is the experience of women in administration at a private institution in Kenya?

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is important to gain a better understanding of the cultural barriers impacting women within international higher education. Burn (2005) said, “The great strength that women possess and the work they accomplish despite their customary lower status and power is truly amazing” (p. 6). In order to provide a foundational framework for the leadership of female Kenyan administrators, the following chapter will examine higher education within a global context. The first section will discuss a general overview of the status of women followed by a discussion on cultural views of women. Following this, a survey of international higher education will be briefly introduced. The next section will direct the focus to African, and particularly Kenyan, higher education. In discussing Kenyan higher education, a more direct concentration will be given to causes of gender imbalance within managerial positions. The chapter will conclude with coverage of feminist theory and the leadership capabilities of women.

Studying women globally broadens the need to consider their perspectives regarding higher education. Women’s perspectives are necessary in order to incorporate change within society and specifically within higher education. DiGeorgio-Lutz (2002) states, “Our ability to create change within higher education should be equally enhanced by the diversity of our academic backgrounds” (p.1). If women, much like any other minority group, are not represented within innovation, then resulting change is not reaching its potential.

Women across the world lack representation in higher education. From undergraduate students to faculty to executive administrative roles, women continue to be a minority as a whole (Onsongo, 2004). More females are enrolling in institutions of higher learning than in years past, especially in private universities (Partnership for Higher Education & Mwiria, 2007), but women still lack a presence in roles that influence university decision-making. Women, as procreators of the next generation, play an important role in society and modern economies (Onsongo); however, in comparison to their male counterparts, few hold positions of authority in the educational realm. One possible explanation why few women hold management positions is that they are being limited by culturally defined gender stereotypes (Burn, 2005).

Cultural Views of Gender

Across cultures, stereotypes absorbed at a young age socialize men and women to pursue culturally appropriate career paths. According to Burn (2005), stereotypes “suggest that women are inappropriate for leadership positions” (p. 111), which creates an unequal workforce. Women often fight against cultural views of gender in order to achieve leadership positions, but women “clearly navigate a different societal and organization terrain from their male counterparts” (Nohria & Khurana, 2010, p. 379). Cultural views on gender and leadership have shaped the means by which women have been able to pursue management level positions.

Stereotypes train people to deem certain jobs appropriate for men and women – this often translates internationally into unpaid positions for women (Abramson, 1975). As a result, in many developing countries women spend more time completing unpaid tasks such as household chores than men doing similar work or unpaid tasks. Women in

the workforce are expected to balance their time with unpaid labor, yet their workload is much greater. Dejardin (2009) states, “It is women’s time that is mainly stretched between work in the unpaid care economy and paid economy” (p. 3), a fact that severely limits their workforce opportunities.

Men and women are unequally positioned in society and in the workforce because they are often limited by socially-determined duties, which leaves the women with few options (Dejardin, 2009). Across the globe, societies expect women to perform domestic responsibilities regardless of whether or not they have a professional career (Webuye, 1993). For those women who do enter into the workforce, many will face challenges and more than likely be less supported in their career path. In comparison to men, “women receive on average fewer rewards...hold lower ranks, are paid lower salaries, [and] are promoted at a slower pace” (Poole, Bornholt, & Summers, 1997, p. 375). The supervisor role within the workforce is different for women than men. Supervisors tend to show more care and intentionality toward cultivating leadership within males, and they are more likely to assist male employees with personal support and professional development (Burn, 2005).

Although women may be educated and qualified for specific roles, they may never reach the position they deserve. Abramson (1975) states, “The reason there are so few qualified women...is that early socialization has forever damned women to a secondary and supportive role in society” (p. 115). Across many cultures, women are expected to be obedient and care for domestic needs, thus occupying the subordinate role in society (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Project on the Status and Education of Women, 1978). The supportive role is carried throughout society and into education.

These cultural views of gender likewise influence specific stereotypes in higher education. More women are enrolling in universities in recent years but few women hold positions of decision-making within institutions. According to Patel (1993), higher education prepares people to make objective decisions and creates an environment to enhance social and cultural innovation, which, in turn, helps to establish autonomy. If the global trend continues to be that women are not leading as part of senior management in higher education, it could be concluded from Patel's statement that women are not obtaining the ability to make objective decisions and thus enhance a culture of individual freedom.

Through governmental efforts in several different countries, women are gaining more access to education but are not receiving the responsibility of making objective decisions in roles of authority (Onsongo, 2004; Webuye, 1993). The Chinese government increased educational opportunities for women by granting greater access to paid labor and creating marriage laws that demanded more equality with rights (Feng, Riley, Xiaohua, & Bauer, 1992). Gender equality efforts in African countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, Ghana, Kenya, and Zimbabwe have mainly focused on affirmative action and lowered admission standards for women (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006).

Bringing more women into formal education, specifically higher education, can help provide a more balanced gender ratio. However, simply increasing the number of female students at the university level will not solve the gender equality problem within the higher education workforce (Kamau, 1996). More women are needed within the education sector to gain knowledge that helps them achieve higher promotion and to represent the growing number of females within the student population (Tinsley, Secor,

& Kaplan, 1984). Since role modeling is key in improving the participation of females in society (Onsongo, 2004), it is important for more women to be involved in education and management to set an example for other females. Education serves as a traditional foundation for training leaders (Gumo & Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2003), but women are not receiving the same opportunities as men based on the socialized stereotypes. Mathipa and Tsoka (2001) note, “Unfortunately, for the women, education which is expected to play a liberating role, has taught them to accept and practice what society expects of them at the expense of what they aspire [to]” (p. 325). Women worldwide have been expected to settle for traditional roles, which places a barrier in their career path and limits the opportunity to pursue leadership.

International Higher Education

Within international higher education, culture plays an integral part in women’s attainment of education. Mathipa and Tsoka (2001) state that “through education a person is made to acquire his or her culture, while at the same time his or her self-image is also being determined, shaped and developed” (p. 324). Education shapes perception, and few women internationally are receiving an opportunity to experience this process of self-discovery. Women represent only a fraction of the percentage of college students in many countries: (a) Indonesia, 31%; (b) Cambodia, 16%; (c) Nepal, 24%; (d) Ghana, 22%; and (e) Bangladesh, 20% (Burn, 2005). Although slowly increasing, the percentage of females attending university remains less than males by almost half across the globe (Burn).

Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. The decision-making policies currently in place in many developing countries negatively influence the participation of

women due to cultural views. Current policy problems in higher education take root in “historical precedents, social traditions and values, and political imperatives” (Ransom, Khoo, & Selvarathnam, 1993, p. 3). Although these views may be seen by some as a positive thing, they do negatively affect a woman’s ability to participate actively in careers that allow her to impact policy and decisions.

Higher Education in Africa

A push for equity between genders in higher education is not a new trend in Africa. Many African higher educational institutions struggle with issues of equality and equity (Ransom et al, 1993). Higher education is not the only place where women are restricted because “the traditional African culture has tended to restrict women to the home-stead” (Webuye, 1993, p. 1). Women, by nature of their gender, are handicapped compared to men because societal views on suitable career paths for each gender limit the options women have. Gender disparities within enrollment and employment in higher education have been wide and continue to widen as leadership positions increase in authority (Bloom, Canning, & Chan, 2006). Thus, positions of authority such as executives become positions that are even harder for women to obtain. In African higher education, most women are found within the student ranks but few exist in administrative roles compared to their male counterparts (Chisholm, 2001).

Several different countries represent this trend within Africa. In South Africa, women dominate the educational profession but hold few positions of leadership and management (Chisholm, 2001). According to Burn (2005) only 19% of administrative positions are occupied by females in South Africa. The rest of Africa echoes similar percentages in that, on average, only 11.9% of administration or management positions in

African colleges and universities are occupied by women (Burn). At the University of Zambia, only two of the twelve management level administrators are female (Gumo & Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 2003). Although across Africa there is a push to educate females, there still exists a divide between receiving education and obtaining leadership roles within the university.

Higher Education in Kenya

Kenya is an example of a country where women lack adequate representation within university management (Kanake, 1997). Neither public nor private institutions employ many women as department chairs, chancellors, or in other administrative roles. Women rarely occupy positions that allow them to influence decisions of policy or the direction of the university (Mathipa & Tsoka, 2001; Onsongo, 2004). Even women possessing the necessary credentials rarely receive acknowledgement for such achievements (Kamau, 2004) and settle for junior positions such as teaching assistants and lecturers (Onsongo). Kamau noted that out of four Kenyan public universities, only 19.1% of the academic faculty was female.

The Kenyan government is striving for equality within their institutions of higher education. The government, through the creation of affirmative action policies, has worked to increase women's participation in higher education. Their effort to promote gender equality focuses on affirmative action policies similar to those in countries such as Uganda, Tanzania, and Ghana (Bloom et al, 2006). According to the International Encyclopedia of Education (1994), the Kenyan government seeks to provide education that is not only democratic but also "caters to the cultural aspirations and development of its people" (p. 3126). Since Kenya received independence from the United Kingdom in

1963, every citizen is permitted access to formal education (Knowles, 1978). However, despite the efforts of the government and strong claims that there is no gender discrimination, women still feel at a disadvantage.

There are several factors that can prevent qualified women from mobility in the higher educational system in Kenya. Starting from early childhood, the idea of male superiority is part of the socialization process (Hughes & Mwiria, 1989; Onsongo, 2004). The attitude that women belong in the house while men belong in the labor market supports the conceptualization of gender discrimination in education. While this shaping process is primarily negative, socialization can transform a negative concept into a positive mindset that encourages the participation of women. As Tinsley, Secor, and Kaplan (1984) note:

If socialization explains the success or failure of women, then the socialization that encourages a high proportion of firstborn women to pursue a managerial career should help them to reach the top of the pyramid...it does not mean that other factors must explain why firstborn women strive in great numbers to join the managerial ranks, and then are not able to progress in equal proportion with their male colleagues. (p. 44)

The idea that women are inferior to men inhibits women from equal opportunity within their managerial positions, which is part of the cultural socialization process. Perhaps, the reason a scarcity of qualified women exists in decision-making roles is due at least partly to socialization (Abramson, 1975).

Traditionally women in Kenya have not been challenged to pursue leadership. More specifically, men hold positions of leadership as the social norm (Hughes &

Mwiria, 1989) while women serve beneath them. Superiority of men takes root from birth and carries over into all levels of the educational system. Within higher education, few women reach positions of leadership because of cultural or traditional standards (Nyaigotti-Charcha, 2004). As Hughes and Mwiria point out, “Higher education and highly-skilled employment reflect the cumulative-effect of the inequalities that exist at all lower levels” (p. 180). The Kenyan woman’s primary job is to perform her domestic duties (Hughes & Mwiria; Mwiria & Participation in Community Development, 2007), thus making it difficult to progress up the hierarchy of university control. In fact, a contemporary African woman’s educational career “often collapses before they can set foot in a university” (Oanda, Chege, & Wesonga, 2008, p. 70). Women are at a disadvantage in opportunities to pursue leadership even before entering higher education.

The role of the woman in African culture is secondary to the husband’s role. Traditionally, women are denied the right to be in leadership positions because their place in society is “defined as the kitchen” (Webuye, 1993, p. 18). With their primary responsibility being the management of the everyday routine in the home, the opportunity to seek alternative employment is limited. Traditional cultural values stress that the woman’s role in society should be primarily that of wife and mother (Nyaigotti-Chackha, 2004). Employers possess bias with regard to women due to their traditionally defined household and family responsibilities, thus creating more male employment opportunities (Webuye).

Another factor that inhibits women from obtaining positions of authority is socio-economic background. Although a woman’s socio-economic level will not keep her from achieving admission into a university, “family connections, resources and support will

color the nature of her post-graduation experience” (Hughes & Mwiria, 1989, p. 183).

The degree of literacy and the amount of education that someone receives is typically an indicator of higher socioeconomic status within Kenyan society (Lindsay, 1980). The degree of literacy and the amount of education someone receives is typically determined, at least partly, by their socio-economic status, meaning those with greater literacy and education tend to come from a higher socio-economic background. Based on this idea, women from families with higher socio-economic backgrounds are more likely to seek opportunities for (or within) higher education and other types of formal education (Hughes & Mwiria; Lindsay).

Professional achievement, whether in a positive or negative manner, also contributes to a woman’s ability to acquire higher status within the institution. A woman could reach high levels of educational accomplishment but still not be granted occupational mobility (Buchmann, 2000). Many women will work toward high degrees but struggle to find academic supervisors because few male academics will risk supervising them out of cultural-based fear (Kamau, 2004). Mostly men hold higher statuses, so the chances of finding a female supervisor are slim. A woman’s academic accomplishments rarely are recognized (Onsongo, 2004); therefore, women’s societal role tends to remain unacknowledged in terms of academic or professional achievement.

In one study, several key factors were identified as influencing female academic staff at a public institution in Kenya. Women reported feeling a lack of support and feeling unrecognized for their accomplishments (Kamau, 2004). Out of those who did hold academic staff positions, very few served in the role as department chair. A majority of the females occupied the rankings of lecturer and teaching assistant with very little

promise of promotion (Kamau). “Societal gender-typed attitudes” entangle female professionals, and they “continuously attempt to redefine their identities, adjust, resist, negotiate, and subvert their sex-typed roles in an effort to make academe work for them” (p. 3). This reality may not be connected solely to women professionals in the public sector but to women in the private sector of education. This also may not only be limited to women in Kenya but on a broader spectrum. Therefore, approaching such a topic should consider gender theories that can represent a larger scale rather than one particular region.

Feminist Theory

Although feminist theories are often explained through a Western lens, feminism is not limited to Western societies. Contemplating feminism on a global scale has “strengthened the ability of feminists across the world to agitate for and bring about change in women’s lives” (Smith, 2004, p. 308). Not all women – even within a single culture – think and act alike (Tong, 2009). Therefore, the necessity of feminism originates from the longing to fashion a world where women are no longer oppressed (Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991).

Global feminism recognizes that women are different worldwide. Sauliner (1996) describes global feminism in terms of working beyond national borders because “what happens to women in one part of the world is connected to what happens to women quite far away” (p.150). In patriarchal societies – cultures where males possess dominance – establishing a feminist theory can be a difficult task. Patriarchal societies view gender constructs as normal and believe that “people’s normality depends on their ability to display whatever gender identities and behaviors are culturally linked with their

biological sex” (Tong, 2009, p. 51). However, global feminism takes account of cultural constructs in place to encourage women’s success by understanding the gender roles already in existence within a given society.

Global feminism sees beyond the bounds of developed and third world societies in order to promote the strengths of women across continents. In many cultures, feminism can be viewed as a plot for power. Notwithstanding, the “participation of Third World women in defining feminism and setting a feminist agenda is often primarily a question of power” (Mohanty, Russo, & Torres, 1991, p. 323). However, simply looking through a lens of feminism on a global scale helps to alleviate the tension of power and allows us to focus on the purpose of uncovering what women have to offer. Moi (1999) states, “While the invocation of biology allows the social construction of sexual difference to appear motivated or ‘natural’ the real function is to mask the true, socially produced power relations between the sexes, to present social gender divisions as doxic, that is to say as that which cannot be questioned” (p. 282). The belief that women lack the capability for leadership due to natural tendencies is a global issue.

Although women and men do not necessarily exhibit entirely different leadership styles, several traits are demonstrated more so by women than men. Such traits identified mainly within women’s leadership include collaboration, participation, nurturance, and communication (Denmark & Paludi, 2008). Female leaders tend to be more willing to bring in others’ opinions, create open lines of communication, and approach relationships with more of a nurturing attitude. Women “imbue each element of their leadership with a moral dimension” (Denmark & Paludi, p. 705). Since women bring a different perspective to the decision-making table, presenting women with the opportunity to lead

not only changes the dynamic of the conversation but also offers a broader spectrum of solutions.

Women in leadership can also serve as role-models for younger generations. Hughes and Mwiria (1989) suggest, “Highly visible women (and men) in positions of authority and responsibility can serve as mentors to identify and cultivate capable women” (p. 191). Both genders have the capability to serve as mentors to women, and can challenge women to pursue leadership roles by capitalizing on their strengths and what they can offer.

Summary

Around the world, women lack a presence in higher education management. Current issues of equality in higher education are rooted in historical and social traditions (Ransom et al, 1993). One example of these social traditions is the lack of female participation due to culturally defined gender stereotypes (Burn, 2005). During the socialization process, perceptions of appropriate male and female roles develop depending on the culture (Tinsley, Secor, & Kapla, 1984). These perceptions deem women’s work to consist mainly of domestic responsibilities, often describing the place of a woman as “in the kitchen” (Webuye, 1993, p. 18). Although this view is culture-sensitive, it is the case in many countries worldwide.

Many African countries traditionally expect women to maintain the homestead (Hughes & Mwiria, 1989). Therefore, even women who are highly educated rarely progress up the hierarchy of educational administration (Onsongo, 2004). Specifically in Kenya, few women reach the higher education management level (Kanake, 1997) and those who do, at least in public institutions, have little opportunity to participate in

decision-making (Latvala, 2006). There currently exists little to no research on women administrators at a private institution in Kenya; thus, research needs to be conducted to uncover the experiences of female administrators serving in the private sector of higher education.

Purpose of Study

This study seeks to gain insight from the experiences of women serving in administrative roles at a private institution in Kenya. As previously discussed, women are underrepresented throughout higher education worldwide. Several factors such as cultural views can inhibit women from participating in university management. Although literature exists on women serving in faculty positions and management in public institutions, little research has been conducted within the private sector of international higher education. Therefore, this study aspires to gain more knowledge of females working in university management at a private institution. According to Mohanty, Russo, and Torres (1991), “we must stop reproducing pictures of the world only from the inside out, and try to look from the outside in” (p. 326). This study intends to give a voice to women inside the private educational system from outside their natural domain.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

A phenomenological research design was utilized in order to better understand the experience of women in administrative roles at one Kenyan, private institution. A phenomenological research method “involves a return to experience in order to obtain comprehensive descriptions that provide the basis for a reflective structural analysis that portrays the essences of the experience” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 13). As defined by Creswell (2003), “understanding the ‘lived experiences’ marks phenomenology as a philosophy as well as a method” (p. 15). A phenomenological design best fits the research situation because a small sample within a population will be studied in an effort to gain better understanding of their experiences. Cubillo and Brown (2003) note, “Through narrative, we can penetrate cultural barriers, give voice to human experiences and experience human intentions and actions” (p. 283). By examining the experience of Kenyan female administrators, the study seeks to discover key factors that influence women’s participation in university decision-making roles.

Participants

The participants in this study are women who serve on the management board at an accredited, private, faith-based institution in Kenya. The institution’s undergraduate population is approximately 1,500 local and international students between two different campuses. The management board operates as the administration of the university and has authority over the day-to-day affairs of the institution. Participants ranged from young professionals (those who have only worked in higher education for five years or fewer) to experienced professionals (those who have worked in higher education for more

than five years). Seven of the nine participants were married and had at least one child, while two participants were single. In order to make the participants' stories and experiences more personal and to protect confidentiality, each woman was given a pseudonym.

Procedure

The study first required contact with females in administrative roles at the institution. Through the Director of Research at the institution in Kenya, the female administrators were contacted, informed of the study through personal contact by the researcher with a letter of intent from the Director of Research, and asked to participate. The participants signed an informed consent form (Appendix A) explaining that they may stop the interview at any point and stop recording the interview upon their discretion. Although it is not possible to provide complete anonymity due to their uniqueness, confidentiality of the participants was maintained throughout the entirety of the research. Since few women occupy administrative roles, the women were chosen based on convenience and willingness to participate; therefore, there is no randomization.

After consent, an in-person interview was scheduled for a time between June 25 and July 2, 2010. The interview length ranged from twenty minutes to an hour. The interviews were digitally recorded and kept as secure files with access limited to the principle investigator. Prior to conducting the interviews with the participants, a pilot survey was conducted with a female faculty member at a Midwestern, faith-based institution who has worked in both Kenya and the United States. The purpose of the pilot study was to help the researcher refine the interview protocol and guard against leading questions while providing strong and culturally sensitive wording.

The interview protocol (Appendix B) was geared toward understanding the participants' experiences as women on the management board. The interview began with general questions regarding their particular title, educational credentials, and work experience. Following these type of questions, the interviewer asked questions about their experience at the institution and as a woman in administration, along with general questions about their role as a Kenyan woman.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process took place after all the interviews were conducted. The raw data was transcribed from the recordings. Due to technical difficulties, one interview was not recorded and transcribed. However, notes and direct quotes from this interview were recorded. The researcher then reviewed the transcribed data in order to gain a general perspective of the responses. Coding was then utilized to draw out concepts beyond the general responses. Coding is a process of analyzing the data by which the researcher ascribes labels to emerging themes (Creswell, 2007). The codes assigned by the researcher “represent information that researchers expect to find before the study, represent surprising information that researchers did not expect to find, and represent information that is conceptually interesting or unusual to researchers” (Creswell, p. 153).

The coding process, as laid out in Creswell (2003), starts with producing categories for the information by generalizing overarching themes of all the transcriptions. After looking at the transcriptions in a broad sense, the researcher studied one interview at a time to discern its “underlying meaning” or the substance of the information (Creswell, p. 192). Each interview was studied with the goal of discovering the underlying meaning, and similar topics were grouped together followed by an

abbreviation of topics. For a phenomenological study, the researcher pays particular attention to the “individual experiences and the context of those experiences” (Creswell, 2007, p. 153); therefore, when coding for the themes of the interviews, the researcher concentrated on understanding the experience of being a female administrator in the context of the culture and nature of the institution. The analysis of the coded data began after all the data was categorized and relationships were determined.

Finally, the validity of the coded information was confirmed through member-checking. Member-checking is used “to determine the accuracy of the qualitative findings through taking the final report or specific descriptions or themes back to participants” (Creswell, 2003, p. 196). The participants received the opportunity to read through the findings, thus validating that the information pulled from their responses was accurate. Conducting international research in an area with strong cultural views toward the topic can be a difficult process. Therefore, participants were given the opportunity to review the interview.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The aim of this study was to provide an avenue for women administrators to share their experience working in private higher education. The interviews sought to gain insight into the lives of Kenyan women administrators. Therefore, the following themes seek to provide organization and flow to the lived experiences of the participants. The themes range from the journey of being an administrator to the pursuit of education, from possessing specific personality traits to the importance of faith. Although themes convey a number of different experiences, the stories of the female administrators demonstrate an overall courage and endurance that serves as an example to other women in pursuit of leadership.

Improbable Pursuit

Out of the nine participants, seven discussed that they did not think that they would ever work in higher education, particularly administration, and reasons for this varied among the women. Two were quick to note that though they did not envision themselves in higher education management, this did not mean that they did not picture themselves in leadership at all. Joanna, for example, responded to the question as to whether she saw herself working in management by saying, “No, not in a university. In the corporate world yes, but not in a university.” Six participants were encouraged to pursue higher education in general by family members, mainly parents. However, none of the participants discussed being encouraged to pursue management positions. Hannah talked about her parents being an encouragement to pursue a college education: “They

didn't go to university...But they wanted all of us siblings to receive an education. They sacrificed a lot to have us go to school...They were willing to do anything to have us get a college education." All six participants who specifically commented about being encouraged to pursue an education mentioned similar situations.

One participant, Sarah, was not encouraged by her parents to pursue an education. Since her parents were not educated, she felt like they never truly understood what she was doing seeking an education. Sarah commented, "My parents never contributed to the line of education. They were not equipped for that." However, Sarah did talk briefly about other relatives who had obtained a certain level of education, which helped to push her forward.

The Uphill Climb

Participants were asked several questions designed to discover what they had learned from their experience as a female administrator working at a faith-based institution. When discussing their overall experience, participants used stories and referenced specific duties related to their position on management board and at the university. Three participants felt that the system in general was male-dominated, even though a majority of the management board consists of females. Esther described her experience as negative at times and said, when talking about top male administrators, "I feel that after all, it doesn't matter what I do because many times they will come with the decisions already made...I consider the top administrators to be dictatorial myself." Not every participant described their experience as negative, though. Joanna used the word "interesting" to describe her experience followed by the comment: "It is sad that women in leadership don't have it as easy as men." Though she enjoyed her worked, Joanna felt

that women were still disadvantaged in their leadership compared to their male counterparts. Participants felt the consequences, good and bad, of what it means to be a female manager within higher education, like constantly climbing an uphill incline.

Participants also explained how their position often requires focus and completion of additional work beyond a day at the office. Some participants discussed having to separate their work from family time to be a successful manager. Martha described this experience in terms focusing on work at work and family at home:

Well, I just try to kind of have a focus. When it is family, it is family. I used to make people laugh...Even if I left a child sick at home, when I come to [work] I would forget. When I am going home, I am a mother and I have to behave as a mother...Not a single time would I say that my job had been affected by my family.

Martha talked about focus as being able to separate work and family, which helped her do her job well. Others talked about not having the option to separate work and family because the position sometimes required late nights at the office during days set aside for family.

Four participants talked specifically about their experiences at the current institution compared to other places of employment, with a consensus that the current institution provides for a good work environment. Mary commented, "I have found [the current institution] to be quite understanding given the roles, especially people with young families." Anna said that the current institution "is more supportive of women" than other institutions at which she has worked. Overall, participants commented that

there exist barriers in their positions, and their experience in management has been one of overcoming challenges to continue to succeed.

One specific manifestation of this uphill climb was the struggle of asserting an *administrative voice*. When discussing their roles as administrators and members of the management board, two participants directly referenced feeling like their voice is not always heard. Esther, when asked whether she felt that her voice was heard as an administrator, responded as follows:

Oh my goodness. That is a good question. To be honest, our top administrators are males. There are times when I personally feel that they do not reason. They come with [their] own decisions already made so we are there arguing and saying this is not the way to do it but they have already made up their mind. So, yeah, there are times when I feel that it is unheard.

One participant felt that her voice was heard only on issues directly dealing with her particular department. Miriam, when asked if she felt her voice was heard, said, “With issues to do with my job, yes, otherwise no.” The remaining six participants felt that their voices were heard and their opinions taken seriously. Sarah attributed being heard to the current institution, and responded,

I must confess that [current institution] is a little bit different than other places that I have been exposed to because professionally they will listen to a professional not looking at the form of dressing. I am a lady. The decisions, they will always point to the head of that department to give their input. So you are a professional. Professional advice is very highly valued.

Other participants gave a variety of reasons why they felt that their voice was heard including longevity, age, and specialization in a particular area. They felt heard and that their opinion was taken seriously when offered.

A Battle of Tug-O-War

All nine participants discussed different societal roles they have experienced as Kenyan women. Participants expressed roles ranging from mother to manager, from wife to teacher, from daughter to educator. Their roles differed depending on environment. The theme emerged through statements such as Ruth's: "You have so many roles as a lady in Kenya." Miriam commented, "You are expected to be a good African woman, professional woman, and Christian woman." Hannah elucidated that Kenyan women are "expected to be god...expected to be good mothers, good wives, good community mobilizers, and they are supposed to progress in their careers." Although each participant discussed expectations using different wording, each woman expressed the weight of the expectation to be a good wife, mother, and employee almost as if they were caught in a battle of tug-o-war with society.

In many instances, this tug-o-war caused the subtheme of what participants identified as a *balancing act*. Four participants discussed the conflict they experienced within the different roles they played as a Kenyan woman. Two participants specifically mentioned that society has too high of expectations for women. Esther, when asked about social expectations of women in Kenya, replied

I am struggling with [expectations of women] even now everyday because it is difficult for a woman to climb the ladders, particularly in our country and in our institutions. Because the pressure is too much, the society expects me to be an

excellent mother to my children and to other children because our society is communal... I am supposed to be a good wife and a good wife must feed her husband well. And then, I have to be a good employee of my institution and a good administrator. I find myself in a conflict all the time... It is very difficult to be a woman administrator.

The participants expressed that expectations placed on them by society were, at times, too much to handle. Hannah commented that societal expectations were especially high for educated women when saying, "Those expectations are huge because it means at each level there are networks and individuals that one is to care about."

Eight of the nine participants discussed the difficulty of managing their multiple roles, using such phrases as "it is not easy" and "it is challenging to balance." Although they describe the balancing act as being difficult, all nine participants expressed various means of managing the multiple roles that they must play on any given day. Two participants talked about having "focus" specifically relating to working at work and being home when home. Two other participants explained the need to create additional time in the day by waking up earlier than normal to do work.

Two participants also discussed the importance of having a supportive husband in their attempt to balance life responsibilities. Although this idea seems a contradiction to the cultural norm, the women talked about having a supportive husband in terms of having a good relationship with their spouse. However, the cultural norms still possess a strong pull within the home. Joanna explained, "I am lucky. I have a very understanding husband... I guess us Africans are different, cause for us the women's role in the kitchen

is very strong.” Though the women have professional careers and the support of their husbands, their responsibilities within the home do not change.

A common theme that emerged when discussing how participants managed their various roles was the employment of house help. Three participants specifically mentioned that without house help, they would not be able to hold a management position. House help, according to the participants, allowed them to be productive while at work because they knew that things at home were being cared for such as children, chores, and cooking.

Finding the Stronghold

Five participants referenced their personal relationship with God as a key factor in their life as a working woman within higher education. These five participants specifically discussed the role that their relationship with God played in making decisions and functioning as a Kenyan woman, planting themselves in the stronghold of Christian faith. Sarah said, “I work for God...I would say over and above all that God is the one who helps us. The more you pray to God, the more the Lord energizes you.” Two of these five participants credited God directly for their success. When asked what had enabled them to achieve the level of manager, each one stated that they first must “give credit to God.”

The five participants who talked about their relationship with God each expressed that they drew their strength from God similar to what Sarah stated. Ruth, for example, said,

Sometimes meeting people’s expectations is a challenge and sometimes you won’t be able to meet their expectations...You can still relate to the other person

and force a smile even if you disagree. You must be very strong at heart and be able to separate things. I think God has given me strength, and I rarely get annoyed.

The importance of faith and having a relationship with God is a driving force for the women as they navigate a professional career and outside expectations.

The Confident Conqueror

Individual personality traits emerged as a major component to which participants attributed their success as female administrators. Participants discussed not fearing men, having confidence, and having the capability to speak up when needed. Martha said,

It is the way we carry ourselves. It is the personality. For me, even if I am at a meeting with all males and I am the only woman I don't feel intimidated and I don't feel shy. Why should we feel shy? They are human beings just like us.

Similar to Martha's explanation of possessing a personality not of intimidation but of confidence, other participants commented on feeling confident in their ability to lead. Such comments emerged as participants talked about believing in themselves.

Confidence is seen not only in the ability to voice their opinion, but also as an element of feeling secure in their skill to do their job. Anna said, "I always feel confident that the [university] management has put me here, and they looked at my performance before they put me here; so that adds to the ability of what I am doing." Participants felt that confidence could be due to appointment to the position and to their integrity.

Since becoming a member of the management board is not an application process but a position of appointment, personality also emerged through comments about specific talents and strengths that the participants possessed. Some of the women specifically

referenced having relational strengths that allowed them to connect with colleagues. Some of the women talked about more administrative talents associated with their service on management board. In both cases, the women felt that their appointment to the board was due to their strengths and demonstrating a personality of confidence.

Personality also emerged through comments about *persistence*. Three participants discussed having a persevering personality, one that never quits pushing. Esther said, “There is a contribution that I can make. I push, push, push. Some of the things pass and some of them do not pass. At times, I get very discouraged. I will not quit, but I always remind myself that there is a need to have somebody to push.” Even though the participants may feel tired, they commented on possessing the personality traits of perseverance, strong work ethic, and aggressiveness, which helped them to work hard. Joanna demonstrated persistence when discussing how hard she had to work to achieve results, and explained, “I have to prove myself. I have to work harder in order to prove myself. I have to actually bring in tangible results...I have had to be aggressive, extremely aggressive.” She later explained that this approach helps her to continue to persevere. The personality traits that emerged through the interview also aligned with the advice that the participants offered for others in pursuit of leadership.

Words of Wisdom

At the conclusion of each interview, participants were given the opportunity to offer advice for women desiring to pursue higher education or higher education leadership. Advice ranged from having focus and confidence to priorities and balance, and almost all participants recommended something unique. However, their thoughts can be grouped into two main categories.

Perseverance.

Five participants encouraged women to persevere. One participant talked about this in terms of being “relentless,” while another participant simply repeated “don’t give up” several times. One participant talked about perseverance in terms of women not believing that they are the weaker sex and encouraged women to have confidence in their ability. Joanna recommended, “Have the goal where you want to end up and then strategize...It may take awhile but don’t give up. It is not going to be easy but have the will-power to fight.” In order to achieve leadership roles, it takes much work, which the participants encouraged women to endure the hard times and push through until they meet their goals.

Value the experience.

When offering advice, participants encouraged women to value the work they are doing and pursuing. One participant talked about this in terms of being committed to one’s talents and putting forth a good effort in all that they did. Another participant described placing value on her work as staying relevant in what is going on in the education realm, to keep studying. Yet, another participant talked about valuing work by separating her social life from her professional life. Ultimately, the advice for placing value on work is summed up best through one participant’s advice: believe in yourself. Ruth said, “I think the most important thing is to encourage women that you understand yourself and believe in yourself and that you can make it. And equip yourself for the responsibilities.” The experience of education and of leadership is one not to be taken lightly; thus, encouraging women to be confident in their ability and to value their

experience emerged through the women's voices as they continued to serve as role models for the next generation of leaders.

Summary

The female participants describe their experience as female administrators working in the private sector of higher education through different language, but their stories paint the picture of an overall phenomenon. Their experiences overlapped and, though each woman voiced her own story, many had very similar experiences serving in administration. The participants felt that their experience in higher education management has been good overall but the expectations placed upon them were unreasonable. When the researcher initiated the interview, a majority of the participants read the introduction letter, chuckled, and said, "This needs to be talked about." Overall the participants demonstrated the necessity of having more research and space to talk specifically about what it means to be a female leader in the changing face of African higher education.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The research sought ultimately to answer one question: What is the experience of women in administration at a private institution in Kenya? The question was answered through support from interview questions seeking to give voice to women administrators working in private higher education. Throughout the interview several themes arose, and the following discussion is geared toward exploring and engaging those themes in detail. In this discussion of the emerging themes, previous studies were taken into account.

Education and Support

At the beginning of the interview, the participants discussed their educational history, aspirations, and family support. Most participants were encouraged to pursue higher education from parents or relatives. Previous research indicates that women from higher socio-economic statuses are more likely to pursue higher education (Lindsay, 1980). A range in socio-economic backgrounds is demonstrated from participants with a varying level of support from family. All participants earned at least a Masters degree with a majority of the participants earning their doctorate; however, none of the participants were encouraged by family to pursue management positions. Latvala (2006) reported that highly educated women “strongly felt that their possibilities to act on a political or other decision-making level in Kenya were limited” (p. 79). A common career path for Kenyan women is education at a teacher’s level, so it is easier to note the connection between pursuit of higher education and career path. But, the women were not challenged to pursue leadership, which could be due to African tradition within previous

generations. Webuye (1993) discussed the African traditional culture playing a role in women's inability to achieve positions of decision-making.

Leadership, according to the female administrators and historically in Kenya, has been viewed as a suitable pursuit for males (Burn, 2005; Kanake, 1997). The success of the participants could partly be due to the encouragement of their parents to pursue higher education. There seems to be a shift in the thinking of leadership, and though the paradigm is small, it is worth mentioning. None of the participants foresaw a career in higher education administration probably because they were not presented with that as a career option. A study by Onsong (2004) conducted on Kenyan managers at three public and three private institutions revealed that women who chaired departments in the private sector had worked in public institutions before. This finding also appeared within this study. Almost all participants worked outside of private education before holding their current position at the institution.

Multiple Roles of a Kenyan Woman

When discussing the roles of Kenyan women, all participants articulated the expectation of them to be a good wife, mother, employee, and a good African woman in general. The cultural expectation of Kenyan women, despite strides in reform, remains one of tradition, where a woman is expected to clean, cook, and care for the children before fulfilling their desire for a professional career. The participants' comments are similar to existing literature (Burn 2005; Hughes & Mwiria, 1989; Mathipa & Tsoka, 2001; Nyaigotti-Chackha, 2004). Kamau (1996) conducted a study on Kenyan academic females and reported the same expectations of women as the female administrators discussed in this study. An interesting note is that the participants did not speak of the

expectations as being a wholly negative thing, but rather in terms of the expectations being too high at times. Although house help is typically employed, the participants referred to the danger of relying too heavily on that resource because it shows that you are not taking care of your family. The extent to which participants talked about house help was not expected because previous studies did not discuss it.

The language that the participants utilized to describe their experiences aligns with language on gender stereotypes in the literature. Some participants explained that it often is a surprise to people that they are in a managerial role because people expect men to hold that role. Their role in society remains as one of subordination (Kamau, 1996), which emerged from a few participants in particular as they described feeling overpowered by male leadership. DeJardin's (2009) study on gender inequality noted, "It is women's time that is mainly stretched between work in the unpaid care economy and paid economy" (p. 3). Participants commented that the multiple roles they play require them to balance between the unpaid work of being a wife and mother and their career as a manager. This balance emerged as a challenge for women in the public sector of higher education (Kamau, 2004).

Kenyan culture is not the only one where women generally play multiple roles. Ojeda (2005) explains that "virtually all societies manifest some amount of difference between women and men, and virtually all exhibit some form of male domination, despite variations in gender definitions" (p. 28). Since each society makes sense of gender and views gender roles through the context of culture, it is important to account for the differences. Some sort of male dominance may be present in most societies, but to what extent is dependent on culture's definition of normal (Tong, 2009). For this study

in particular, the women felt that they were different but should not be viewed as weaker. This sense of male dominance could be due to the patriarchal society set up, as reported in earlier research.

Experience as a Female Administrator

Although no one person experiences something in the same manner as another, there is often a common bond within a shared experience. The way that the female administrators talked about working among women can be an encouragement for women working or pursuing higher education. The participants work at the same institution and hold positions on the management board, creating common experiences. Participants described their experiences using a variety of words, but their stories align with the experiences of females in management positions in other studies. Cubillo and Brown's (2003) study reported women's roles in leadership as one of having worthwhile contributions to make.

In talking about their experiences, all participants discussed their role in the decision-making process. Most of the participants felt that their voice was heard and taken seriously, and some of them attribute their voice being heard to their age and longevity at the institution. This could be where personality plays a role. Mathipa and Tsoka (2001) conducted a study on possible barriers limiting women from pursuing leadership positions within education and concluded,

the disadvantages women are subjected to appear not to have anything to do with the requirements for positions of leadership, except only to perpetuate a false perception that women lack the personality and the experience needed when faced with tough situations. Challenging situations demand unwavering decisions and

actions taken by any person possessing qualities such as determination, fairness, confidence, honesty, assertiveness, discipline, steadfastness, decisiveness, and aggressiveness. (p. 324)

Several participants commented on being assertive and taking their own voice seriously when bringing ideas to the table. They also recognized that just because their voice was “heard” did not mean that their ideas were considered. For the most part, participants felt that they had something to offer specifically in their area of specialty. Entering the meetings and contributing ideas with confidence was a way that the participants carried themselves in the professional realm, and according to literature on African women and leadership, such qualities as these are needed within women leaders (Cubillo & Brown, 2003).

Importance of Christian Faith

The current institution is a private, Christian institution in Kenya, so staff members must be professing Christians to work at the university. The participants took their faith and relationship seriously, with a couple of participants attributing their success to God. Through the way and extent to which participants discussed issues of faith, it seemed that the women attempt to live out their faith in all areas of life, family, marriage, and work. The manner in which the participants’ faith guided their conduct professionally and personally aligned with Thaver’s (2008) study on private higher education in Africa. Little research is conducted at private institutions (Thaver), so little research exists on how female administrators’ commitment to faith directs their role in decision-making personally and professionally. However, it is no surprise that a

commitment to faith was emphasized by the participants, considering that the current institution is faith-based.

For some of the participants, their faith also helped them guide how they viewed their role in society in relation to men. Several participants mentioned the man being the head of the house and how having a supportive husband affected their professional aspirations. Arnfred and Afrikainstituet (2004) state that “in many parts of Africa, Christianity is no longer just determining the ways in which gender relations are perceived from the outside; Christianity is also influencing the ways people see themselves, their past and present” (p. 251). The participants’ responses reflect a trend occurring throughout not only Kenya, but Africa, when it comes to faith.

Limitations

No research is without some sort of limitation and with this particular study, it is important to note a couple specific issues. The first limitation is low external validity. The study only focused on the experiences of women administrators at one private institution in Kenya; therefore, emerging themes may not represent the entire population of Kenyan women administrators working in private and public sectors or women in other international settings. However, many of the participants have studied or worked in other organizations and institutions apart from the studied university and spoke from a wider variety of experiences.

Another limitation to this study is the sample size. Although almost all eligible participants joined in the research, the sample is not representative of female administrators in general across the current institution. However, the management board setting was chosen out of convenience and accessibility during the specific time. The

results, therefore, do not necessarily represent the experiences of female administrators throughout the institution.

The limitations do not make the conducted research any less valuable in relation to telling the stories of the female administrators. The voices of those serving in management, especially within private education, are ones to be considered as wise. Much can be learned through their experiences of balancing multiple roles and growing in their career. Therefore, as the participants' stories portray the positive aspects and the tough times of being a female administrator, future research can continue to bring in more perspective on the experiences of Kenyan women within higher education management.

Implications for Practitioners

As women in higher education, in general, it is important to acknowledge cultural biases that may hinder or create obstacles in promotion in higher education. This study should serve as encouragement to women working within higher education. The stories of the women speak to obstacles they have faced, but their stories also demonstrate perseverance and strength in balancing societal expectations and a professional career. Although this research speaks to women particularly at the current institution, women worldwide can relate to their stories in some fashion according to previous research.

However, this research does not solely benefit women. Since women lack a representation internationally in higher education administration, it is important to understand possible factors that affect their participation as well as better comprehend the experiences of women in those roles. Burn (2005) states, "The global study of women is rich and rewarding because it requires that we learn about different customs, religions,

and forms of government and that we imagine what it would be like to be a woman in another culture” (p.6). Through research, greater awareness of different cultures is acknowledged.

The study of women in higher education is not a new trend, but there exists a lack of information on women in administrative roles at private institutions in Kenya, as well in other places. In the process of globally engaging our community, a vital element is educating individuals on issues affecting higher education as a whole across cultures. Pickert (1992) says, “One widely embraced goal is to produce graduates who not only are aware of the interconnections among regions of the world, but are willing to consider national perspectives other than their own” (p. 1). Studying the bias in other cultures can help reveal issues that may possibly exist within our own culture.

This qualitative study also benefits higher education institutions in Kenya, particularly those within the private sector. The information collected could help the university officials recognize possible cultural barriers surrounding women in the institution. Information may also reflect positive attributes of the institutional community that promote educational attainment and higher achievement of women. Through means of this study, men serving on the management board may gain better understanding of their female colleagues.

The current institution is a Christian institution and thus has a Christian mission to which the university adheres and upon which policies are based. This study seeks to understand a sector of African private higher education better through discussing culture with women. For individuals pondering the possibility of working internationally, especially in Kenya, this study could provide an idea of possible cultural issues to

consider. More in-depth research will need to be conducted in order to expand ideas on a larger scale.

Numerous studies have laid groundwork in the study of women administrators within higher education management. Not many look specifically at private higher education or faith-based institutions within Kenya. To gain more of an understanding of the experiences of Kenyan female administrators, more research should be conducted utilizing a larger sample of the population. A study should look at gathering data by interviewing women in multiple institutions for comparison. A more in-depth analysis could compare the experiences of female managers at public and private sectors of education, not only in Kenya but across East Africa. It also would be interesting to study how faith affects their professional career on a larger scale.

Conclusion

The research revealed that women working at a private university in Kenya experienced the same difficulties as professional women at public universities reported in other studies. Participants discussed their pursuit of higher education, the cultural expectation to be a good Kenyan woman and a good employer, the importance of faith to their success, and how much their personality plays a role in how they balance expectations. Although balancing the demands of society, family responsibilities, and a career is a major undertaking, more women need to pursue leadership because of the valuable insight they offer. Understanding issues such as lack of female representation within higher education administration is a global phenomenon that needs to continue to be researched in order to gain a better grasp of the experiences of female leadership.

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APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT

Worldwide women are underrepresented in higher education. Currently, there are increasing trends of female enrollment, but there still lacks female participation in administration compared to men. Little research exists expressing the experiences of women especially working in private higher education management. Therefore, there are many benefits to conducting this research.

This study is being conducted to better understand the experiences of female administrators working at a Kenyan private, faith-based institution. Interviews involve answering questions centered on your participation on the management board and your experience as a female administrator working in higher education. Interviews will last approximately one hour.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You have the choice to withdraw from the study at any point. All responses will remain confidential. The interview will be audio recorded for the transcription and data analysis process. Only the principle investigator will have access to the recordings and the recordings will be kept in a locked container in a safe location.

Your involvement in the study does not affect your job, and although there is little emotional risk involved in participating in this study, materials will be provided if needed. Thank you for your time and participation in this research.

I, _____, consent to participate in this study. The study has been explained to me, and I understand that I may choose to withdraw at any point. I have been informed of any potential risks of the study and know that my responses will be kept completely confidential.

Signature of Participant

Date

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APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interviews will be conducted in order to better understand the experience of women on the management board at a Kenyan private institution. The interview will focus on what factors influence participation in administrative roles and how perceptions of women affect their roles in decision-making.

General Questions

Tell me a little bit about yourself:

- How many years have you been working in higher education?
- Where did you receive your education?
 - What did you study?
 - Why did you pursue this particular field?
 - What made you take part interest in your area of study?
- What was your experience like as a student?
- Growing up, did you ever think that you might go to university or work in university administration?

Position Specific

- How long have you served on the management board?
- What are your responsibilities serving on the board?
- What role do you play in the decision-making process for the university?
- Do you feel that your voice is heard in the decision-making process?
- What has been your experience has a female administrator and educator? Give examples.
 - What do you think has enabled you to succeed to this level?

- What has impacted you the most in your role on the management board and as an educator?
- In your current position, have you encountered any obstacles?

Previous Experience

According to research, several women who work at a private institution have previously worked in a public university.

- Have you worked at any other institutions other than Daystar?
- If yes, how does your experience here at Daystar compare to your experience there?

Social Expectations of Women

- Are there any social expectations of women?
- If yes, can you describe any constraints or social expectations of women in accordance to working in education?
- How do you manage your professional life with family and other outside responsibilities?
 - Are men contributing to the home more now than in the past?
- Are there any provisions within the university to help women professionally advance?

Final Question

- Is there anything else you think that I need to know about your experience or is there anything else that you would like to tell me in regards to your role professional life, social responsibilities, or your university?