

Social-Cultural Factors and Women's Participation in Higher Educational Leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia

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How to cite this article: Abdikarim, S., Otieno, D., Kariuki, D. (2024). Social-Cultural Factors and Women's Participation in Higher Educational Leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia. *Journal of Education*, 4(2), 35-47.

Abstract

Participation of women in leadership, particularly in higher education is an issue that attracts global attention from educational practitioners. The SDG 5 data shows that the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030. Women's representation in positions of power and decision-making remains below parity. Women's participation in government, research, and resource management remains far from equitable to that of men. It is with this background that this study sought to investigate the relationship between social-cultural factors and women's involvement in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia. The social feminist theory is employed to theoretically anchor the study. Pearson's correlational design was employed. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were used while Pearson correlational analysis was used to establish correlations. The findings revealed that social-cultural factors ($r = -0.631$, $p < 0.05$) had a negative and significant relationship with women's participation in higher educational leadership. The study concluded that social and cultural factors contribute significantly to the decrease in women's participation in higher educational leadership in Somalia. The study recommends that university management should discourage gender stereotyping when it comes to leadership by encouraging and training employees to adopt a universal leadership mindset.

Keywords: *Social-cultural factors, women's participation, higher educational leadership*

1.0 Introduction

Female contribution to educational administration is a matter that has received wide attention, both globally and locally. It has remained a hotly debated issue among scholars internationally and regionally (Gupton, 2009; Legesse-Bedanie, 2014; Murakami, Jean-Marie, Santamaría & Lopez, 2017). As far as the historical record goes, women from different parts of the world suffer from the label of "housewife". This labeling has largely been used to subjugate or underestimate women's capacity and chances of getting into positions in the corporate world or practicing senior managerial leadership. Nevertheless, as Freeman (2020) avers, in this era of modern civilization, technology, globalization, and related human rights, the number of women participating in leadership is increasing. The United Nations has given the matter of gender equality a prominent place in Sustainable Development Goal 5. However, the data available in most developing countries on female participation in leadership positions is insufficient.

Read and Kehm (2016) report in their study that females hardly hold top positions in higher education and universities, represented by 17% and 12% for vice-chancellor (VCs) positions in the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany Universities in 2013 respectively. However, Zippel, Ferree, and Zimmermann (2016) report that the Federal Government of Germany has introduced an equality plan aimed at increasing female participation in higher educational settings, particularly, in the universities.

As pointed out by UNESCO-IESALC (2021), most of the women across the world are not sufficiently provided with equal opportunities to participate in the leadership of the universities. In Greece and the UK, Mitroussi and Mitroussi (2009) noted that few women are involved in higher academic management roles. In China, evidence indicates that only 4.5% of the leaders in mainland universities in the country are female (Zhao & Jones, 2017). This could be attributed to the fact that China is a male-dominated country that is greatly influenced by Confucianism. This has resulted in little attention in China on women's participation in leadership particularly in Universities (Meng & Baker, 2018). In Turkey, Titrek, Bayrakci, and Gunes (2014) and Yıldırım, Seggie, Emil, and Şahin (2021) shared that there are some barriers to women's participation in leadership in universities that include their low levels of education, social and cultural issues, and gender roles including the child-rearing roles. Gender inequality in management is a major concern for many countries around the world, especially at the legislative and research levels (Bimrose et al., 2014).

In Africa, Adu-Oppong, Aikins, and Darko (2017) observed that in Ghana, there exist widespread disparities and inequalities between both sexes in the management of basic and higher education. In Ghana, women account for 9.5% and there are Universities in the country that have never had women holding Vice-Chancellor positions (Segkulu & Gyimah, 2016). This underrepresentation of the female gender is a matter of national concern. Adu-Oppong et al. (2017) go further and point out that currently, there is only one women Vice-Chancellor in Ghana in the University of Energy and Natural Resources. In South Africa, Mankayi and Cheteni (2021) shared that the process of selection, gender stereotypes, limited support, mentorship, and networking opportunities are some of the key challenges that ascertain women's inclusion in university leadership. As observed in the University World News by Datzberger (2018), there were only 3 women VCs in Uganda that had over 50 Universities in 2017. The article went further and pointed out that Makerere University as one of the biggest institutions of higher learning in the country only had one female principal. In the year 2020, there were only 4 women VCs in the 26 Universities in South Africa.

Somalia is an African country that is in the horn of Africa. The country has undergone decades of civil war that adversely affected the economy including the higher education system of the country. Currently, the country is working to recover from these events and thus women's leadership in senior academics cannot be underestimated in this endeavor. One of the significant challenges in Somalia is the low involvement of women in senior educational leadership. Mohamed and Ikinya (2013) attribute this trend to the social attributes of women like family roles and responsibilities, cultural as well as religious practices as well as the degree of economic empowerment of women. According to Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers (2017), social-cultural issues, lack of female role models, networking opportunities as well as organizational variables are some of the key determinants of women's contribution to leadership in higher education.

Although updated data on Somali education status is insufficient, the available statistics paint a grim picture. The Integrated Quranic Primary Schools (IQS) Alternative and Basic Education schools only enrolled 40% of Somali females, which provides context for gender concerns in

Somalia's educational system. According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) and Education Management Information System (EMIS) survey data, just 25% of girls in Somalia, aged 15 to 24, are literate compared to men 49.7% (2013–2014). Less than 20% of elementary instructors are women, which can be attributed to security issues and cultural views in favor of children's education. Parents are reportedly reluctant to send their daughters to school because there are more boys than girls. This translates to the underrepresentation of women that is experienced at the national level. With a gender gap (GG) of 6.1, Somalia's total school enrolment and attendance rates were extremely low. The same data source reveals that 14,362 (59.7%) of the 24,050 in primary school who were enrolled in the 2013–2014 academic year were boys. There were 1262 qualified both primary and secondary in total, 57 of whom were female teachers, and the remaining 10205 were male teachers. Additionally, UN Women in SDG 5 tracker data (2021) reports that the number of women in decision-making positions in Somalia is below 30% while there is overall insufficient data to track progress towards the realization of this goal. The research addresses the pervasive issue of limited female participation in predominantly male-dominated spheres, a widespread problem observed globally.

Women's engagement in educational leadership is impacted by various factors across socio-cultural, personal, and institutional realms. Recognizing these factors is crucial for fostering gender equality and establishing inclusive leadership environments within academic institutions. This research delves into the determinants of women's participation in educational leadership, centering on socio-cultural influences. Socio-cultural influences such as societal norms, stereotypes, and expectations concerning gender roles and leadership. Stereotypes often dictate perceptions of women's capabilities, potentially hindering their access to leadership positions. Gender norms influence how women's leadership skills are perceived, affecting their involvement in decision-making and strategic planning within educational settings.

1.1 Problem Statement

The research addresses limited female participation in male-dominated spheres as a global issue with deep-seated roots in cultural, educational, social, and economic factors across Africa. However, the specific dynamics of this issue in Somalia, particularly regarding women's restricted involvement in leadership roles within higher education, are underexplored.

Despite societal hesitance and the scarcity of educated women, a determined few actively pursue leadership roles within higher education in Somalia. However, the roles of women in these positions are significantly influenced by various cultural, social, and religious factors. The patriarchal structure of Somali culture acts as a significant barrier to women's active involvement in education, hindering their access to senior positions and leadership opportunities. Additionally, gender discrimination and societal perceptions reinforce the dominance of men in higher education leadership roles.

Given the limited exploration of this issue, it is crucial to investigate the correlations of women's participation in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia. Understanding the factors influencing women's involvement in leadership roles within higher education is essential for addressing gender disparities and promoting gender equity in academia. By shedding light on these dynamics and developing possible solutions, this study can contribute to enhancing women's representation and leadership opportunities by investigating the correlations of women's participation in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia.

1.2 Research Objective

To assess the relationship between social-cultural factors and women's involvement in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study was guided by social feminist theory. The fundamental assumption underpinning this viewpoint asserts that individuals of both genders have the same abilities to assume leadership positions. but the challenge is vested in the power structures including the policies and practices in the institution. The cultural factors perspective was addressed by (Smulders, 1998) which includes gender roles, stereotypes regarding the abilities of women in cultural dimensions, gender expectations as well as social construction of gender. These three viewpoints will be the foundation of the proposed study, which examined the correlates of women's participation in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia.

In most countries, theoretically, women have equal employment rights to males. In practice, however, they are usually underrepresented in management positions. Gender segregation of work is a major social problem for working women when Women's careers are kept apart from men's, and men and women are found in different positions within the work structure. The latter form of discriminatory workforce participation is known as vertical segregation.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Social-Cultural determinants of women's involvement in Educational Leadership

Higher education is fundamental to economic and social development. Higher education enhances not only human productivity but also national capacity and competitiveness by making knowledge and tools for expanding and diversifying knowledge accessible to everyone. Literacy boosts individual worker productivity and helps the economy grow, reduces inequality in income distribution, reduces poverty, improves social health, contributes to depopulation, and contributes to more culturally and politically conscious societies (Gobaw, 2017). Evidence from third-world countries suggests that women's education and socioeconomic progress show a strong connection, but women all over the world have one thing in common. They are marginalized in public and are still underestimated. Much of the literature from previous research shows why women are underrepresented at school leadership levels based on outdated ideas about what makes for effective leadership and what women should be.

A study by Segkulu and Gyimah (2016) examined female educational leaders in the metropolis of Tamale. A descriptive study was conducted in the 2013/2014 academic year. The main goal was to determine whether variables such as inadequate educational credentials, traditional beliefs, and cultural practices have an impact on women in urban educational institutions and to examine the factors that influence gender discrepancies in educational leadership within the service. As a result, not only were there more men than women in teaching positions in large cities, but male teachers were also more likely to perform professionally and academically than their female colleagues. As a result, more men than women are eligible for managerial positions. The problem is made worse by the people's cultural and traditional setting, which demotes women to a lower status in society. This is the contextual gap that this study seeks to address. The locale and its difference in respondents' characteristics provide another contextual gap that this study seeks to address.

In seminars for teachers, educational administrators, and the general public, Malik (2011) arranged workshops that focus on the value of higher education for women, the vital role

women can play in the development of their country, and an active educational campaign through symposiums. The study went on to claim that women face significant obstacles in society because of its male-dominated structure. However, only cultural, and institutional changes will be able to remove these obstacles that enable individuals to overcome them. The idea that the social order was constructed from the perspective of men fades away, giving women the opportunity to be accepted as leaders. This study seeks to explore the correlates of women's participation in educational leadership universities in Mogadishu, Somalia.

According to (Segkulu & Gyimah, 2016; Malik, 2011; Dipboye, 1995; Ondigi, 2011; Shakeshaft et al. 2007). The major finding of how social-cultural factors affect women's involvement in higher educational leadership is Women can actively lead and play a significant but limited role. Social expectations limit women's role in leadership. The study is contextually limited to female respondents. Role of cultural norms in women leadership. Previous studies have not addressed the role models in female participation in leadership.

In some Muslim-majority countries, women have made significant strides in higher education, both as students and faculty members. Women can be found in leadership positions such as university presidents, deans, and department heads. Countries like Malaysia, Turkey, and Indonesia, for example, have seen increased participation of women in higher education leadership.

Society Expectations of Women Involvement in Educational Leadership

The researchers (Dipboye, 1995; Ondigi, 2011; Shakeshaft et al., 2007) demonstrate that one of the reasons for women's minimal engagement in educational guidance is social expectations. These elements include gender socialization, societal beliefs and attitudes, the self-image of female leaders, and family and home life. The process of gender stereotyping starts at home and continues over time. The majority of females are reserved, well-behaved, shy, and less gregarious. Boys, on the other hand, are urged to be energetic, forceful, autonomous, and self-assured. Boys tend to feel powerful and girls feel powerless. Most women in the community do not possess the capacity to make decisions and cannot act as public leaders. Conversely, guys are trained into active roles and given the chance to make decisions or grow as leaders outside of the setting of the home (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Shakeshaft, 1989) This socialization process defines and shapes a person's personality, role in society, and sense of self. Role modeling as a socialization process affects how females are inducted into leadership roles in society. Previous studies have not addressed the part of role models in enhancing female participation in leadership. This is a gap that the current study seeks to fill by establishing the role of role modeling in female participation in leadership. Other studies were conducted with respondents from corporate organizations. This study will be conducted within Universities in Mogadishu. In other words, because of differing socialization, boys and girls have different responsibilities and expectations (Eccles, Jacobs & Harold, 1990).

The process of socializing entails primary instruction and role models and imitations of many parents and other adults. Different cultures use different accents in their communication with their sons and daughters. Helgeson (2020) points out that women are used to trusting. As many researchers have pointed out, socialization and stereotypes related to gender roles, women themselves, and other members of the community do not associate females with any type of authority (Shakeshaft, 1989). So, socialization and gender discrimination ultimately hindered the socialization of women.

2.2.2 Women's Participation in Leadership Roles in Higher Education Institutions

Many women, especially high school girls, often draw inspiration from women in positions of influence in all fields. Since the commitment to fairness between males and females was first recognized in the 1945 United Nations Charter, women's issues have taken on a new dimension, being treated differently by the United Nations and its specialized organizations. The promotion of women to managerial positions was recognized as one of the 12 major themes of the Beijing Platform for Action. Democratic governance requires women in positions of authority and decision-making. Studies of women's leadership styles have been conducted by writers including Hall, Smulyan, Curry, Reynold, Blackmore, and Sinclair (Massry-Herzallah & Arar, 2019). The studies have revealed that women who practice leadership are more democratic than their other counterparts. They act as role models that their peers can emulate. This study seeks correlations of women's participation in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia.

Women researchers around the world are re-conceptualizing what leadership means in the world of women. Many studies, such as those (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2008), have established that elevating women to educational administration is gaining currency in many countries. In Uganda, the emphasis has shifted focus to measuring a woman's career performance within a new framework. It measures the career performance of women alongside men. Research has also been conducted to explore the challenges women encounter in exercising management roles. According to Gaus (2011), these obstacles can be categorized into three categories: internal obstacles, external obstacles, and barrier-busting techniques. This study seeks to establish the obstacles that hinder women in their career progression.

Aspects of socialization, personality, aspirational level, and individual views and attitudes are examples of internal impediments. Personality and ambition are further factors. External barriers, on the other hand, include aspects such as gender role stereotypes, sexism, lack of professional preparation, and family responsibilities. Female role models are often seen as having the resilience to overcome these barriers and have a significant influence on young girls. This study seeks to confirm or refute some of the claims that have been made by previous studies in existing literature.

Nature of Female Mentorship

A mentor is a role model or someone whose characteristics are admirable (Gupton & Slick, 1996). Without suitable and adequate role models, there is a barrier to entry for women in education and development (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010). Some researchers (Irby & Brown, 1995) have emphasized its necessity. Role models provide standards and templates that can be copied or modified. This opinion suggests that the lack of suitable role models can lower the entry of aspiring women into management positions, especially in the academic sector. It is for this reason that the study seeks to explore how women role models inspire young leaders to positions of leadership through mentorship and other programs.

In the past, Somali culture contributed to lower levels of education among girls. They were encouraged to learn how to be good wives and mothers, and their uneducated mothers were role models. Recently, they have understood that education is important for both men and women, and because of that girls have had the opportunity to learn. However, society still believes the idea that girls' work is not necessary, instead, women should stay at home with their knowledge and prefer not to participate in leadership and management in the education field.

There are 30% of women participating in politics but still dominated by men, they do not allow women to have this ratio and want to reduce the percentage of women to less than 30%. Society discriminates against gender, moreover, it does not consider men and women equal. In terms of leadership positions in the management and leadership of universities in Somalia, Somali girls have no role models as only men are in charge of these places. This is an obstacle for young girls who do not identify with the men. Women want to get into management education and even manage other fields. Somalia has several universities, but most governing bodies are all male-dominated. There is no single university that has a female role in executive leadership positions.

The cultures of different societies around the world discourage or prevent women from taking on leadership roles in their societies. Women are considered inferior in Africa, where women are primarily responsible for being wives and mothers. Women are seen as inferior, like Somalia and other African countries where most African countries define women according to what they do for men. For example, society believes that a married woman's first duty is to support her husband's career aspirations. The woman is responsible for all household chores, including parenting and taking care of the whole family. An article of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Somalia in the education policy, Chapter 9, Article 9.1.4.11 states that gender equality must be achieved in all private and public education institutions and other government fields regarding the acceptance of disabled students as students and as staff.

The values and beliefs of these cultures don't seem to be conducive to giving women the chance to shine and realize their potential, taking on the family business on their own. Women themselves are dissatisfied with the culture of their family and society and do not see themselves as potential leaders capable of taking on leadership positions like men. The cultural impact of aspiration is reinforced by men. This is another important reason for the underrepresentation of women in management roles because fathers do not allow their daughters to dream of becoming leaders in the future.

Gender expectations

Local ties develop rapidly, as well as domestic obligations to spouses (Brown, 2004) identified family responsibilities as a barrier to participation in management. Shakshaft et al. (2007) explain that family and familial responsibilities often have more impact on women's career profiles. It is a challenge for women to balance professional work with family duties and responsibilities and this hampers their career progression (Grogan 1996; Gupton 1998; and Wynn, 2003) opined that the responsibility of the family is considered the woman's responsibility. The sociocultural traditions of most African cultures, including Ethiopia, tend to view women's social roles as simply activities that complement their primary roles. In Ethiopia, for example, women are involved in domestic and charitable activities (Kumilachew, 2022). These different roles force women to stay at home, with fewer opportunities for leadership and management positions.

Conversely, men tend to focus on one subject at a time, while women have more brain activity and well-developed language centers. Therefore, some stereotypes about the superiority of male and female leaders are not true. However, it would be wrong to assume that one gender is superior to the other in terms of leadership qualities or characteristics. Both men and women have what it takes to be an effective leader and can learn from each other to lead in a more balanced way. Although there is debate about the correlation between leadership and gender, the way women lead is increasingly under scrutiny. The “relatively consistent model” of a leader is considered a leadership style (Eagly & Schmidt, 2001). Research on female leadership

shows that women are more educated managers than men (Coleman, 2003); (Shakeshaft, 1993). A Greek study found that female school leaders value female leaders more than male leaders. They argue that women are more flexible, insightful, and inclusive leaders (Qiang et al., 2009). Some argue that women prefer effective leadership methods (Coleman, 2003). Women have the chance to interact with other leaders and take part in decision-making through networking opportunities. Yldrms, et al. (2021) claim that the case for women's leadership and decision-making is based on the understanding that every person has the right to take part in the choices that affect their lives. The principle of equal participation by men and women in decision-making is based on this right.

Arguments are made that women should participate equally with men since they are the ones who are most familiar with their circumstances and can thus effectively contribute to decision-making at all levels. Men and women have different needs, interests, and ambitions because of their unique positions and circumstances. Society as a whole suffers greatly when women's issues are not taken into consideration while making decisions.

According to Zhao and Jones (2017), women are dissatisfied with the low numbers of academic leaders and managers. Despite the state of gender-sensitive political frameworks, women's participation in managerial positions in university teaching is still low in terms of numerical equality. It has been shown that there is a need to emphasize the importance of women and their influence on non-numerical equality. The existence of women in institutions' leadership and management can act as a catalyst, motivating young women to take on more impactful roles in upper education, thereby alleviating continual gender inequalities (Zufiaurre, Pellejero Goni, & Weiner, 2010). This study dwelt on women's role in management positions largely in business-oriented organizations. The current study will focus on women and men in universities thus filling a contextual departure from the previous studies.

Sperandio and Kagoda (2008) found in their research that the underrepresentation of women in administration positions in academia was related to the existence of a patriarchal culture in academia and a work environment unfriendly to women. In accordance with these studies, institutions should improve their working environment for women to encourage them to pursue careers in academic leadership. Several actions can be taken; however, it begins with involving them in decision-making and pledging senior management, to help eliminate the employment's gender pay gap. Young women can advance by receiving networking, mentoring, and proactive leadership training.

In the historical context, Somali girls were initially deprived of educational opportunities, but following the attainment of independence, avenues for learning emerged. While progress allowed women to engage in employment and lower-level positions in private enterprises, contemporary Somali women now actively pursue education, employment, and managerial roles across diverse fields. However, despite these advancements, women face challenges in balancing family responsibilities, particularly childcare, without substantial support from extended family. Notwithstanding these obstacles, Somali women have managed to participate in educational management and leadership roles, although their representation remains insufficient. It is noteworthy that, within Somalia's Muslim-majority context, religious norms traditionally limit women from holding the presidential position. Although religious guidelines permit women to lead in other capacities, societal and cultural practices have extended this restriction to various spheres, including education. Consequently, women encounter obstacles in assuming leadership roles, both at the basic and higher education levels, within Somali society. According to (Massry-Herzallah & Arar, 2019; and Sperandio & Kagoda, 2008), the major finding of how female role models influence women's involvement in higher educational

leadership is that women practice more democratic leadership. The research gap women practice more democratic leadership and Controversies around the part played by role models Studies have not explicitly revealed how women practice role modeling in leadership.

3.0 Methodology

Pearson's correlational design was employed. The target population was deans, HoDs, directors, and lecturers, with a sample size of 146 participants, 6 deans, 4 directors 30 HoDs, and 106 faculty members from accessible universities in Mogadishu Somalia. Due to security challenges, the accessible population was limited. A representative sample was drawn using a census approach. Data was gathered using questionnaires for faculty members and interviews were conducted with the faculty deans. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages were used while Pearson correlational analysis was used to establish correlations.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Social-cultural factors and women's involvement in higher educational leadership

The study sought to determine the relationship between sociocultural factors and women's involvement in higher educational leadership in Mogadishu, Somalia. Using a five-point Like a scale, the respondents were asked to state their agreement or otherwise with statements on social-cultural factors. Descriptive outcomes are depicted in Table 1.

Table 1: Social-cultural factors

| Statement | SD | D | N | A | SA | Mean | Std dev |
|---|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|---------|
| Home-based gender stereotypes affect girls' perception of female leadership. | 9.3% | 4.1% | 14.4% | 61.9% | 10.3% | 3.6 | 1.0 |
| Gender discrimination is a challenge for working women aspiring to lead. | 9.3% | 17.5% | 9.3% | 50.5% | 13.4% | 3.4 | 1.2 |
| Society believes that good leaders have masculine features. | 3.1% | 7.2% | 27.8% | 45.4% | 16.5% | 3.7 | 0.9 |
| Values and cultural beliefs diminish women's chances to lead. | 0.0% | 16.5% | 20.6% | 42.3% | 20.6% | 3.7 | 1.0 |
| Gender bias is a key determinant of the low involvement of women in leadership in higher education. | 9.3% | 16.5% | 16.5% | 45.4% | 12.4% | 3.4 | 1.2 |

Results reveal that the majority of respondents agreed (72.2%) with the statement that home-based gender stereotypes affect girls' perception of female leadership (mean = 3.6). Results also indicate that 63.9% of respondents agreed that gender discrimination is a challenge for working women aspiring to lead (mean = 3.4). Further, results indicate that 61.9% of respondents agreed that society believes that good leaders have masculine features (mean = 3.7).

Additionally, findings show that 62.9% of respondents agreed that values and cultural beliefs diminish women's chances to lead (mean=3.7). Finally, 57.8% of respondents agreed that gender bias is a key determinant of the low involvement of women in leadership in higher education (mean=3.4). The implication is that social-cultural factors are hindrances to women's participation in higher educational leadership in Somalia. The findings concur with those of

Malik (2011) that women face significant obstacles in society because of its male-dominated structure.

Thematic analysis of Social-cultural Factors based on the Interview Guide

The respondents were asked to state their preferred gender as vice chancellor of the university. The respondents (5) stated male while the rest (3) stated female. This implies that the majority of deans and directors prefer males as vice chancellor compared to females.

The respondents were also asked whether the universities where they work currently have equal opportunity for both genders. The respondents (5) said yes while the rest (3) noted that there are no equal opportunities for both genders. Some of those who said yes observed that:

“The university has an equal opportunity policy. The hiring of lecturers is based on qualifications and skill” (R2)

“It's based on the knowledge and experience of the person, not his/her gender” (R4)

Further, some of those who refuted the claim noted that:

“The majority of applicants are male” (R3)

“There are more responsibilities for women than men at home. Like caring for the children” (R7)

These findings concur with Meza-Mejia et al. (2023) who noted that women exercise leadership in higher education in teaching, research, and management roles with unequal participation in each of them. They noted that women continue to make their way through universities, overcoming the gender stereotypes of sociocultural construction that replicate the social order in organizations, which has slowed their process of promotion to senior management roles or positions of greater responsibility in institutions of higher education. The findings also concurred with Cahyati, Hariri, and Karwan (2021) whose results showed that women in Indonesia, especially in tertiary institutions, still face obstacles in reaching top leadership positions, even though there is a growing recognition of gender equality. According to their findings, women are given the same opportunities as men to become leaders. Women do not report experiencing obstacles from institutions but rather from family responsibilities, a patriarchal culture, and a lack of support.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis results on the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

| | Women Participation | Social cultural factors |
|-------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Women Participation | Pearson Correlation 1 Sig. (2-tailed) | |
| Social cultural factors | Pearson Correlation -.631** Sig. (2-tailed) 0.000 | 0.000 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results indicate that there is a strong negative and significant relationship between social-cultural factors and women's participation in higher educational leadership ($r = -0.631$, $p < 0.05$). This implies that an increase in social and cultural factors is associated with a decrease in women's participation in higher educational leadership in Somalia. The findings are consistent with the work of Gobaw (2017) who concluded that women are underrepresented at school leadership levels based on outdated ideas about what makes for effective leadership and what

women should be. Similarly, results agree with Segkulu & Gyimah's (2016) assertion that the lack of women's participation is made worse by the people's cultural and traditional setting, which demotes women to a lower status in society. Moreover, studies such as Ondigi (2011); and Shakeshaft et al. (2007) observed that women can actively play significant but limited role.

5.0 Conclusion

The study's findings show that social-cultural factors have a significant and negative connection with women participating in higher educational leadership in Somalia. This implies that cultural aspects strongly contribute to reducing women's involvement in leadership within higher education in the country.

6.0 Recommendations

The university management is encouraged to create more opportunities for women to lead by assigning them positions and responsibilities.

The Ministry of Education is recommended to review policies aimed at strengthening equal opportunities for leadership in higher learning institutions.

The university management is encouraged to discourage gender stereotyping when it comes to leadership by encouraging and training the employees to adopt a universal leadership mindset.

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