DETERMINANTS OF CHOICE OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES AT THE MASTER’S LEVEL IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES) KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

AUGUST, 2018
DECLARATION

I confirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works- including the internet, the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family: to my late father Paul Kimeu Mwose who always had faith in me and encouraged me in my studies, to my mother Eugenia Wanjeru Mwose who was there for me during the highs and the lows of the thesis writing. To my sister Pauline Muthue McKeown who gave me all the support that I needed to complete the thesis and to my brother Abraham Mwose Kimeu who was there to guide me from the start up till the end of this thesis patiently assisting me as proof reader until I completed.
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May God Bless you all abundantly.
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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BPFA  Beijing Platform for Action
EFA   Education for All
FAWE  Forum for African Women Educationalists
GAD   Gender and Development
ILO   International Labour Organization
KU    Kenyatta University
MDGs  Millennium Development Goals
NGO   Non-Governmental Organization
O.I   Oral Indication
WAD   Women and Development
WID   Women in Development
UN    United Nations
UNDP  United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children’s Fund
UON   University of Nairobi
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Choice
Decision made to pursue gender and development studies as a subject in higher education. In this study, students who were enrolled in the Master’s programme in Gender and Development Studies were considered to have made a choice.

Culture
Refers to a way of thinking and behaviour shared by a substantial group of people in order to cope with the requirements of the African environment.

Gender equality
Refers to equal valuing of women and men, boys and girls by the society of their similarities and differences so that they can enjoy the benefits of development including; equal access to and control of opportunities and resources such as in higher education.

Gender and development studies
An interdisciplinary scholarly discipline which interrogates the various ways that masculinity and femininity influence patterns of human life in relation to the development process.

Gender responsiveness
This refers to the ability of a programme in an institution to take into account the social relations of women and men, as well as differences in their needs in their needs in any undertaking or decision.
Perceptions

Entails how we form impressions of other people, the way we organize those impressions and the reasons behind the drawn conclusions about the people and events in our environment.

Socio-cultural factors

This refers to elements such as relational networks, ideologies, attitudes and activity patterns that form part of the structure of students’ environment in higher education.
This study sought to establish the determinants of choice of the master’s programme in gender and development studies in Nairobi County. Specifically, it focused on the factors influencing the subject choice of gender and development studies and gender related courses in selected universities in Nairobi County. The study was prompted by the lack of consideration of gender social relations when students are making subject choices. This occurs when there is underrepresentation of either male or female students in a particular career choice. Consequently, there is lack of accommodation of both perspectives in classes and career sectors which negates the achievement of goals envisioned in Article 27 of the Kenyan Constitution which states that women and men have the right to equal treatment including the right to equal opportunities in political, cultural and social spheres. The purpose of the study was to determine the factors that explain the choice of gender and development studies across selected universities in Nairobi County. The study objectives were: to identify the socio-cultural factors that influence students’ choice, to investigate the effect of perceptions on choice, to identify the constraints that students face as they make their choice and to suggest ways in which enrolment interventions can be made more gender aware. The rational choice theory was used to show how both male and female students make their career choices and how choice making is an individual process which emerges as rational, when the chosen alternative is primarily based on the student’s individual preferences. The study employed a case study design. Besides, purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents for the study. Interview guides and open ended questionnaires were the main data collection instruments for the research whereby both qualitative and quantitative data was generated. Qualitative data was analysed by use of themes and the coding technique while frequencies and percentages were used in the analysis of quantitative data. The study established that subject choice is influenced by a myriad of factors including, influence from peers, parents and societal opinions. Also reference groups in the society and environmental stimuli significantly contribute to subject choice. Lack of gender awareness featured primarily when the students did not feel suited to the choice they had made due to factors such as family advice and their educational background constraints. Individual factors such as gender roles and responsibilities as well as personal interests did not feature as factors that greatly influence gender unresponsiveness. Finally, career counselling and mentorship programmes for the students, seminars, outreach and sensitization programmes play a great role in subject choice and resolving the lack of gender awareness before it occurs in career choice. The study recommends that universities should initiate career education sessions that address the lack of gender awareness through student sensitization so that they make subject choices where they can actualize their potential.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Career choices in education are made every day. Subsequently, the way these choices are made and implemented depends on the attitudes and perceptions of the society and their decision makers. Equally, an individual’s education helps to form these attitudes and priorities during the career choice process. An educational career choice is important because of its potential to promote social change and act as defender of prevailing norms and values (Ridgeway & Erickson, 2000). Career choice not only concerns institutions one chooses to attend but also a broad range of forces influencing the development of individuals, their educational experience and their later working life (Kabeer, 2005).

According to Ampofo et al. (2004), gender and development studies as a career choice ensures that education has a positive impact on the status and roles women and it integrates men into the gender discourse. Ampofo et al. add that gender and development studies has the potential to challenge stereotypes about male and female roles, offers alternative ideas that to equip both women and men to pursue a range of possibilities. Thus as a career choice in this area of study is associated with power and control just like gender which is viewed as a system of challenging patriarchy.

This system of patriarchy has been demonstrated in the career choices that women have made since 1990s. It is noted that women’s employment confines them to low level pay and responsibility. They include: work in the health sector, education and social services, banking and insurance, hotel and catering, the retail trade and
personal services such as hairdressing and domestic work. Typically, women make up the majority of sales staff, cleaners, kitchen assistants, nursing auxiliaries, secretaries and primary-school teachers. Worse still, most service jobs are part time, casual, temporary or ‘informal’ than jobs in other sectors, thus posing a great disadvantage to women (ILO, 2016).

In some work situations women dominate certain career choices that are characterized by low level skill, responsibility and pay leads to job segregation. This implies that the career choices that women and men make differ leading to segregation and concentration, often leading to women overrepresentation in a limited number of careers (ILO, 2014). Crucial to note in the gender system is the impact of women’s career choices, lack of opportunities in both formal and informal careers that increases competition between them and keeps wages low.

There are two types of career based segregation that women face when they make their career choices; the first is horizontal segregation where they find themselves in career clusters that are dominated by women such as the services sector, especially in the personal and caring services. Secondly, is vertical segregation where a career choice has both women and men; however, women are assigned less responsibility which is less secure leading to low pay. In fact, even when the career is predominantly female, men are still found in the managerial positions (ILO, 2016).

Gender and development studies as a career choice is crucial as it seeks to examine the issues of structural disparities of the gender system that influence women and men when making their career choices. Of importance to note is that women do not enter
the labour market be it formal or informal on the same basis as men, nor do they operate within it on equal terms (ILO, 2016).

The socio-cultural roles allotted to women and men limit women’s access to means of production ranging from credit to training opportunities. These result in crowding of women in a limited number of careers and markets (ILO, 2014).

Gender and development studies has revealed that the low wages and prices that women command and the pressure on their time from their unpaid domestic activities, means that women everywhere work longer hours than men for considerably less income and with less control over the decision-making processes that affect their lives and careers (ILO, 2016). Gender and development studies is thus of importance as it reveals career choice dynamics and their implications on both women and men.

Gender studies emerged as an academic discipline within social sciences as a result of the UN Women’s Conferences that sought to establish an approach that integrates men and women, their needs and concerns in the development process. Former development approaches such as the Women in Development approach (WID) prevalent in the 1990’s exclusively focused on women without taking into account how their lives were shaped by their relations with men (Kabeer, 2005). Globally gender studies seek to address the structural relations of power and inequality in a wide range of political, economic, social and cultural spheres in which equality needs to be realized (Ridgeway & Erickson, 2000).

Gender studies in higher education seeks to draw out interconnections of relationships associated with power and meaning in different sites between men and women, boys and girls. According to Unterhalter (2012), gender studies explore how universities
and processes of learning operate to reproduce and transform inequalities. This is important because among others it highlights the process of choice whereby there are subjects defined as either those which women or men are “good” at or those which they are not. Gender studies in higher education is therefore, an academic discipline aimed at naming and changing the relationships of inequality that set the conditions and processes that allow people to critically view their wellbeing. The term gender studies flourished in the mid-1980s in research and publications which substituted the word ‘gender’ rather than ‘women’ as their area of focus (UNDP, 2000).

On the other hand, the use of the term gender as developed in America and Western Europe led to the increased interest in the study of masculinity and the development of men’s studies alongside women’s studies (Kabeer, 2005). This was due to the perception that there was little direct focus on the social construction of ‘men’. Moreover, gender studies in higher education examine ideas like ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ and the processes involved in the reproduction of gender relations (ILO, 2017). The ILO (2017) additionally notes that these processes play a crucial role in the creation and reproduction of gender differences and that to understand them; we have to look at the experiences of students themselves and the meanings they give to the choice on whether to study gender studies. The goals of gender studies include the balancing of the curriculum by providing a place for both male and female perspectives and advocating for social change (World Bank, 2013).

Women who have attained higher education are not deemed to be successful by virtue of having done so, on the contrary, the choices they make on what to study is viewed to exclude and marginalize them, pushing them further into ‘female’ jobs or marriage and family. This notwithstanding, university system often prepares men to take up
roles of power in the man-centered society than it does to women (Ellis, Cutura et al. 2007).

In African national governments owing to the implementation of gender policies, both long and short term programmes in gender studies are offered in many universities (National Policy on Gender and Development, 2000). The gender policies’ main objectives are to build capacity by creating a pool of qualified personnel to serve as researchers in gender-focused studies or as trainers and practitioners to work with various sectors and NGOs.

Further, they are supposed to be change agents either through generating gender-disaggregated information if they are researchers or train others and act as good role models by enhancing gender sensitive practices (Mama, 2003). A case in point is Makerere University which offers gender studies at the degree level. Its mission is to bring change in the socialization of men and women in Uganda by enhancing understanding their lives and encouraging development of policies and programmes that are sensitive to the fact that women’s and men’s lives are structured differently (Ibid. 2003).

Gender studies have also been introduced at the Gender Studies Institute in Cape Town University in South Africa. They promote eradication of patriarchal domination tendencies, instead men and women are respected as equals and socio-economic justice is a reality for all. In other cases, specific courses on gender have been introduced or a gender perspective adopted in the mainstream curricula at African universities. At the University of Dar-es-Salam for instance, gender study courses have been introduced in the Institute of Development Studies and Sociology
while a gender perspective has been adopted in some courses in the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences, Law and Education. Such integration has been beneficial in the articulation of gender issues and has raised awareness on the significance of gender issues for both staff and students (Cooksey, Levey et al. 2001).

Gender and development studies in Kenya were started as an effort to situate gender equality issues at the center of policy decisions and they entail bringing out the perceptions, experience and knowledge of women as well as men to bear on the development agenda (National Policy on Gender and Development, 2000). Gender and development studies examine the status and conditions of women and men in developing economies.

Kenya has made efforts to promote gender equality in higher education as shown by various policy documents such as the Kenyan Constitution (2010); article 27 that states “women and men have the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres”. International agreements also underscore the importance of achieving gender equality in education such as the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), the Dakar Education for All (EFA) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

According to Onsongo (2006), universities are expected to play a role in leadership and transformation of the society with regard to gender relations by promoting women’s and men’s equal inclusion in their programmes. These goals adhere to one of the Gender and Development approach (GAD) key propositions, that a focus on women alone is inadequate in seeking to understand the opportunities available for women so as to bring about equality or change (Kabeer, 2005). Gender and
development studies goals and objectives in Kenya are directed by the National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and Sessional Paper no.2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development which among others seek to address two key priority areas relevant to this study.

First is the removal of impediments to equal access of economic employment opportunities for men and women and second, the elimination of gender disparities in education and training to enhance and sustain gender parity in access,

The contemporary gender approach in development requires in its process that gender is mainstreamed. This involves ensuring that attention to gender equality pervades all interventions such as gender and development studies programmes at the university (UNDP, 2000). Gender imbalances or unresponsiveness in career choice are deemed to be an impediment to inclusivity and representation of students, as both women and men are not participating and benefiting equally from the developmental policies put in place to ensure their equal access to gender and development studies.

This study therefore examines selected universities in Nairobi County that offer gender and development studies at the master’s level. Thus the study brought to the core, socio-cultural factors, perceptions and constraints facing master’s students.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Nairobi County, almost all public and some private universities have sought to offer gender related courses. This is in response to international conventions (SDGs) and treaties (CEDAW) as well as national gender policies(National Policy on Gender and Development (2000) and Sessional Paper no.2 of 2006 on Gender Equality and Development) that aim to entrench gender equality and equity in higher education.
These policies are meant to promote the equal inclusion and participation of men and women in careers.

While making subject choices it has been noted that even if men and women have the same opportunities availed to them, several factors condition their choices in different ways. This leads to gender imbalance in terms of gender representation despite interventions by the universities such as advertisements for the courses that are not gender specific and are aimed at ensuring gender inclusivity. Subsequently, some subjects end up being male or female dominated leading to a perception that such courses are suited for or are meant for a specific gender.

Even though subject choices made by both women and men are personal, patterns emerge as some courses are dominated by a specific gender leading to gender disparities in terms of gender representation.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to identify the socio-cultural factors or norms that influence choice of gender and development studies at the masters’ level, investigate the effect of perceptions concerning choice, identify constraints faced in choice-making and make suggestions that will address gender responsiveness in enrolment interventions in the gender and development studies departments.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The objectives of the study were:

1) To identify the socio-cultural factors that influence master’s student’s choice to study gender and development studies at the master’s level.

2) To investigate the effects of student’s perceptions on master’s choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level.
3) To identify constraints facing master’s students as they make their choices to study gender and development studies at the master’s level.

4) To suggest ways in which gender and development studies enrolment interventions at the master’s level in Nairobi County can be made more gender aware.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1) What are the socio-cultural factors that influence student’s choice to study gender and development studies at the master’s level?

2) What are the effects of student’s perceptions on choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level?

3) What constraints do master’s students face while making the choice to study gender and development studies?

4) How can gender and development studies enrolment interventions at the master's level be made more gender aware?

1.5 Significance and Justification of the Study

There have been various studies in Kenyan higher education that focus on gender imbalances in terms of undergraduate enrolment (Mwiria (2007), Sifuna & Chege (2006), Karani (1995), Groenewegen & Bennaars (1995), Kanake (1997), Bunyi (2006) & Kamau (2004), yet relatively few studies address determinants of choice of master’s programme particularly in gender and development studies. This study filled this gap by focusing on African universities; as career choice is significant for the development discourse as this may serve as an indicator of the status, participation and influence of women and men vis-à-vis cultural expectations.
Additional significance in the study was the data it produced that could be used as a guideline by policy makers. This could lead to understanding and formulating friendly and appropriate policies to assist students enrolling for gender and development studies. Besides, this research can benefit universities in terms of knowledge contribution because it sought to highlight similarities and differences in the educational experience of women and men thus adding a qualitative aspect that needs to be addressed in any meaningful developmental discourse.

This study is justified as it seeks to place choice in higher education in the global gender and development discourse as is demonstrated in various developmental blueprints such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Kenya’s Vision 2030 which emphasize the need for gender equal participation in the development field and in gender and development studies which should therefore reflect such equality.

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was carried out in selected universities in Nairobi County that offered gender and development studies at the master’s level. Specifically, it targeted master’s students, in Nairobi County taking gender and development studies. Further, the study focused on the 2013/2014 -2014/2015 intakes of master’s students in selected gender and development studies departments in Nairobi County. The selected universities were chosen on the basis that they offered gender and development studies at the master’s level. The 2013/2014 -2014/2015 intakes were chosen as they allowed for a diverse sample which was expected to make the study more representative and valid as the time frame is larger.
The County of Nairobi was chosen primarily because it is the location where most universities offering gender and development studies were based. Nairobi County is also a cosmopolitan hub that hosts a large number of local and international NGO’s. The presence of these NGO’s in Nairobi County creates the need for courses to train professionals to fill the vacancies in areas of gender and development.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to the study that is organized thematically. The sub themes included are: the socio-cultural factors that influence students’ choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level, the effects of perceptions on students’ choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level and the constraints that students face as they make the choice to study gender and development studies at the master’s level. Also presented are suggestions that are employed to make gender and development studies interventions at the master’s level more gender responsive. In addition, the chapter presents the theoretical framework based on the rational choice theory and the conceptual framework on the determinants of gender and development studies as a choice for masters’ students in Nairobi County.

2.2 Socio-cultural Factors that Influence Student’s Choice of Gender and Development Studies at the Master’s Level

Culture is seen as a collection of practices by which meaningfulness develops within a group and provides social interpretation framework for its members (Maatta & Lyckhage, 2011). Culture is one of the aspects that provides a backdrop to choices that masters’ students make in choosing gender and development studies and it involves a complex interaction between biological characteristics, social, cultural, political, ideological and economic structures that influence equality between men and women. Society plays a role also in determining which course students pick with the concept of social gender which is based on non-biological differences between
men and women and social structuring of the roles undertaken as well as relationships.

Career choices can be seen as a series of decisions based on a comparison of costs and benefits. These costs and benefits may differ by gender, potentially providing a different set of incentives for men and women. The gender specific comparisons of costs and benefits serve as the theoretical underpinning of most research on the determinants of gender studies in higher education (Morrison et al, 2007).

When it comes to research in social psychology, the focus narrows to the individual and psychological determinants to explain the gender gap between women and men when they are making career choices (Ridgeway, 2006). From a macro-level perspective, gendered patterns in career choice have been attributed socio-cultural determinants such as the socialization of women and men (Inglehart & Wezel, 2005). In explaining gender roles and gendered patterns of academic choice such as in gender and development studies, socialization theory has argued that the roles of men and women in societies are the result of complex inter-actions between various social-cultural factors (Pajares, 2005)

The socialization theory above was supposed to reduce the inequalities between men and women within the education system and the labour market owing were thought to the progression of women’s rights over time and the implementation of various international and local policies (Baker & LeTendre, 2005). Most sociologists, however, have now abandoned this idea, as recent studies have shown that increases in gender equality have not led to gender parity in career choices and occupations
such as gender and development studies and related professions (Charles & Bradley, 2009).

In the African tertiary education, choice as to which degree to study consists of access, cultural perceptions of the roles which women are expected to fill, the extent to which women participate in formal education and the type of education accessed. Gender is one the determinants that play a role in social relations and it has been noted that in higher education women are underrepresented which has roots in the lower levels of the schooling system (Klasen, 2002). When assessing gender and choice, policy implications such as institutional reforms to embrace for example a concept such as gender mainstreaming in the university policies comes to the fore. Although Ibid. (2002) notes that in Africa gender as a determinant plays a role in choice-making, it does not identify key components in choice making that maintain or change the gender system. This study sought to identify these key components such as beliefs in socio-cultural contexts that influence masters’ students’ choice-making process.

Institutional reforms in such a perspective cannot be seen solely in terms of ways of facilitating access to gender and development studies for relatively ‘marginalized’ groups such as women or conversely restricting access for other categories such as men. Often when it comes to the gender imbalance in choice-making in courses like engineering in higher education in Africa, it is assumed that during choice-making the playing field is even or leveled. The choice whether to take gender and development studies therefore is not only about access or about mainstreaming but also about engendering the whole socio-political and economic processes and institutions (Assie-Lumumba, 2006). What does not emerge from Ibid. (2006) is that institutions play a key role in the activation of gender beliefs in norms and structures...
of the university. Choice making is therefore not only influenced by the field being uneven but also by having gender beliefs being institutionalized in norms (Klasen, 2002). This study sought to identify how gender beliefs as enforced by socially advantaged actors in an educational context, operated by playing a role in the choice making process for masters’ students.

2.3 Effects of Student’s Perceptions on Choice of Gender and Development Studies at the Master’s Level

Student’s perceptions on gender and development studies are influenced by four primary factors: first, environmental stimuli such as advertising and books, second, education while third are reference groups and lastly are personal characteristics (Fiske et al., 2002). These intermix creates a person’s self-perception that in turn influences subject choice. From childhood, students amass conceptual structures (schemata) which later serve as tools that shape their perceptions and influence their attitudes. The schema structures perceptions and attitudes, by filtering out irrelevancies and allowing sense to be made of partial information. As new experiences are gained, schemata are modified and perceptions of the students reflect what is recognized in the surrounding world (Betz, 2004).

Perceptions about particular career choices are shaped early in life and it has been noted that children appear to be more stereotyped in their beliefs than older persons (Bandura et al., 2001). Programme presentation, materials and career guidance may also shape the perceptions about gender and development studies by reinforcing sex role stereotypical behaviour by for example over representing female interests and concerns in textbooks (Fiske et al., 2002).
Various authors such as Amundson(2005), Creed et al., (2004) & Gainor(2006) advance the theory of subject choice that examines both the individual perception and social environmental influences on subject choice. Betz (2004) emphasizes the importance of gender roles and prestige in the subject choice process. Ibid (2004) emphasizes that the subject choices people tend to make reflect their desire to implement their preferred self-concepts and to have their choices remain congruent with their sense of self. In addition, a person’s satisfaction with their career choice depends on a sense of congruence between a sense of self and the career itself, thus men who choose gender and development studies may sacrifice high prestige within a career or within their career to implement their self-concept.

Chen (2005) concurred with the identified personal characteristics linked to self-concept that could be identified with subject choice and agreed that people knowing their interests and abilities would actively search out an appropriate subject choice. This self-concept can be applied to men who choose to enter gender- stereotyped nontraditional subject choices. Such men who choose gender and development studies may find a strong congruence between their personality and specific course choice areas that they are able to override gender-stereotypes shaped by attitudes and perceptions associated with nontraditional subject choices (Jackson, Wright & Perrone-Mc Govern, 2010). This study sought to identify which perceptions influence both men and women’s subject choice in gender and development studies and their effects.

When applying the principle of compromise to nontraditional subject choice, such as whether to take gender and development studies, gender role attitudes and perceptions appear to be highly influential. Men who choose gender and development studies
appear to hold less traditional gender role attitudes than men who choose traditional careers (Ibid. 2010). What does not emerge from Ibid. (2010) is what attitudes motivate these men who enter into non-traditional careers such as gender and development studies. This study sought to find out what perceptions motivate male and female students to choose gender and development studies.

2.4 Constraints Faced when Making a Choice in Gender and Development Studies at the Master’s Level

Basic subject choice constraints are presented as being the same for men and women, but they make different choices because structural opportunities are different. Hakim (2006) argue that even when women make the required changes in sex-role beliefs and behaviours and expect to include active participation in both occupational and family roles, the problem of societal structures still arises. Issues such as sex discrimination and the structures of opportunities may alter the patterns of women’s subject choice from that of men (Ibid. 2006). Therefore, we need not only consider family and competing demands which are external to subject choice as constraints, but also account for phenomena within the university which may distinguish men from women. Phenomena within the university that may provide constraints to women’s subject choice in higher education includes: institutional patterns and norms about women’s “place” in gender and development studies, systematic undervaluation of women’s contributions to scholarship, ghettoization of gender and development studies within universities and systematically sexist processes of sponsorship in higher education (Betz, 2007).

Adult women studies in the United States have revealed the impact of gendered identities in creating constraints on subject choice, the distinctively “feminine”
orientations that women hold prior entering higher education affect gender relationships and interpretations in educational settings (Jackson, Wright & Perrone-Mc Govern, 2010). When it comes to choosing a subject, women do not simply absorb the usual pattern of subject choice rather they draw selectively from their personal experiences transforming their roles to fit into preexisting core values of their subject choice (Ibid. 2010). Whereas women who choose to enter male-dominated occupations are viewed as making a positive career move that offers increased opportunities for pay, advancement and status, the same does not apply for men who enter female-dominated or nontraditional occupations (Ibid. 2010).

Men who enter traditionally female occupations face lower status and lower financial rewards and they may find their abilities, masculinity and even sexual orientation questioned (Lease, 2003). With male students, Chen (2005) indicates that constraints in subject choice may emerge from their gender self-concept which interacts with one’s understanding about the subject choice. Thus, men who have less constricted ideas about their own gender and gender-related characteristics of subject choice would be more willing to choose gender and development studies than would men with more strongly held traditional gender-related beliefs. Differences in gender role beliefs and attitudes may then influence a man’s openness to pursue gender and development studies. This study sought to investigate the extent to which gender role beliefs acted as a constraint for both male and female students when they chose gender and development studies at the master’s level in Nairobi County.

There is evidence from Lease (2003) that homophobia and traditional masculinity ideology (antifemininity and toughness) can act as subject choice constraint for male students. Evidently, it has also been noted that men choosing fields such as gender
and development studies are not impacted by the above constraints and have reported lower masculinity and higher androgyny scores. For male students the result of these traditional attitudes, beliefs, behaviours and the societal pressure to conform while choosing subject can lead to high levels of internal conflict and conflict with others.

Such conflict occurs when “rigid, sexist or restricted gender roles learnt during socialization, result in personal restriction, devaluation or violation of others or self” (O’Neil, 2005). What Ibid. (2005) does not address are the various cultural contexts from which these traditional attitudes, beliefs, behaviours arise. Culture, tradition and norms are intertwined therefore understanding the cultural underpinnings of the respondents can give a clearer picture of the nature of the conflict. This study assessed African gender role beliefs and how the conflict or role strain affected students’ choice on whether to study gender and development studies at the master’s level in Nairobi County.

2.5 Suggestions on how to Introduce Gender Responsive Interventions

There are various strategies that can be used to introduce gender responsive interventions to achieve gender balance in the students enrolling for gender and development studies at Nairobi County. At the core of these strategies is the gender role socialization process that begins at childhood and is very influential in the types of subject choice that the students become interested in and eventually pursue (Jacobs, Chhin & Bleeker, 2006). Parental gender typed expectations also play a role in subject choice of their children and a study found that students’ career achievements were related to parental expectations of a subject choice (Jacobs, Chhin&Bleeker,2006). One strategy that achieves gender balance is emphasizing to students the advantages they are to experience by choosing gender and development studies. In addition,
students can be provided with role models in upper management so as to minimize the effects of going against the gender stereotypes (Lupton, 2006).

To overcome the gender stereotyping process that may be responsible for gender imbalances in students’ enrolment, the department may rely on the interdisciplinary nature of gender and development studies and target potential undergraduate students in other departments by offering courses or units on gender and development. Andrews and Ridenour (2006) assess beliefs and attitudes about gender issues of education among graduate students who were enrolled in a cultural diversity course. They found out that throughout the course students had become more aware of gender stereotyping and the negative effects of this process and they tended to adopt more fair gender practices in the classroom and became more aware of gender discrimination and power differences that were based on gender. Thus a decrease in traditional gender stereotypes can lead to a greater acceptance on the part of students who choose gender and development studies thereby making it easier for students to choose this subject choice (Colley & Comber, 2003, Forgasz, Leder & Klosterman, 2004).

Programmes advocating for knowledge and awareness on gender stereotyping appear to decrease the process of gender stereotyping and make it easier for students to pursue subject choices such as gender and development studies (Andrews & Ridenour, 2006). Apart from gender role socialization and gender stereotypes, students may also experience role strain which occurs when fulfilling one role which conflicts with another role. Role strain can be problematic for students who choose non-traditional subject choices such as gender and development studies (Simpson, 2005). Chen (2005) concurs that gender is part of the self-concept that is least likely to be violated.
Therefore students who choose non-traditional subject choices such as gender and development may experience incongruence between their subject choice and the socially prescribed norms for subject choice (Simpson, 2005).

Moreover, students who choose non-traditional subject choices often experience role strain that can result in embarrassment, discomfort, shame, defensiveness and anxiety (Simpson, 2005). Shelton (2006) states that one possible way to ameliorate this experience of role strain is to engage in role-sharing strategies, such as sharing responsibility for child care and housework and delegating traditional responsibilities. These strategies are effective as they allow individuals to improve both on educational work and family roles while reducing role conflict. In addition, it is important to help students develop self-awareness and insights to the reasons they are attracted to certain careers. The gender and development studies departments can also assist students by offering development skills that will help to make them more marketable and employable in areas that have been traditionally occupied by the opposite sex (Russell, 2005). It is also recommended for gender and development departments to help students discover techniques that will assist them in building and enhancing their capacity within the field (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk, 2000).

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the rational choice theory which was formulated John H. Goldthorpe in 1996, whichposits that individual choice is the foundation for action and inaction (Goldthorpe, 1996). The theory explores how individuals react to and seek to structure the varying constraints on actions that occur, whether they are sets of institutions, patterns of group interaction or constellations of socio-economic structures. In particular, the rational choice theory focuses on individual choice
making as influenced by social factors making it relevant to explain how masters’ students in Nairobi County made their subject choices.

Rational choice according to Goldthorpe, (1996) deploys some distinct tenets about human nature that are important to this study; the first is that human beings have preferences that are for the purposes of analysis, that is individuals are purposive entities rather than just vehicles for wider social and economic forces. Thus, they are capable of choosing their own projects and preferences.

Secondly, rational choice theory assumes that individuals act in their self-interest rather than for the interest of others. In fact, they are instrumental rather than expressive and they seek to maximize their personal utility rather than to give life to their personal and collective identities. Personal utility is maximized through an optimization process whereby individuals maximize their income or balance out a number of preferences such as between current and future benefits.

Thirdly, people express their preferences as clear goals. Fourthly, rational choice theorists often assume individuals have information about the preferences available to them. Fifth, when individuals examine the information available to them they select the course of action that satisfies their preferences and are able to modify their courses of action when the benefits and costs of choices change (Goldthorpe, 1996).

In this study, the rational choice theory was applied to explain masters’ students’ processes of choice making as influenced by socio-cultural factors. Goldthorpe’s argument that individuals are purposive entities seeks the individual student’s preferences of choice before those of the society. This was significant to this study as
the society’s socio-cultural beliefs played a role in influencing the students’ choice of masters’ programme before their preferences could lead to conflict.

In addition, the view that individuals act out of their self-interests rather than the interest of others was applied in the study. According to the rational choice theory, the interest of the individual comes first before that of society thus making the students’ attitudes and beliefs free from socio-cultural encumbrances. Goldthorpe argues that even though society may have certain expectations for students’ choice, the prime motivator for the students’ actions should be their own individual preferences.

Therefore, Goldthorpe approaches choice making as an individual process which emerges as rational when the chosen alternative is primarily based on the student’s individual preferences. Applied to this study, the theory provided the opportunity to achieve gender responsiveness in subject choice by focusing on the student’s individual preferences.
2.7 Conceptual Framework

**Dependent Variable**
- Low enrolment of male students
- Negative perceptions of gender and development studies
- Low participation of male students in classrooms
- Lack of adherence to gender and development policies

**Independent Variables**
- No likely Choice of Gender and Development Studies
  - High enrolment of female students
  - Negative perceptions of gender and development studies flourish
  - Lack of inclusive participation of women and men in classrooms
  - Unimplemented gender and development policies

**University Interventions**
- Gender sensitive career education to empower students
- Implementation of policies that seek to gender equality and equity in enrolments

**Choice of Gender and Development Studies**
- Increase in enrolment of male students
- Positive perceptions of gender and development studies
- Inclusivity in participation of both women and men in classrooms
- Adherence to gender and development policies

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework
Source: Author, 2017
The study conceptualized that gender imbalances in terms of gender representation in the subject choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level in Nairobi County were influenced by the independent variables. When no gender based interventions were applied by the university, the framework posited that there was a less likelihood of students choosing gender and development studies. However, when gender based interventions are applied, masters’ students are likely to choose gender and development studies.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the methods and procedures that were used in the study. It covers the components of research design, site of the study, target population, sampling procedures and sample size, research instruments, data collection and data analysis procedures.

3.2 Research Design
This research adopted a descriptive mixed methods study design, in collecting information from the sample population in order to assess gender and development as a subject choice for masters’ students in Nairobi County. The descriptive mixed methods study design was chosen because tertiary institutions offering gender and development studies are dominant in Nairobi County hence it was easy to single them out. Secondly, gender and development studies is a unique subject and the only subject choice that challenges gender inequalities and seeks to include more men unlike other humanity subjects. The study design enabled the researcher to acquire in depth information about the determinants of choice.

3.3 Site of the Study
This research was carried out in selected universities in Nairobi County that offer gender and development studies at the master’s level. Public and private universities were targeted because the study sought diverse views from students from different parts of the country who were mostly found in public universities and students from Nairobi County who were mostly found in private universities. The universities offering gender and development studies in Nairobi County which were the University
of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Mount Kenya University, St. Paul’s University, Catholic University and Daystar University. had an approximated total postgraduate student population of 240,000 registered for various courses (KNBS, 2015).

Nairobi County was chosen as it is a cosmopolitan hub in East and Central Africa and a centralized location where many NGOs have put up their headquarters. These NGOs in Nairobi County provide employment opportunities for those with gender and development qualifications. Additionally, Nairobi County hosts the largest number of institutions offering gender and development studies. The goal of the Gender Policy in Education (2007) in Kenya is to promote gender equity and equality in education, offer training and research to contribute to the economic growth and sustainable development in Kenya. This study aimed to be in accordance with the guiding principles of the national policy by addressing gender responsiveness and inclusiveness.

3.4 Target Population
The target population for this study comprised of masters’ students in both public and private universities taking gender and development studies as well as development studies. Masters’ students were selected because they had already chosen gender and development studies as a specialization and they were more aware of their choice implications as many direct their choice towards specific career goals such as employment and promotion. Purposive sampling was used to select the participating universities to narrow the focus to those universities with students enrolled for gender and development studies in Nairobi County.
The County had a total of seven public universities and fifteen private universities out of which only eight (four public and four private) offered gender and development studies or courses with a gender and development component such as development studies. The eight universities were: the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Mount Kenya University, St. Paul’s University, Catholic University and Daystar University. Approximately, a total of 250 masters’ students were registered in the gender and development studies departments for years 2013/2014 to 2014/2015. The total population of lecturers in these eight universities in the departments of gender and development studies and related departments such as development studies were 60 including chairpersons of the departments. Out of the targeted population, the researcher selected 20 specialized key informants who comprised chairpersons, lectures and students based in the eight universities.

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

A sample was selected from the list of public and private universities in Nairobi County. The researcher purposively selected four universities: public and private that offered gender and development studies or courses with a gender component. The four universities were: Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi, Mount Kenya University and St. Paul’s University. The four universities were selected as they were representative of the background characteristics on the behaviour being studied. A sample of 54% which were the students available to participate in the study were chosen purposively from the total population of the students taking gender and development studies in the four universities (which was 122 students) in the years 2013/2014 to 2014/2015 which translated to a total sample of sixty six students.
The sample of 54% was able to accommodate equally two private (Mount Kenya University and St. Paul’s University) and two public universities (Kenyatta University and University of Nairobi) thus evenly distributing the respondents from private and public universities, to attain balanced views. The sample size of sixty six students was within the ambit that is deemed appropriate by Suter (2006) who states that a sample size of 30 to 200 respondents is sufficient for a credible educational research. Twelve lecturers, three chairpersons and five gender and development master’s students were purposively selected as key informants. Purposive sampling was used as all the lecturers were included in the study.

3.6 Pilot study

Before using the instruments in the main study they were piloted in similar categories of universities in Nairobi County; Jomo Kenyatta University (Nairobi town campus) and Daystar University (Nairobi town campus). The pilot study was conducted three months before the actual study with different respondents in the selected universities than those of the actual study. The purpose of the pilot study for the questionnaire and interview guide was to eliminate inadequacies, vague questions and irrelevant items and to determine whether the anticipated information could be obtained using the developed tools. The responses from the pilot study were analyzed and used to determine the validity and reliability of the instruments. The researcher then reviewed the instruments accordingly before engaging in the data collection process.
3.7 **Research Instruments**

The study used both primary data and secondary data. Primary data was collected from the study respondents using open-ended questionnaires and interview schedules. Secondary data on the other hand was collected from libraries in form of information from textbooks, journals and research theses and publications.

3.7.1 **Questionnaires**

The researcher used closed and open-ended questionnaires to obtain responses from the masters’ students. The instrument had two parts: Part one comprised of the bio data of the respondents and part two had each study objective. A total of 66 students; 51 female and 15 male received and filled the questionnaires. The students were met at different times and locations to ensure their confidentiality and availability. The questionnaire was adopted because it had the advantages of low cost in terms of both time and money and the inflow of data was quick and from many people.

3.7.2 **Key Informant Interviews**

In this study, the researcher used key informant interviews to pursue in-depth information around the topic. The researcher held interviews with the gender and development studies departments which comprised of: 12 lecturers, 3 chairpersons and 5 masters’ students. Each gender and development studies key informant was subjected to an individual in-depth interview which was also tape recorded. The researcher assured the respondents of their privacy and sought their consent. This allowed the

3.8 **Data Collection and Recording Procedures**

The researcher first sought verbal and written consent from the respondents before collecting data. Then, she proceeded to actual data collection from the 66 gender and
development masters’ students. The generated data was recorded in notebooks and codes were used which were later summarized into categories. Similarly, data from the interview guides and tape recordings of the 20 key informants as well as questionnaires from the 66 masters’ students was sorted and transcribed. This was done according to the predefined themes in the study objectives and merged to the respective category to present the study findings.

3.9 Data Analysis and Presentation

The researcher used Glaser’s (1992) constant comparative method of qualitative data analysis. The qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis used in the study entailed data collection and recording, transcription, coding, ordering and data display, generation of themes and interpretation as well as the analysis of meaning from the data. The quantitative findings were presented in form of tables and the qualitative in form of summarized theme discussions.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

The researcher asked the respondents for verbal and written consent before they filled the questionnaire and participated in the oral interview. The researcher also used self-disclosure by providing information about herself, the research and the reasons why the research was being conducted. The researcher also ensured the confidentiality of the respondents by informing and assuring them that the data they generated would only be used for the purposes of academic research.

Besides, the researcher obtained an introduction letter from the gender and development studies department and the Kenyatta University’s Graduate School, which enabled her to get a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation. A visit was made to the various administrative heads of
the universities and the researcher presented to them the introductory letter and permit authenticating the research. Once granted the permission to collect the data from the university, the researcher went ahead and administered the research instruments in the respective universities as per the arrangements agreed upon by both the researcher and university administration.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the study findings in relation to the study objectives. The chapter is organised under the following sub headings: demographic characteristics of the respondents, socio-cultural factors influencing choice of master’s programme, effect of perceptions on choice of master’s programme, the constraints respondents face while making choices of master’s programme and suggestions for making choice of master’s programme more gender responsive.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the gender and development studies master’s students are discussed on the basis of questionnaire return rate, gender, marital status and age.

4.1.1 Study Population

A total of 80 questionnaires were administered, out of which 66 were collected as shown in Table 4.1. Twenty interview guides were used to gather information from chairpersons, lecturers and masters’ students and the response was 100 percent.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire and interview guide response rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Sample Targeted</th>
<th>No. Collected</th>
<th>Percent Return Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Master’s students</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>82.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers, Chairpersons and Students</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From the Table 4.1, an average response rate of 86% was obtained which was deemed adequate for data analysis. According to Suter (2006), a response rate of thirty percent (30%) is regarded as acceptable for most research purposes. This good response rate can be attributed to the fact that the researcher informed the respondents in advance about the study and meeting them in venues that were accessible and suitable to the respondents. The return rate for questionnaires is presented in Table 4.2 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Actual No</th>
<th>No. Collected</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenyatta University</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nairobi</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Kenya University</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s University</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>80</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
<td><strong>82.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.2, a total of four universities (two public and two private) were represented proportionately indicating there was proportional representation of the respondents from the sampled universities.

4.1.2 Sex Disaggregated Data of the Respondents

In this sub-section the study sought to establish the sex disaggregation of the respondents to enable a clear gender analysis of the findings. The total number of students of gender and development and development studies departments for the years 2013/2014, 2014-2015 is shown in Table 4.4. The total number of students who participated in the study were 51(77%) women and 15(23%) men making a total of 66 respondents as shown in Table 4.5. Of the 20 key informants, 10 were women and 10 men. This study purposively sought the views of both men and women taking
gender and development studies to ensure inclusivity and representation of both. It was also crucial to get the views of both to make the study more meaningful from a gender and development perspective.

Table 4.3: Target population of master’s students in gender and development studies departments in Nairobi County for years 2013/2014 - 2014/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total per University for years 2013/2014-2014/2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenyatta University (Main Campus)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nairobi (Main Campus)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egerton University (Town Campus)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JKUAT (Town Campus)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Kenya University (Town Campus)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s University (Town Campus)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daystar University (Town Campus)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic University (Main Campus)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>180</strong></td>
<td><strong>250</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Respective University Departments

Table 4.4: Total registered students per department for years 2013/2014-2014/2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total per University for years 2013/2014-2014/2015</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenyatta University (gender and development studies)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nairobi (gender and development studies)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Kenya University (development studies)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s University (development studies)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>44</strong></td>
<td><strong>122</strong></td>
<td><strong>166</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Respective University Departments
Table 4.5: Sex disaggregation and Total number of respondents sampled per university.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Total per University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kenyatta University</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Nairobi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Kenya University</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s University</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Respective University Departments

From Table 4.1 and 4.2, it is noted that the student distribution is asymmetrical with more women than men both in terms of those registered for gender and development studies and those who participated in the study. Flabbi (2011) attributes this to a variety of reasons such as the tendency of women to acquire a little more tertiary education than men and humanities tending to attract majority of female graduates than men. In the World Development Report (2012), it is noted that there are gender differences in tertiary education across the world where women are overrepresented in arts and humanities, health and education and underrepresented in engineering, manufacturing, construction and science.

Additionally, the report notes that in tertiary education women are more likely to participate than men a difference that increases with overall participation rates. The report further notes that between 1970 and 2008 in Sub Saharan Africa, the number of female tertiary students increased more than sevenfold (from 10.8 million to 80.9 million) compared with a fourfold increase among males. The researcher notes that this trend of more women participating and enrolling could be a factor contributing to
the asymmetry in the enrolment for gender and development studies in Nairobi County.

4.1.3 Marital Status of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the marital status of the respondents at the master’s level pursuing gender and development studies to get a clear understanding of the findings. As shown in Table 4.6, of the 16 male students, 4 (25%) of them interviewed were married, 10 (62%) single and 2 (13%) in a come we- stay- relationship. Out of the 50 female students interviewed, 11 (22%) were married, 35 (70%) single, 2 (4%) divorced and 2 (4%) in a come we- stay- relationship.

Table 4.6: Marital status of male and female students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come we- stay- relationship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>15</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>51</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In identifying this variable, the study took note of the fact that gender and development studies as a career choice for female and male students is based on the notions of gender equality and how these are defined and perceived in or outside the marital context (Klasen & Francesca, 2009). The findings showed the highest number of female and male students that made the choice to pursue gender and development studies were single as compared to those who were married or in a come we –stay-
relationship. This suggests that gender and development studies was more appealing to single students as they did not as yet have fixed notions of gender issues such as equality whereas those in marriage and come we-stay relationships were influenced by how the society perceived gender issues as having a detrimental role in families (Amin & Islam, 2015).

4.1.4 Age of the Respondents

Age of the students was thought to be a crucial component, as it reveals the age categories of those pursuing gender and development studies at the master’s level. Scholars have noted that the age may influence individual values which then influence the student’s choice (Jackson, Wright & Perrone-McGovern, 2010). The findings are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Age of the male and female students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Men (%)</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Women (%)</th>
<th>Total Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-59</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-69</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.7 the group aged 20-29 years had the highest number of male 8 (54%) and female 28 (55%) students followed by the group aged 30-39 years with 5 (33%) male and 17 (33%) female. The possible explanation for younger students pursuing the master’s degree could be attributed to the fact that in Africa consumption of
education is higher among the younger age groups and consumption of healthcare higher among the older groups (Canning, Raja & Yazbeck, 2015).

There were fewer older people choosing gender and development studies with 2 (13%) for male and 3(6%) for female for the age bracket of 40-49 and 3(6%) female for the age group 50-59. This decline in choice by the older people could be attributed to the maintenance and decline stages in the career development, which did not allow them to make new choices (Jackson, Wright & Perrone- Mc Govern, 2010).

4.2 Socio-cultural Factors Influencing Gender and Development Studies as a Master’s Choice Programme

The first objective of the study sought to identify the socio-cultural factors that influence master’s student’s choice of gender and development studies. To attain the objective, the study posed structured and open-ended questions which generated the following responses discussed under three sections namely: family relational networks, socio-cultural factors and individual view of choice.

4.2.1 Family Relational Networks

In order to establish the influence of family relational networks on students master’s choice of gender and development studies, the respondents were asked, “Did your family play a role in influencing your choice of gender and development studies? To which the students were either to answer yes or no.

Table 4.8 Role of the family in career choice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of Family</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>No</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Women</td>
<td>Men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>(%)</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In this regard, 85% of the women and 38% of the men reported that family played a role whilst 15% of women and 62% of men reported that family did not play a role by either supporting their choice, encouraging them or advising them. These findings in Table 4.8 show that the families of the women students were more supportive of their choice than that of the men students. These findings are in line with Catalyst (2005) and KPMG (2014) who observed that families either support or discourage their children in pursuing certain subject choices owing to given stereotypes about the career choice. Thus, in this study, women student’s parents could have been more supportive of their choice as gender and development studies strengthened certain career choice stereotypes about women. With regards to this one woman respondent noted that:

*My family and especially my mother was very supportive of my choice, my mother felt that I was in a career that suited me as a woman and that would greatly aid in my holistic development. My father on the other hand supported my choice because he found the course related to women’s interests and thought I could manage to score good grades.*

(O.I Eunice 16/08/2015).

As deduced from the verbatim, parental support for gender and development studies was higher among female students as it was perceived as a subject traditionally associated with women. However, parents may not be aware that gender and development studies seeks to integrate both men and women in the development process and has inclusivity at its core (UNDP, 2000). Also the female student’s parents saw that their daughters stood a better chance of excelling at the subject content. Further probing revealed that parents thought that the content was dealing with women’s issues only whereas this is not the case.
Lastly, gender and development studies was viewed as being more marketable and advantageous to women as they could utilize the qualification more than their men counterparts. This awareness of gender and development studies marketability could reveal its association to NGO’s well-paying jobs that have employment policies that seek to integrate more women in employment to close in on the gender gap (Mama, 2003).

The men respondents on the other hand gave reasons for lack of support from their families. They noted that they were challenged for having chosen a career that is traditionally viewed as women’s. Moreover, their families feared that they were contributing to the erosion of patriarchal structures and some were uncomfortable being in a class with a high population of women. Other men’s respondents’ family such as the one below did not believe that gender and development was as marketable as other career choices. In this regard one male respondent noted that:

*My family had mixed reactions towards my choice, my father wanted me to take an education based masters as he felt it was more marketable while my mother wanted me to continue with mass communication because she felt that gender and development studies would not blend with mass communication (O.I Anthony, 18/08/2015).*

As deduced from the verbatim, parental support for gender and development studies was lower among male students as it was perceived as a subject traditionally associated with women. This association could have led to biased perceptions and stereotypes on gender and development studies. However, men respondents who were pursuing gender and development studies had a clearer understanding about the content of gender and development and were free from biased perceptions and stereotypes.
When it came to marketability, even though some male respondents’ parents did not find gender and development as marketable as other courses, the male students who participated in the study felt that there was a gap for them to fill in the equality debate, even though they were underrepresented in the gender and development classes. Hargrove et al. (2002) found that the perceptions of family and goal orientations may play a role in the formulation of clear and stable career goals and the promotion of self confidence in regard to career choices.

The World Bank (2012) further notes that families are the cornerstone for choice and that gender roles from an early age influence the way in which parents view their children and direct them in choice-making. Parental views on appropriateness of gender roles influence their children’s lives in terms of perceptions and attitudes towards of subjects at school.

As this study noted earlier in this section, 85% of the women student’s families supported their choice, this could signal a societal change from a gender perspective. Families could have noted the positive impacts that gender and development studies could offer women in terms of broadening their expectations in what they can achieve in the society through their educational capabilities. Arbache, Kolevand Filipiak (2010) note that in Africa the returns from education on earnings were important and education has a positive effect on gender wage equity.

Parents could have realized that women have been traditionally disadvantaged in education access and employment. Gender and development studies advocates for gender equity both in employment wages and educational access (ILO, 2012). This is beneficial in the society as the status of women need to be improved as they have
traditionally been tolerated since birth rather than being celebrated. The researcher found that although it has been noted that gender and development studies has benefits that primarily seem to accrue to women because of the various equity and equality challenges that they face, gender and development studies has the potential to impact men as well.

Evidently, gender perspective challenges stereotypes about men and women’s roles and offers alternative roles to both (ILO, 2012). Thus, as women in the society change their outlook on issues, families get educated in the process and gradually their societies evolve around the gender based perspective.

Hence, from the discussion it may be noted that since the respondents’ families played a role in their choice by either supporting or discouraging them, the rational choice theory applied in the study did not apply to the findings. This is because it posits that individuals choose their own projects and preferences and this could not have been applicable since there was parental involvement in the choice making process. Secondly, the parent’s interests were considered by the respondents during choice making; this consideration contradicted a tenet of the rational choice theory that individuals act in their self-interest rather than for the interest of others, rendering the theory not applicable to the findings of the study.

4.2.2 Socio-cultural Factors

The study established that gender inequalities among male and female students existed. Therefore, the researcher sought to find out which socio-cultural factors may explain this scenario particularly in relation to subject choice. To this end, the study posed open and closed-ended questions that generated the following responses which
are discussed under the following sub-sections: traditional values, societal values, perceptions of the society, socialization process, gender roles and feminine and masculine self-concept. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9: Socio-cultural factors influencing career choice of gender and development studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal values</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional values</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social values</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of the society</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socialization process</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine and masculine self-concept</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that traditional values at (33%), perceptions of society at (40%) and feminine and masculine self-concept at (27%) were the major influencing socio-cultural ideologies among the male respondents. Female respondents were mainly influenced by traditional values at (22%), societal values at (19%) and personal values at (16%). The discussion for personal values has been omitted as it closely correlates with the discussion of individual view of choice in the sub-section after this one. These results are discussed as below:

i) **Traditional Values**

The results of this study as shown in Table 4.9 indicate that men were influenced by traditional values at (33%) which was higher than that of the women at (22%). When it comes to traditional values and choice, the World Bank (2007) explains that the concept of agency is patterned by the social structure which is inclusive of individuals’ influences from their traditions. The World Bank (2007) further explains that this social structure from which values emanate create action indirectly by shaping actors’
perceptions of their interests and by directly constraining choice. Traditional values are deemed important as they play a role in shaping the students’ perception of their choice and also constrained this choice.

Examples of such traditional perceptions in Africa that emerged from the respondents' views in the study were that: men are perceived to be stronger and higher in hierarchy than women in the society. As a result of such perceptions, men are expected to be the breadwinners and perform tasks demanding more physical strength than women’s physical strength. In addition, decision-making powers are supposed to be vested with men as when a woman possess these, it is seen to be detrimental to a man’s authority as she will ‘sit’ on him.

Traditions have been viewed as reflecting cultural beliefs which have a component of gender stereotypes which contain specific expectations for competence (Ridgeway & Correll, 2000). Such a competence that emerged in this study was that naturally men are rulers and that an African man cannot be ruled by a woman as he is expected by traditions to be above her. This outlook was linked to patriarchal norms that men considered and situated their choices in. One male respondent said the following:

*Our cultures particularly in Kenya provide us male students with notions that influence our career choices. Patriarchy in particular, grants men with a variety of choices more than women. Career choices are tolerated by men in the society in as much as they are not considered as being feminine or those of the female domain. Feminine courses are those seen to be easy while masculine courses are those that are challenging and dominated by men such as engineering (O.I. Paul, 7/08/2015).*

From the views expressed, culture it seems plays a greater role influencing career choice more for men than women. Flexible self-perceptions of gender roles are
restricted by traditions leading to rigid and stereotypical attitudes when it comes to making career choices (Bluestein et al., 2004). Consequently, this may lead to role conflict restricting respondents’ ability to actualize their human potential.

Traditionally, men are perceived to be stronger and better placed in the society to make better choices than women. When such a perception is challenged, in reality it may lead to producing an inner conflict for the men (Lease, 2003). Gender and development studies challenges this perception leading to what one male respondent called:

*The soul searching of the definition of their masculinity owing to how they had been socialized by the society (O.I. Kevin, 5/08/2015).*

Conversely, when it comes to women they believe that a career that empowers them in their roles will help them achieve self-mastery and this affects their choice making process (Amundson, 2005). Experiences in childhood may expose and sometimes limit women to the sources of information necessary for the development of strong beliefs of efficacy in many occupational areas (Correll, 2001).

To encapsulate, traditional values act like a signpost or reminder of where traditions have placed us and this requires us to conform to them when making career choices. However, the researcher notes that our traditional values need not be personal values and with change of attitude gender responsiveness can be achieved.

**ii) Social Values**

As shown in Table 4.9, social values featured as the second highest socio-cultural factor affecting women at 19% while this variable did not feature among men. Social values in this context were explained to the respondents as ingrained ways that had
influenced their perspective of their career choice as pertains to their cultural norms or schemas. Social values emanate from social relational contexts which are: any situation in which individuals define themselves in relation to others in order to act (Correll and Ridgeway, 2004). These social relational contexts from which these social values may emerge may include everyday interactions and the media.

From the qualitative data women respondents opined that their social values influenced the process of defining themselves in relation to others when it came to their career choice. One of the women respondents noted:

_Pursuing gender and development studies has given me greater awareness of what it means to be a woman. Before taking the course I saw women defined as less competent than men in the society but during the course I have developed an alternative set of beliefs where I find women just as strong, capable and competent as men._ (O.I. Eunice, 11/08/2015)

The above observation is in line with what Correll and Ridgeway (2004) note that men are viewed as more status worthy and competent while women on the other hand are seen as less competent and better at menial tasks. These narrow descriptions about men and women that pervade in the society may be responsible for shaping social values associated with career choice.

The researcher is of the view that if women focus on these narrow social understandings of men and women they are likely to expect to be treated according to these beliefs. Examples of such beliefs that emerged from this study are that there are some career choices that are feminine and others that are masculine. And since men are viewed as more competent than women, the masculine courses are taken to be
more marketable or competitive. The feminine courses on the other hand are viewed as less demanding and generally women dominated.

These beliefs can influence career choice for women who may assimilate them as they make educational choices. Such social understandings could be from diverse aspects in the society such as the rights and traditional status of women as indicated by one woman respondent who noted that:

\[My \text{ gender played a role in my career choice as I come from Kajiado where women are not allowed to inherit or own property. As a woman I would like to change such biases against women by empowering myself by going back to pursue my masters which will put me in a position to empower other women}\ \text{(O.I, Anne, 3/08/2015).}\]

Examples of other socio-cultural norms that emerged from the study were: allowing a woman to enjoy her full rights would empower her and this would upset the power balance breeding a tough headed woman. Another cited is that it is the man in a home who represents the family and speaks on behalf it, and women in most instances are expected to be silent. In fact, one respondent, chairperson noted a popular saying that:

\[\text{“If you lead a woman down the path of ambition and popularity she will ‘sit’ on you” \text{(O.I., Omondi, 24/08/2015).}}\]

Such socio-cultural norms and values, differences in education and lack of women’s power within the household are some of the most important factors that lead to worsening outcomes for women in the labour market (Arbache, Kolev & Filipiak, 2010). These outcomes have implications on women’s futures as women’s employment and earnings are essential in the fight against poverty because of the direct contribution they make to the household welfare. Additionally, their employment provides personal power for women in making family decisions and
redirecting household spending on essential needs especially in favour of children’s health and education (Bloom et al., 2009).

From the qualitative data from other women respondents in the study, other variables such as better earnings, career progression, leadership and empowerment played a role in their career choice of gender and development studies.

iii) Perceptions of the Society

As shown in Table 4.9, the men felt that the perceptions of the society influenced their choice at 40% while that of women was at 12%. The researcher noted that the perceptions of the society of the respondents’ choice played a role as a socio-cultural factor. These perceptions by the society contained specific expectations as to what men or women should pursue as career choices. The perceptions of the society could influence men more than women owing to men’s greater awareness of and impact of socialized sex differences. In relation to this a lecturer had the following to say:

_Most of the perceptions held in our society regarding subject choice are stereotypes and misconceptions. These perceptions are not based on a true understanding of women and men’s true capabilities (O.I, Sheila, 12/08/2015)._ 

The World Bank (2007) suggests that these perceptions and norms develop in the society when actors occupy similar network positions in the social structure and evaluate their options _vis-à-vis_ the alternatives of similarly situated others. In this study, a perception that emerged among both men and women respondents was that gender and development studies was to be regarded more as women’s course than men. This perception was primarily shaped by the media that presented women mostly when discussing gender concerns.
Gender and development studies was also perceived to be advocating for mainly women rights and activism making men to oppose it because they belief it incites and eventually turns women away from patriarchal norms. In relation to this one man respondent had the following to say:

*Cultural norms and values are threatened by gender and development studies as men are seen to be the initiators of development; and gender and development studies goes against this norm. Some women are from deeply patriarchal societies and view life from a man's eyes. This patriarchal view of women is continually challenged, revised and updated by gender and development studies whereby women have to assess patriarchal situations critically. Women have to learn to do what is best for themselves even though it goes against the Kenyan Society’s patriarchal norms (O.I, John, 14/08/2015).*

Other men respondents concurred with this but emphasized that at the core of gender and development career choice was the African socialization. One respondent noted:

*The African ideal of masculinity is reinforced by entrenched socialization norms, such as men are stronger and more competent than women. A challenge to male dominance and the existence of alternative gender roles as is sought by gender and development studies is a threat to such norms as men have to relinquish their inward and outward status and power (O.I. Kevin, 5/08/2015).*

According to Kabeer (2005) one way of exercising power is to have the ability to make choices; to be disempowered means to be denied choice while to be empowered means to gain the ability to make such a choice. Power of choice in the researcher’s view could be what gender and development studies offers and what is opposed by men in the society.
When the above emergent perceptions of gender and development studies are examined they relate to the ability of women to attain power and become empowered through their choice. Viewing career choice from this angle means that gender and development studies as a career choice, ceases to be a personal choice but one with an impact on the society.

In this regard Emma opined:

*I think the negative attitude towards gender and development studies is due to fears from the community on seeing that after some women receive empowerment from knowing their rights they become radical. By radical I mean they become transformed and changed. A woman is now independent and being independent is viewed negatively or frowned upon by the society but in my opinion I think that every woman is entitled to her own independence (O.I, Emma, 14/08/2015).*

Other women respondents associated these negative perceptions towards their choice by the society as having to do with the notion of equality, stereotypes about women, rigid gender roles, misperceptions of gender and development studies content and lack of proper implementation of pro-women policies.

Despite the negative perceptions among the men and women respondents, there were also positive perceptions towards their choice of gender and development studies. The women respondents felt the positive perceptions emanated from: the empowerment of women, balanced media coverage on gender issues, the representation of women in leadership positions, reduced inequalities for women, enhanced employment opportunities and the involvement of men in the gender agenda.

Some of the male students had positive perceptions of the choice of gender and development studies towards the realization of a balanced gender where women
formed an integral part of the society and that the empowerment of women was crucial in all aspects of their lives.

In this regard Charles opined:

Those like I who have chosen gender and development studies would like to think of it as an open system of thought, embracing both information and empowerment. In the course of my study I have known more about women, their concerns and how to treat them both at home and at work (O.I. Charles, 4/08/2015).

Additionally, these male students owing to their choice of gender and development studies, were now: aware of their rights, introduced to role sharing, equipped with new knowledge and exposed to better employment opportunities. If the positive and negative perceptions from women and men towards gender and development studies are investigated research may establish that they embody ideas, values and identities.

iv) Socialization Process

As shown in Table 4.9, eight per cent of the women indicated that the socialization process played a role in their career choice process, while for the men this did not feature as a variable. By socialization the women indicated that their past and present interactions with their family and friends encouraged them to choose gender and development studies. Their societies impressed on them the need to improve their status by choosing a degree choice that would positively impact on them and their communities. In this regard a woman respondent opined that:

I was encouraged to choose gender and development studies by the strong women who surrounded me as I was growing up, in particular my mother and aunties. Their assertiveness made me feel that women are recognized in the society and that they cannot be subdued in the society
if they are able to articulate their issues. This made me interested in choosing gender and development studies to live up to this ideal of the strong woman (O.I. Decy, 6/08/2015).

In such an instance, the role of socialization is twofold: first it provides models that have particular roles and behaviour with which the student identifies with and then the student makes a choice that they feel is at par with these roles and behaviour. Secondly, the student identifies with the role model and incorporates and internalizes the roles and values of the person such as in this instance the mother and aunts (Jackson, Wright & Perrone-McGovern, 2010).

The role of socialization was related with gender roles and played a role in the self-definition of women. This self-definition was influenced by the educational system. With regards to this one lecturer noted:

When it comes to Kenyan traditional values, gender roles play a part in shaping perceptions that certain subjects are for men and others for women due to socialization by teachers. Teachers at an early stage reinforce the notion that men are more capable than women and women internalize this and mould their future career ambitions on this untrue notion (O.I. Leah, 8/08/2015).

The finding is in line with students who when asked who influenced their choice, some mentioned their lecturers. It may therefore be inferred that among the earliest role models that socialize the women into their choice of courses and career paths are teachers. The World Bank (2012) notes that socialization is likely to influence educational and vocational choices in part through its impact on individuals’ perceptions of the field of viable options, as well as its impact on expectations and subjective task value.
Socialization as a variable has been noted to first lead men and women to have different hierarchies of core personal values and place different values on long range goal and choices (World Bank, 2012). With regards to personal values female students exhibited different values from those of men. Women focused more on family values such as feeding, educating and caring for the family, while men focused more on their career growth.

When it came to long range goals, women in the study were more focused on finishing their graduate degree and seeking employment or a work promotion, growing personally and getting empowered. Men on the other hand, focused primarily on better employment prospects. The World Bank (2012) notes that women have multiple roles and goals, while men focus on one main goal which is their professional development. From the study we may deduce that the socialization process may have made women aware of their unequal status with men in the society. This unequal status may then influence women’s career choice in a direction that will not only earn them a graduate qualification but seek ways for them to uplift their status and improve their well-being in the society.

v) Gender Roles

As shown in Table 4.9, eleven per cent of women indicated that gender roles influenced their career choice while it did not feature as a variable for men. Gender roles featured as a variable as they influenced primary activities for women. These primary activities bring about differences between men and women. For instance, although the biological factor of having a child does not in itself make it impossible for a woman to choose a specific career, she may be prevented by a number of factors determined by gender.
Among these are cultural norms restricting women to the home, stereotypes about ‘suitable’ career choices for women, or the lack of child care and family services for married women or single mothers who want to go back to school and pursue a career (World Bank, 2012). In view of this one respondent observed:

*One of the greatest challenges that I faced when I decided to pursue my graduate course was that of my gender roles. As a mother I was expected to earn a living, feed, wash, clean and take care of the family. My husband on the other hand was focused only on earning a living. Together with my husband we made the necessary arrangements and he encouraged me to pursue gender and development studies. At present my husband now realizes that this arrangement was to his undoing as I am empowered in terms of decision-making, ideas and newfound knowledge attainment. (O.I. Eunice, 11/08/2015).*

This view was echoed by other married women who participated in the study who said that their gender roles as mothers constrained them in terms of achieving a work-family balance. Another issue that emerged from the women respondents in relation to their gender roles was the reaction of family and friends towards their choice of gender and development studies. Some women noted that even though their husbands were supportive of their choice, their friends did not approve it. Their friends thought they would be influenced negatively by those taking gender and development studies to seek new freedoms and abandon their marital duties.

Some single women also reported the same reaction from their friends who saw that they were transgressing their gender roles. One woman respondent commented that:

*My male friends were biased because studying gender and development studies creates a newfound awareness of your rights that is not necessarily consonant with the given gender roles for women. From*
gender studies you learn how to negotiate for your space and men are not comfortable with this, as an addition to my space is a reduction in theirs (O.I. Mima, 12/08/2015).

A theme that emerged from most of the women as the one noted is that most of those who echoed caution towards their choice for fear of the women’s gender roles being eroded were their friends, while their families supported their choices. The opposition from their friends was a form of caution regarding the course content which was perceived to be radical, leading to the break-up of their marriage or making it difficult for one to find a marriage spouse.

Kabeer (2005) links this opposition to the weaker bargaining point for women which has its genesis in the gender division of labour that is closely connected with gender roles. This could be true to a large extent because when a woman decides to pursue gender and development studies she will have to balance her studies and family time and this will inevitably put strain on performance of both. The second issue that emerged from the discussion is the ideological challenge to gender roles that gender and development poses in terms of its content.

The researcher notes that the content of gender and development studies seeks to integrate equally both men and women in the development process. This can bring about an ideological shift in gender roles which are unequally assigned with men being highly excluded from reproductive roles such as household work. This ‘natural’ role assignment process is what is challenged by gender and development studies.

From the discussion it emerged that a new outlook on gender roles can be accepted by the family members as most of them accommodated the choices women made to pursue gender and development studies. The ideological shift in the gender roles was
however, not easily accepted by friends to the women respondents as they did not approve of their choice of gender and development studies.

vi) Feminine and Masculine Self concept

As shown in Table 4.9, eleven per cent of the women respondents noted that their feminine self-concept influenced their choice, while 27% of the men respondents said masculine self-concept influenced their choice. The term self-concept was explained to the respondents as the way they viewed themselves with particular emphasis on their gender, values and place in society. For men their self-concept played a greater role since the content of gender and development is associated with feminine values. The male respondents did not want to make a choice that seemed to be associated with feminine values and that would undermine their masculine self-concept. In this regard a respondent opined:

*My male friends were not so enthusiastic of my choice of gender and development studies because of the implicit erosion of patriarchal structures which they fear. They told me that since gender was associated with women they will perform better than me in class and dominate the job opportunities (O.I. Charles, 4/08/2015).*

Other men respondents reported similar sentiments, noting that is rather their friends not family who took particular interest to appraise them whether their career choices fitted the societal masculine self-concept. And those that did not fit into this societal self-concept by choosing the ‘other’ in this case gender and development studies were led to believe that they would experience an inner conflict. This anticipated inner conflict was related to aspects of male domination and the adherence to the culturally prescribed gender roles. In this regard a male respondent noted:
Men’s inner conflict occurs when they choose a course such as gender and development studies that fights for women’s rights. This is because they juxtapose themselves with other men who are outside the course who believe in male domination and women’s submission. Men who have chosen gender and development studies might experience inner conflict because our patriarchal norms are constantly reinforcing the norm that women should be confined to reproductive roles and men to productive roles (O.I. Meshack, 9/08/2015).

Thus, it is evident that patriarchal norms in the society may reinforce a certain masculine self-concept and provide the setting for unresponsive career enrolments. Men’s self-concept as defined by these patriarchal norms is linked with advantage. The men respondents in the study elaborated this advantage as their ability to be the sole breadwinners and the rulers in the political, religious and household spheres. These views were confirmed by a lecturer, who had the following to say,

Men tend to associate control and power with the productive domain and gender and development studies is not viewed favourably as it is viewed as the one sensitizing women to the productive domain and taking them out of the domestic one (O.I, Casper 6/08/2015).

Kabeer (2005) observes that control and power are exercised in many different ways. These may include culture and religious beliefs being used as means to control as well as justify actions. Kabeer (2005) further argues that inner conflict may have its basis in the fact that men are there to safeguard theirs and other men’s self-concept. This can be contrasted with the women who felt a change was needed in the way patriarchal structures in the society defined the feminine self-concept. A female respondent had the following to say:
What shapes the reactions, ideas and opinions towards gender and development studies is predominantly patriarchy. Men do not want a new power relations regime because they are beneficiaries of the current status quo, socialization processes support patriarchy and are deeply entrenched. Gender and development studies is seen to enhance women’s self-concept more than that of men and is viewed as a women’s department making it out of bounds for men (O.I, Eva 3/08/2015).

This sentiment raised by the respondent was supported by other women in the study who linked the definition of their feminine self-concept to societal patriarchal structures. Decision making, lifestyle and authority are aspects the women respondents felt that were at the core of choice making and comprised an integral part of their self-concept. The women in the study further noted that their choice of gender and development studies contributed to their self-concept as they felt more empowered and self-assured.

Correll (2001) notes that career choices for women are influenced by cultural beliefs that contain specific expectations for competence. Individuals in the society may thus not attribute it to the feminine self-concept competence and this may influence the choice to choose gender and development studies.

The researcher noted that even when an individual holds a stereotypic belief about the feminine or masculine self-concept and its association to gender and development studies, they rely on others. In this study friends reinforced these beliefs.
### 4.2.3 Individual View of Gender and Development as a Master’s Degree Choice

**Table 4.10: Individual view of gender and development studies as a master’s degree choice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual satisfaction</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enlightenment on gender issues</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Familiarity with course content</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual empowerment</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future career prospects</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquisition of additional knowledge on gender</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the third sub-section of objective one, the study sought to examine the respondent’s individual view of their choice of gender and development studies. The individual view was divided into individual satisfaction, enlightenment on gender issues, familiarity with course content, individual empowerment, future career prospects and the acquisition of additional knowledge on gender.

As shown in Table 4.10 above, men reported satisfaction at 28%, enlightenment about gender issues at 20%, while familiarity with course content, empowerment, career prospects and additional knowledge 13% each. The finding is not similar to that reported in women with empowerment scoring highly at 49%, satisfaction and career prospects followed at 16% each. Additional knowledge on gender scored 11% and lastly enlightenment about gender issues and familiarity with course content was least at 4% each.

The data revealed that what mattered most for the men was satisfaction. It was related to feelings of motivation and encouragement from others. Additionally, satisfaction was linked with the feeling of knowing that the chosen career had excellent career prospects. With regards to this one man respondent opined that:
I am satisfied with my choice as it will improve my chances of promotion at the workplace. My choice will also enable me to relate better with my work companions as they will know that I have an understanding of my work content (O.I, Charles 18/08/2015).

An understanding of the work content has been shown to be linked with self-efficacy which is one’s general sense of competence and effectiveness (Bandura, 2002). According to Betz (2007) self-efficacy beliefs concern personal capabilities, for specific tasks, problems and activities. In the above case, the choosing of gender and development studies was not associated with competence at work and thus an understanding of its content leads to self-efficacy leading to the achievement of a tangible goal. It has been noted that self-efficacy beliefs influence goal setting behaviour (Bandura, 2002).

The researcher noted that the association of gender and development studies being viewed as a women’s field could emerge from a lack of understanding of its content that can lead to weak self-efficacy that is associated with anxiety over the career choice process (Betz, 2007). This can be contrasted with flexible self -perceptions of gender roles that facilitate stronger self-efficacy for career decision making (Bluestein et al., 2004).

Women Empowerment was the highest scoring variable at 49%; women reported empowerment emerging from making a choice that was relevant in terms of content to their needs and concerns. They also linked this empowerment to knowledge that their course was relevant to career progression and that they had better career opportunities. With regard to this one woman noted:
My view towards my choice is I feel that I am on the right path and since it is a relatively new course and not saturated in the market as other traditional courses, I think that my consultancy chances in the market are feasible. Knowing this makes me feel empowered and fully satisfied (O.I Noel.22/08/2015).

The empowerment that strongly influenced women’s choice may be attributed to strong efficacy beliefs about their choice(Betz, 2007). These self-efficacy beliefs also emerged from positive feedback from friends and family. With regards to this one female respondent had the following to say:

Positive reactions towards gender and development studies from family and friends arise because of perceived employment opportunities and the self-empowerment that arises through the content of the course. The course as a whole makes an individual more informed in decision-making where gender issues are concerned as a whole (O.I Noel.22/08/2015).

Another issue that was linked to women’s empowerment was the fact that they were aware that women in the African society have been more disadvantaged than men and that their choice had put at their disposal an opportunity that many women did not possess. This concurs with Arbache, Kolevand Filipiak (2010) who note that in Africa, despite education having shown that it influences employment earnings and outcomes, educational attainment for women is lower. They attribute this disparity to gender inequality in human capital acquisition among the adult population in Africa.

From the discussion it emerged that future career prospects which scored 13% for men and 16% for women was highly interlinked with satisfaction for men and empowerment for women. As for women better career prospects can empower leading to reduced gender gaps in the labour market: which are areas where women are
disadvantaged as compared to men. The ILO (2014) attributes these gender gaps in employment to a higher prevalence of temporary contracts among women than men, differences in educational attainment and labour market segregation.

Another factor that the ILO (2014) attributes to the higher unemployment rate for women is that women are more likely than men to exit and re-enter the labour market owing to family commitments. The report further notes that career interruption for child rearing results in longer periods of unemployment, while men are more likely to move directly from one job to another. Interruptions in attachments to the labour market could lead to skills obsolescence and reduced employability.

The above report shows why future career prospects may matter more to women than men as a variable as they are outpaced by men due to their gender. The researcher notes that not all is lost as the remaining variables which are enlightenment on gender issues, familiarity with course content and acquisition of additional knowledge on gender can remedy women’s bleak career prospects. This is because at the heart of these variables is awareness creation about choice and how this choice can transform the individual and community as a whole.

The rational choice theory was found to be applicable as the respondents expressed their choices as clear goals where they expressed personal utility by balancing out a number of preferences and chose gender and development studies as it was most representative of their career goal. This was at par with a tenet on the rational choice theory that posits; people express their preferences as clear goals. Secondly, from the findings the respondents possessed information about gender and development studies as well as other career choices. This finding was at par with a tenet of the rational
choice theory which posits that individuals have information about the preferences available to them which made the theory applicable.

**4.2.4 Summary of Objective One**

From objective one it emerged that the socio-cultural determinants of choices were linked to the idea of gender equality and the value of empowerment. For women empowerment to be attained there has to be integration of their social selves in their career choices while for men it could be attained by adhering to traditional male ideals. The socio-cultural determinants shaped women and men’s career choices by making them more involved and aware of their choice in relation to themselves, their families and friends.

The study also confirmed the assumption that there were socio-cultural factors influencing student’s choice to study gender and development studies at the master’s level in Nairobi County. This assumption was proven by the findings in part as culture influenced both women and men’s choices. However, as noted the social component in the factors influenced women’s career choices to a greater extent than men’s career choices.

**4.3 Effect of Student’s Perceptions of Master’s Choice of Gender and Development Studies**

The second objective of the study sought to establish student’s perceptions of their choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level. This objective examined perceptions which are important to the student during the choice-making process. This is because perceptions are the student’s assessment of what comprises choice, how accessible the choice is, as well as what choice is compatible with their values. The study posed closed and open-ended questions to the respondents, whose
responses were sought as to what and how perceptions played a role during their choice-making process. Table 4.11 below presents the findings.

**Table 4.11: Effect of perceptions on student’s master’s choice of gender and development studies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of acceptability</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of prestige</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of career prospects</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptions of career relevance</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted information and guidance</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family and career balance</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that perceptions of career prospects at (33%), perceptions of acceptability at (30%) and perceptions of career relevance at (20%) were the major perceptions influencing the choice of master’s programme among the male respondents. Female respondent’s choice of master’s programme was mainly influenced by perceptions of career prospects at (33%), family and career balance (18%) and perceptions of career relevance at (16%). These results are discussed as below:

i) **Perceptions of Acceptability**

The results show that 30% of men perceived gender based acceptability as a factor while making their career choice and 7% of women did the same. Acceptability in career choice in the study pertained to the appropriateness of the choice in light of individual, societal and family factors. These factors were then influenced by African gender roles which dictated which career roles were deemed acceptable. Perceptions of acceptability could have featured as a stronger determinant for men than women owing to their closer link to societal gender role expectations.
Gender role expectations can be seen as a socializing influence, and views about the acceptable social roles of men and women can be seen as attitudinal sets that influence nontraditional career choice (Lease, 2003). Men who perceived gender and development studies to be acceptable are likely to have more liberal gender attitudes that challenge traditional stereotyped perspectives of appropriate gender roles (Cornwall, 2000). With regards to acceptability of career choice, one male respondent noted:

What is deemed as an acceptable career choice is dictated by the conservative nature of our society that demands adherence to the traditional roles of men and women and does not entertain deviance from these roles. Traditionally, men were the breadwinners and in some communities women did not perform certain roles like constructing houses. However, at present, especially in the urban areas perceptions have changed owing to lifestyle changes whereby women are no longer restricted to their traditional roles and men have embraced those once associated with women (O.I. Paul, 7/08/2015).

The men in this study could have found perceived acceptability to be of more importance than women because they are traditionally supposed to be the moral custodians or gatekeepers of what is deemed as acceptable in the society, owing to their dominance in leadership positions. In this regard a male lecturer opined:

Men are used to being at the top of the house and to have the decision-making power. A woman who has power over him or is viewed as competing for power in the household and productive realms is not well tolerated by him, his family and friends (O.I, Casper 6/08/2015).

Other male respondents in the study made an association between dominant male leadership and a conservative society as being the source of what was deemed as an acceptable career choice. The researcher noted that even though most of the
respondents in the study were living in urban areas, the conservative outlook on gender roles that originated from the rural areas still had a hold on them.

In this regard a male lecturer opined:

*The rural areas in Kenya are the source of the deeply rooted cultural perceptions. Male dominance is celebrated and entrenched with traditional symbols such as fly whisks, batons, elaborate head dresses and costumes. Male personalities are personified with attributes of courageous or strong animals such as the lion, the cockerel, the crocodile, and the bull among others. Such traditional symbols and personifications contribute to strengthening of the notion that men are the natural leaders and that what they dictate is what should be taken as acceptable in the society (O.I, Caleb 8/08/2015).*

Amundson (2005) is of the view that individual and social-environmental influences such as cultural gender role expectations, impact on gender roles as well as one’s gender self-image in career choice. Ibid. (2005) further indicates that one’s gender self-image interacts with one’s understanding of which career choices are acceptable. The researcher notes that cultural career expectations and notions such as: there are some careers that are the preserve of men and other for women may act as career barriers.

This is because during the career decision making process students may be inclined to make decisions based on cultural acceptability instead of their individual preferences and aptitude for the course. This may be a reason for gender unresponsive enrolments in courses such as gender and development studies in Nairobi County.

The researcher notes that fewer women may have found perceived acceptability as a challenge as they may have found it compatible with their preferences and did not feel
like they were going against their cultural career expectations. It may also indicate that the women respondents had more proximal factors acting in their favour such as career contacts or academic advisors.

**ii) Perceptions of Prestige**

Perceived prestige was a factor only considered by women at 12%. Prestige in the study was the association of gender and development studies with high status in society, professionalism, employability and both local and international repute. Career prestige is associated with widely held cultural beliefs that attach greater social value and competence with one category of the attribute than another (Correll, 2001). The cultural status of a career choice provides the setting for whether greater or lesser worthiness and competence are associated with the choice (Correll, 2004).

Fiske et al., (2002) note that those possessing higher status in careers are expected to offer more valued contributions than those with lower status. The authors further note that higher status individuals are given more opportunities to participate and when they do participate in the group, their contributions are evaluated more positively. In this regard one female lecturer noted:

*In Kenya since the Fourth Beijing Women Conference, opportunities for women in the gender and development area were amplified. Women’s issues were in the limelight and careers emerged to address women’s needs and concerns. A local woman’s situation could now take international center stage and this encouraged many Kenyan women especially scholars and activists into the field, making gender and development studies prestigious (O.I, Geraldine, 16/08/2015).*

Women respondents in the study noted that gender and development studies addressed issues that concerned them and that they felt included in terms of content and
participation in the classes. Most of the women respondents, who participated in the study, were in gender and development careers and were anticipating entering the field. In fact, while in class, the women respondents said that they felt at ease participating and that their contributions mattered. This led to a feeling of worthiness and competence among the women respondents. One female respondent opined that:

_I view my choice as strategic and enabling because I am exposed to better career opportunities and that my choice will make me a gender focal point. I feel like I will be part of a society that contributes to issues that have long been neglected. I also feel I have a role to play in the sensitization of gender issues. I am aware of my privileged position as not many women have such an opportunity_ (O.I, Getrude, 5/08/2015).

Despite most women in the study viewing the career choice as prestigious they were aware that not everyone especially men found the course to be prestigious. This may be due to what Ridgeway (2006) terms as status beliefs and stereotypes that operate as schemas for interpreting and making sense of the social world. The researcher notes that status beliefs and stereotypes when viewed as cultural schemas are likely to lead to gender unresponsiveness at enrolments for master’s students.

This is because even students who do not personally endorse beliefs that men choose more prestigious courses than women, are likely not to endorse gender and development studies as a prestigious course. The researcher notes that this can be attributed to the students awareness of these beliefs existing in their culture and expect that others will expect them to choose the more prestigious male oriented courses. This expectation or what we think most other people believe has been shown to modify behaviour and bias judgment (Correll, 2004).
iii) **Perceptions of Career Prospects**

The perceptions of career prospects of gender and development studies highly influenced choice at 33% for men and 33% for women. This was the most highly ranked perception among both men and women and it mainly had to do with employability. Van der Heijde and Van der Heijden (2006) define employability as the continuous fulfilling, acquiring or creating of work through the optimal use of competences. The men and women respondents chose gender and development as they perceived that their choice would lead to new employment opportunities or enable upward mobility in existing careers.

Cornwall (2000) among other reasons noted that when it came to career employability men were likely to choose a career associated with women owing to opportunities for advancement to authority positions that may not be available in male dominated occupations. This was the case in the study as one male respondent noted:

> I think being a man played a role in my choice as I felt I had a higher advantage in the job market over women, even if gender and development studies was considered as a woman’s turf. This is because there were fewer men entering in female concentrated careers thus granting them more employment slots and greater receptivity as they could be seen as proof that gender equality works. Additionally, I had done prior research and found out that when a man ventures into a female concentrated profession such as catering, they enjoy higher status and wages than women in the same field (O.I Anthony, 18/08/2015).

The views of the respondent concurred with research that has noted that men who enter female-concentrated occupations, benefit from their minority status (ILO, 2016). These benefits include remuneration where by men are paid more than women in female-concentrated occupations (Catalyst, 2005, KPMG, 2014). Such benefits have
been linked to the glass escalator effect whereby men progress more quickly than women to senior positions (Catalyst, 2005). The effects of this process are apparent in vertical segregation that sees a higher proportion of men in upper echelons of female concentrated occupations (Lupton, 2006).

Concerning this a key informant student in the gender and development sector noted that:

_Men find the career prospects of gender and development studies so appealing because of greater rewards and prestige. Men who have the gender and development studies qualification are more likely than women to have an advantage when it comes to hiring and promotions (O.I. Angela, 21/08/2015)._ 

The above advantages and benefits that men acquired in female concentrated careers may be attributed to what Catalyst (2005) described as men taking their gender privilege and sexual power with them into women’s work and thus representing an advantaged rather than oppressed minority.

Despite what Catalyst (2005) notes about privilege and sexual power, the researcher noted that the men respondents in the study were not as assertive and confident as the women respondents when it came to expressing themselves and the way they felt about the course and its content. Even though men respondents were aware of the benefits and high employability promised by pursuing gender and development studies, they did not want to entertain doubts about their masculinity or have their sexuality challenged.

This thin line between advantage in female concentrated occupations and the questioning of masculinity by the men respondents was noted by a lecturer as follows:
In a typical gender and development class, male students are very conscious of the reactions of other students towards their choice as they do not want to be considered effeminate. However, when they realize that their classmates have accepted them they become fine with their choice. I have noted that men are more concerned with what their peers will think of them when they chose a course associated with women and women’s activities(O.I, Sheila, 12/08/2015).

The researcher also notes that these advantages that gender and development studies offers to male respondents could lead the men to be as purposive entities that seek rewards and prestige rather than just heeding to gender stereotypes. This supports the rational choice theory employed in this study, as the theory posits that purposive entities put their interests and preferences before those of the society.

The women also interviewed in the study had similar reasons such as those of the men respondents. Most of the women were either seeking job promotions, entry into new careers or to enhance their consultancy work profile. KPMG (2014) however notes that women unlike men mostly consider prospective benefits while men weigh whether the prospective benefits exceed latent conflicts.

The researcher notes that women weighing prospective benefits could be the result of their complex reality whereby women have fewer choices available to them as compared to men. When a women is considering her career prospects and she understands that she is limited in terms of time, resources and career options, it make sense for her to focus primarily on the prospective benefits.

The researcher also noted that the career prospects for women not only comprised of the employability benefits, but was also inclusive of the benefits that they would gain to their overall wellbeing.
In this regard one female respondent noted:

*I chose gender and development studies because as a woman I felt subdued by cultural constraints and saw that men especially those in leadership positions had not embraced inclusivity. As a result of my career choice, I now can articulate my standpoint on the need to include women in the development process and do not look down upon myself. I also now have healthy self-esteem and increased confidence* (O.I, Maria, 14/08/2015).

Other women respondents in the study also reported choosing gender and development studies because of benefits related to the above view, such as its association with women’s empowerment and women’s rights. The researcher notes that these additional benefits that women anticipate to gain from their choice did not feature with the male respondents and could to be tied to women’s complex reality of home-making and childcare.

The researcher notes further that the benefits of a healthy self-esteem, higher confidence, greater empowerment and awareness of rights stem from feminist identification. This identification is beneficial to women as its curriculum underscores the importance of ability and a sense of personal agency as was rightly perceived by the women respondents while making their choice.

iv) Trusted Information and Guidance

In terms of trusted information and guidance concerning gender and development studies men felt this was adequate at 17% higher than women who felt it was adequate at 14% respectively. Trusted information and guidance was mostly accrued by the respondents from background influences such as past career choices, lecturers, mentors, friends and family members. Lecturers especially featured in this study as
sources of trusted information and some of them were friends or in contact with the respondents. In this regard, one female respondent noted:

*A lecturer in the gender and development studies department whom I knew gave me the information that I needed while I was in the process of making a choice for my master’s degree. I knew that I could rely on this information as the lecturer had previously taught me in the undergraduate level (O.I, Faith, 21/08/2015).*

Among influences for guidance are family especially parents who were supportive of the student’s past achievements and encouraged autonomy of decision-making. Parents featured for guidance in this study and in this regard one male respondent noted:

*When I first made my choice to pursue gender and development studies, I discussed my prospective choice with my parents. My parents encouraged my choice because they liked the development field. They thereafter discussed my choice with their peers and then came to a unanimous conclusion that it was a good choice as its prospects were very promising (O.I, Samuel, 4/08/2015).*

Lent et al. (2000) note that background contextual factors guide and help shape the individuals’ career choice based on the prior learning experiences that they have experienced. In this case, such background contextual factors that were present in this study were the respondent’s undergraduate career choices. Some of the respondents had previously pursued gender and development studies or courses with a gender component such as anthropology or sociology. In this regard one male respondent noted:

*My undergraduate background is in sociology and geography where I did units in gender and development. Since then gender and*
development studies has always been an interest of mine because I wanted to learn more about gender issues and my rights in the society (O.I. Meshack, 9/08/2015).

The effect that trusted information and guidance from the student’s lecturers, parents, friends or background influences was one of reassurance to the students that they had made the right choice. Such reassurance has been construed to be a career support which has been associated with enhancing the students’ belief in their scholastic aptitude and career decision self-efficacy (Fass and Tubman, 2002).

When relating these findings to the rational choice theory employed in this study, the researcher notes that just as the theory posits that the necessary information should be available, the respondents had information about their choice available to them. After the respondents examined the information, they made their choice according to their preferences. However, the researcher notes that the theory did not factor in the support input from the respondents’ environment from their families, friends and lecturers which played a role in this study.

v) Perceptions of Career Relevance

Perceptions on whether gender and development studies was relevant; in this context relevance meant that their choice was anchored in the day to day reality as based on their preconceptions before career choice. The men in this study scored higher than women at 20% while women at 16% felt that their choice was relevant to their reality. The student’s career reality was based on what ILO (2014) refers to as preconceptions; these were social, economic and cultural frames of reference, self-image and group identity.
The researcher notes that students enter the preliminary search stage of their choice-making process with a set of preconceptions which affect their willingness to pursue gender and development studies. These preconceptions also act as a filter mechanism when assimilating career information later in the process.

In this regard one female respondent in the study said:

*My choice was influenced by a local university that was launching a gender training programme for staff members whereby they needed consultants. It then occurred to me that even though my undergraduate degree was in development studies, I was qualified enough to train on gender and development because I had done gender and development units in my undergraduate studies (O.I. Lena, 19/08/2015).*

From the verbatim it may be noted that the preconceptions of the respondent’s career were shaped by social and group interests. Blustein et al. (2004) note that these interests are shaped by the relational perspective where people tend to seek connectedness through role models and mentors. Other respondents in the study reported as having their preconceptions being shaped by other factors such as economic. In this regard one male respondent noted:

*My choice was influenced by economic realities, I am the first born in a family of six children and my parents are paying for my master’s degree in gender and development studies. I made the choice to pursue gender and development studies as I perceived it to be a marketable course whereby I could easily get employed and in turn educate my siblings (O.I. Thomas, 14/08/2015).*

Trevor- Roberts (2006) notes that career choices are often made under conditions of continual change, uncertainty and contingent employment. When structural barriers
to opportunity and financial realities constrain desired career decisions, individuals attempt to make good decisions within their life contexts (Phillips & Jome, 2005). The researcher notes that in this study that the respondent’s preconceptions of career relevance were mainly shaped whether directly or indirectly by economic factors. The dominance of economic factors may be attributed to factors like the ratio of working-age population to dependents rising and the absolute number of young workers entering the labour force rising creating large youth cohorts (Canning, Raja & Yazbeck, 2015).

Korenman and Neumark (2000) further note that being born into a large cohort, known as generational crowding, may reduce wages and lead to large scale unemployment among the youth. The researcher notes that high unemployment may lead the respondents’ to carefully evaluate how they are investing their resources in education. This is because the respondents will want to choose a career that will give them greater chances of employment and maximize on their earning capacity.

vi) Family and Career Balance

Lastly no male respondents perceived that their choice brought about family and career balance, while 18% of women perceived that their choice was connected to family and career balance. For the women respondents this was particularly an important variable as it was the second highest scoring variable. Family and career balance was taken in this study to mean how women balanced their family and career related responsibilities. Some of the women respondents in the study were married and this meant that when they were making their career choice they had to factor in their marital responsibilities. In this regard one female respondent noted:
Choosing to pursue my postgraduate degree was challenging as during the day I was working and in the evening I had household duties. I therefore had to choose my career over my household duties upsetting my family in the process as I had chosen my career over them. An additional challenge I faced was that pursuing gender and development studies was viewed negatively by our family and friends as encouraging the absconding of my marital duties. I am lucky that my husband understands how competitive the employment standards are, and that you need to continually upgrade your qualifications. However, some other married women are not as lucky as I to have such a supportive husband and as a result their evening education has stalled (O.I. Elizabeth, 17/08/2015).

Other married women respondents in the study reported similar sentiments that it was difficult to balance their family and career duties. Similarly, women respondents who were not married but were working during the day noted that the evening classes took a toll on their vitality levels leaving them feeling drained. A key informant student in the gender and development sector noted that:

Unlike in the past, the family career balance and free versus working time balance in higher educational attainment has now featured as a crucial element in working women’s progression. Women have been known to have triple roles and the juggling of these roles has proved to be problematic for women. This is because they must now learn fast how to achieve this balance in their roles in light of shrinking employment slots in the labour market (O.I. Grace, 17/08/2015).

In the ILO (2016) report on women and work, these sentiments are supported where a 2015 poll indicates that more than 9,500 women in the G20 countries found that work family balance was the top-work related issue for women flagged as such by 44% of the respondents. Additionally, the ILO (2015) in a survey of 1,300 private sector companies in 39 developing countries found the greater burden of family
responsibilities was borne by women than men and was ranked as the number one barrier to women’s leadership.

The researcher notes that since unpaid household and care work disproportionately falls on women, family responsibilities need to be equally distributed between women and men. This is because the unequal share of unpaid household and care work may result in direct or indirect discrimination and tensions between work, family responsibilities and private life, which are detrimental to individual and collective well-being.

4.3.1 Summary of Objective Two

From the findings, it may be said that the effects in students’ perceptions which manifested as differences in career perceptions stemmed from what may be termed as the individual perspective of the respondent. This perspective of the respondent’s may be said to comprise of their past background, experience and expertise in the gender and development field. The researcher is of the view that more women than men chose gender and development studies because they had a perspective that accommodated their career choice of gender and development studies.

The study also held the assumption that there were effects on student’s perceptions of their choice of gender and development studies at the master’s level in Nairobi County. This assumption was proven in that there were effects present on student’s perceptions in the form of individual, social and economic effects.
4.4 Constraints on Student’s Master’s Choice of Gender and Development Studies

The third objective of the study sought to establish the constraints on student’s master’s choice of gender and development. This section examines constraints students faced as they were perceived to affect their subsequent career decision-making. The study posed open-ended and closed-ended questions to the respondents, whose options were sought as to what constraints played a role during their choice-making process. Table 4.12 presents the findings.

Table 4.12: Constraints on student’s master’s choice of gender and development studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Women</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career information</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career counselling</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career mentors</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career role models</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive career policies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study found that career information at (35%), supportive career policies at (20%) and career counselling at (19%) were the major constraints that male respondents experienced during the choice making process. Female respondents were mainly influenced by career information at (29%), career counselling at (24%) and career mentors at (22%). The results are discussed below:

i) Career Information

The study findings revealed career information as one of the factors majorly constraining men at 35% and 29% women. Career information in the study was construed to mean academic details explaining the course curriculum and its application. Owing to perceptions based on gender stereotypes and bias, many male respondents had insufficient information coupled with wrong notions about the
curriculum content of gender and development studies. In this regard, one male respondent noted:

*I had insufficient information on the curriculum of gender and development studies. I came to learn after I had made my choice of gender and development studies that men’s issues were also addressed in the curriculum. I was not aware of this as the word gender studies seemed synonymous with women's studies* (O.I. Mark, 7/08/2015).

Several male respondents in the study noted similar views. There was a variance in these views from the men respondents who had in their undergraduate studies taken units with a gender and development component. However, it must be noted that even those with a gender and development undergraduate component were not also fully informed on the course curriculum. Concerning this, one male respondent noted:

*Although I did a unit in my undergraduate studies of gender and development, we did not cover the course content in sufficient depth. I therefore did not know much of what the curriculum of gender and development studies entailed. I chose gender and development studies at the master’s level primarily for its promising career prospects with scant information on what its curriculum comprised of* (O.I. Kevin, 5/08/2015).

There were also those male respondents who had undergraduate degrees in gender and development studies who were not influenced by gender stereotypes and bias as to the curriculum of gender and development studies. These men respondents however had problems in articulating the curriculum they had learnt and they could not express gender concepts clearly in stark contrast to the women respondents.
The women respondents could clearly articulate the gender and development studies literature and fluently express the concepts however they had challenges in contextualizing the career information in real day to day contexts. In this regard, one female respondent opined:

*When choosing gender and development studies I was aware of its curriculum content and concepts. However, I lacked additional information on its diverse application contexts such as to which specialization suited my career background. What I felt was lacking in the career information was the practical application element (O.I. Lillies, 12/08/2015).*

Other female respondents echoed similar sentiments and attributed this to a weak career academic structure that lacked adequate career supports such as career mentors, lecturers and career resources which were available to give reliable career information. Reardon et al. (2000) underscore the importance of career information prior career choice as it helps in the development of self-knowledge and knowledge of the chosen career.

The author further notes that most career education programmes embody objectives that endorse the acquisition of career information related to both the self and career options. The researcher notes that in this study the women respondents had a higher degree of self-knowledge but lacked sufficient constructive realism on their career options while it was the opposite with the men respondents.

Morrison *et al.* (2007) noted that men rely more on the outer or rational information seeking systems which are characterized by systematic information seeking and logical and objective decision making. While women rely more on the intuitive information systems which are characterized by little search for purposive
information, reliance on self-awareness and emotional factors to make career related decisions.

ii) Career Counselling Services

The study findings revealed career counselling services as a factor that constrained the career choice of gender and development studies for men at 19% men and 24% women. Career counselling in this study meant the establishment of academic services based within the university that inform, advice, guide and direct students during their choice making process. The respondents in the study felt that career counselling was important before choice making as it integrated all aspects of their individual needs (including family, work, personal concerns and leisure) with their career choice.

Most of the respondents in the study were not aware of the location of career counselling offices within the university. The respondents in the study were aware that they needed prior briefing on their career choice before making their choice but did not know a specific person or place within their chosen university to seek such services. A lecturer within the gender and development studies department, aware of lack established mechanisms on career counselling commented:

_In most university departments career counselling services are non-existent. These services would act to debrief and introduce new students to curriculum content and the practical career options. When students lack such services, some make their career choices having unclear notions on the nature and outcomes of gender and development studies. This leads to some students changing to other degree programmes whereas if they had prior career counselling they would be well informed about what career they were choosing_(O.I. Mark, 26/08/2015).
Some of the lecturers in the study agreed with the view while others said that career counselling was existent in the departments in form of the entire department briefs which introduced new students to introductions into the curriculum. It must be noted that most contacts with the lecturers and introductions into the curriculums took place after the choice had been made instead of before the choice making process. In this regard, a male respondent noted:

Prior to making my career choice in gender and development studies, I felt that I needed someone such as a faculty member or lecturer to sit with me and to discuss my prospective choice. I however did not know how to go about getting such a person to counsel me as I was new to the university. It was only after I had paid the fees and registered that I met the faculty members and even then there was discussion or debriefing to introduce me to gender and development studies. I would have found useful if there was an office within the department where students could seek career counselling prior making their career choice (O.I. Daniel, 26/08/2015).

The advantages of career counselling have been highlighted by Reardon et al. (2000) who hold that career counsellors help students to develop coherent plans, identify the steps that can be taken to achieve their goals and connect their often vague ideas about their future work life to actual educational and career paths.

The researcher notes that career counselling can benefit women by incorporating constructive realism that is: realism that is not based in intuitive information seeking. Constructive realism is advantageous to women as it will not only address the constraints on the choice (job requirements and availability) but also the ways to expand choice options (actions one can take to become more competitive for a preferred job) (Morrison et al. 2007).
The researcher is of the view that men on the other hand, who are likely to base their choices on rational information seeking can benefit from career counselling in the exploration phase where they can sample a broader menu of the curriculum content prior to their choice making. For men, this sampling can take place in the form of interacting with and listening to faculty members’ experiences so that they can better discover and develop their career interests and values.

iii) Career Mentors

The study findings revealed career mentors was a factor that constrained the career choice of gender and development studies for men at 13% and 22% women. Career mentors in this study meant people who were professionals in the field of gender and development in various capacities such as gender and development studies lecturers, gender specialists or professionals in local or international NGO’s dealing with gender related issues and concerns. Both the women and men respondents felt that when making their choice they were not sufficiently exposed to career mentors who would have given them feedback and realistic advice on their choice. In this regard, one female respondent noted:

_I would have especially benefited before I made my career choice to have had a career mentor to discuss with my career aspirations. When I made my choice I knew that I had made the right choice but I needed affirmation, encouragement and strategic tips and advice from a mentor so as to know how to strategically position myself in a competitive field. I sometimes feel that trying to navigate the professional field without a mentor is like being in a ship without a rudder (O.I. Milka, 21/08/2015)._
Other women respondents in the study also underscored the importance of having a career mentor during the choice making process because of the importance of the career exploration phase. During this phase, the respondents took part in expressing a primary career choice and mentorship sessions provide the optimal conditions to explore the career choice.

Whereas the women respondents in the study needed mentors to explore with them their choice, the men respondents in the study mostly saw the need for mentors to assist them to familiarize with the career environment that they were going to enter into after they had made their choice. The men respondents viewed the mentor more as a resource instead of a guide. The men respondents were also more likely to choose a male mentor as opposed to a woman mentor as this dispelled the notion that they were entering a female concentrated field.

Concerning this a male respondent noted:

*I would have found a career mentor to be useful during my choice making process so that they could familiarize me with the gender and development field. Although I knew that gender and development studies was a marketable course, I needed to relate to the hands on experience of career mentors who are experts or specialists. Conversing with such specialists as mentors would have given me more certainty in my choice especially if they were men like me (O.I. David, 23/08/2015).*

There exist gender differences in terms of the benefits that men and women derive from mentoring relationships. Women felt mentors are important in teaching them the benefits and potential outcomes of a particular career, while men felt that they could benefit from just observing their mentors (Laff, 2009). Encouragement and the greater
need for affirmation from mentors are linked as one of the characteristics important to women. In contrast, the role of the mentor for men is linked with their association of career benefits (McKinsey, 2010).

The researcher notes that the observation by Laff (2009) differed with the findings of this study as the men in the study were more interested in the benefits and potential outcomes of gender and development studies derived from mentorship. On the other hand, the women in the study were more interested in exploring the choice which had been related with the development of self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2000).

iv) Career Role Models

The study findings revealed career mentors were a factor that constrained the career choice of gender and development studies for men at 13% men and 12% women. As compared to mentors who were taken by the respondents to guide, advice and explore their career options, role models in the study were taken to be individuals the students knew personally or knew of that had influenced their career choice by being admirable in one or more ways. Role models in this study were of importance due to the visibility that role models take in the society showcasing a person worthy of imitation and dispelling misperceptions a student may have about the determinants of his or her own success (Fried & MacCleave, 2009).

Some of the male respondents felt that they had few role models in the field of gender and development as the focus was mainly on women empowerment which used women as role models leaving out men. Other men in the study also felt that they lacked male role models in gender and development studies as they were not
sufficiently available and visible as role models. In this regard, one male respondent noted the following:

When making my choice to pursue gender and development studies, I was not aware of male role models in the field who I could look up to. Men seem to shy away from being role models in a female concentrated field and the few that are available in the field are unsure of themselves. I think there are few male role models in this field as men do not want to doubt or to have their sexuality questioned because it is a sensitive issue (O.I. Charles, 4/08/2015).

The men respondents in the study however agreed that when it came to the availability of women role models; they were available and sufficient, though some noted that the successful women role models in the field such as gender activists were controversial and thus would not be approached.

Women respondents on the other hand agreed that there were sufficient women role models in the field of gender and development. What they however found as a constraint with these role models is contacting them and meeting them as most these role models happened to be busy professionals. One key informant who was working with an international NGO noted:

I am in the field of gender and development working as a gender specialist. I meet with many university students during university open days and mentorships sessions, however these are usually too brief to make an impact, although I know that I inspire many women and men with my work. However, I have insufficient time owing to my busy schedule to play a greater role, in dispelling bias and stereotypes during the career choice process. I also acknowledge that role models would be useful during the career choice process as they
According to Perroneet al. (2010) role models have been described as important decisional influences as they offer affirmations and encouragement that support students to overcome career challenges and to feel hopeful, confident and courageous in the pursuit of career goals. However, as some of the male respondents noted they would not approach female role models or look up to them. McKinsey (2015) has attributed this stance to gender differences in perceived power whereby male role models are perceived to be more powerful than female role models.

Ragins further notes that these perceived gender differences when it comes to role models, makes male role models appear to have more power and ability to provide career development functions than female role models. The researcher notes that such perceptions in this study may stem from perceiving female role models as offering more of friendship, counselling and acceptance psychosocial roles. This can be contrasted with male role models who are perceived as sponsoring, coaching, protecting and offering challenging assignments and exposure (Ragins, 2007).

v) Supportive Gender Policies

The study findings revealed that supportive gender policies were a factor that constrained the career choice of gender and development studies for men at 20% and 13% women. The respondents felt that in order for them to make an ideal career choice in the field of gender and development studies there needed to be a gender friendly environment already present at their universities. There were policies that respondents said could provide a backdrop or enabling environment to make career choices. In this regard one male respondent had the following to say:
My awareness of the Kenyatta University Gender Policy and Sexual Harassment Policy, made me choose gender and development studies. I felt that there were visible efforts being made by the university to try and create a conducive environment between men and women that is based on gender equality that sometimes lacks in our society (O.I. Anthony, 17/08/2015).

The respondents in the study agreed that career education that encompassed career counselling and consisted of career information, making use of mentors and role models to achieve these aims was a product of supportive university policies. When asked why for instance they were not aware of existence of role models within their universities, the respondents in the study attributed this to lack of established structures such as specific offices where they could go and directly contact these role models. In this regard, one female key informant had the following to say:

*Career education is available at most universities offering gender and development studies, however the only challenge is that it is not well structured. By this I mean the onus is left to the students to find out where the career offices are and when they find the offices the staff is not well organised. Availability of role models and mentors is another challenge prospective students face, most of these mentors are busy most of the times and others ignore picking their phone calls* (O.I. Judy, 12/08/2015).

The theme of established structures within which to carry out career education kept recurring when discussing the constraints the respondents experienced during choice-making. Some of the male respondents said that they were aware of gender policies but felt that these policies addressed women inclusion and support mainly and did not see how these policies addressed their needs. Most of the men in the study were however not aware of the existence of the gender policies and that they could access
supportive career education if they wanted from staff like lecturers. Concerning this one male respondent noted:

Policies promoting career education would particularly be useful for men respondents like me in the process of making career choices. The gender policies that currently exist in my university focus mainly on women’s concerns and do not address how to integrate men in the development process. I think that if these policies could also include aspects of career education to increase the number of men choosing gender and development studies, gender balance in classrooms would be achieved (O.I. Kevin, 5/08/2015).

Women respondents on the hand seemed more aware of the existence of the university’s gender policies; however, they found these policies too broad as they did not narrow down on the specifics of how they would implement career education. Both men and women felt that the implementation of career education in gender policies was a challenge their universities faced. This is because the respondents in the study felt that if there was low implementation of existing university gender policies it would also be a challenge to implement career education policies.

Kasente (2002) and Odejide (2002), note that the emergence of gender and development studies has led to the mainstreaming of gender in African universities in the form of university policies. The mainstreaming of gender equity concerns in African universities include affirmative action programmes, strengthening women’s presence and research status, addressing sexual harassment problems, lobbying national policy makers and maintaining liaisons with the wider women’s movement (Bennett, 2002).
Such gender equity concerns shape university gender policies and gender and development studies curricula making the choice of gender and development studies to be viewed as a tool to transform a gender equal society. The researcher notes that mainstreaming policies in African universities recognize that there exists unresponsive gender enrolments with regards to women’s underrepresentation in the sciences and other male dominated career choices but scant attention is given to men’s underrepresentation in female dominated careers.

The researcher notes that this needs to change as gender equity needs to be responsive to both men and women’s needs. Such gender policies need also to address how men can make balanced career choices through the assistance of career education without necessarily conforming to career choice stereotypes.

4.4.1 Summary of Objective Three

Constraints experienced by the students could largely be attributed to their past non-academic background in gender and development studies, their non-academic networks in the gender and development field and their lack of accrued knowledge of how the academic system work in support of their career.

From the findings, the respondents who experienced fewer constraints were proactive, confident and solution oriented. This may be attributed to the possession of relevant academic information and knowledge, networks with mentors and role models and ability to understand what the course requirements were.

The study also held the assumption that there were constraints that masters’ students faced while making the choice to study gender and development studies in Nairobi County. This assumption was proven as the findings revealed that students faced
constraints such as lack of adequate career information, inability to access career counselling, mentors and role models and inexistence of gender policies supportive in creating a career enabling environment.

4.5 Suggestions to Make the Master’s Programme Gender and Development Studies Enrolment Interventions more Gender Responsive

The fourth objective of the study sought to give enrolment suggestions that could make the master’s programme gender and development studies more gender responsive. This meant the achievement of equal balance in numbers of the male and female students enrolling for gender and development studies master’s programme in Nairobi County. This section examines suggestions which are important as they can contribute to the realization of gender balance in enrolment that was lacking in all of the student intakes that participated in this study.

The study posed open-ended and closed ended questions to the respondents, whose options were sought as to what suggestions could contribute towards present or future efforts to attain gender responsiveness. The findings are presented in two sections, one discussing the suggestions of the male and the other of the female respondents.

Table 4.13 below presents the findings below:

**Table 4.13: Suggestions to make gender and development studies enrolment interventions more gender responsive at the master’s level**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Women No.</th>
<th>Women %</th>
<th>Men No.</th>
<th>Men %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender sensitization, outreach and awareness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender workshops, seminars and conferences</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender media initiatives</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender scholarships and part time jobs</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equal participation between both sexes</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender educational content</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender educational socialization</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The study found that the major suggestions that the male respondents thought could achieve gender responsiveness were gender sensitization, outreach and awareness at (33%) and gender educational content at (20%) and gender workshops, seminars, conferences and gender educational socialization at (13%) each. The female respondents’ main suggestions were gender sensitization, outreach and awareness at (24%), gender media initiatives at (18%) and equal participation between both sexes at (16%). These results are discussed below:

Gender sensitization, outreach and awareness were the major suggestions held by men on how to make gender and development studies more gender responsive. Most of the men who participated in the study felt that in order to achieve gender balance in enrolments there was need for sensitization and awareness through outreach programmes. One male respondent had the following to say:

*We should start gender sensitization and awareness outreach programmes in our primary and secondary schools. Introduction to gender and development studies should also be made a mandatory unit for all undergraduate students in all universities. Such outreach programmes and introductory units incorporating especially the male students issues in gender and development studies will greatly aid in the debunking of myths, stereotypes and bias concerning the studies (O.I. Charles, 4/08/2015).*

Gender educational content was taken to be important as a means of achieving gender responsiveness in enrolments as the men in the study found that early in their primary and secondary school studies there were not enough textbooks forming the curricula that introduced gender and development studies. When men respondents subsequently enrolled for their undergraduate and master’s studies in gender and development
studies, the gender and development studies curricula seemed (to them) to focus exclusively on women and was introduced without their prior knowledge of its concepts. The men in the study said there needed to be more curricula introducing gender and development studies concepts especially in the lower levels of the educational system.

Other men respondents in the study found gender workshops, conferences and seminars that involved more men in gender debates and discussions, getting them interested in pursuing gender and development studies at the master’s level. Some of the men also said that for the workshops, conferences and seminars to be effective, there is need for equal participation of women and men. This is because some of them had noted that what made men disinterested in such initiatives was that mostly women participated exclusively and excluded men’s input.

Gender educational socialization was taken by men to be related to how teachers and especially in primary schools and parents in the homes presented gender issues. Men respondents were of the opinion that the viewing of gender and development studies as a woman’s preserve had started early in primary schools. Instead of presenting certain subjects as being neutral, parents and teachers encouraged sex stereotyping of subject choices which influenced a student’s future career choice.

The women in the study also felt that gender sensitization and awareness through outreach programmes was especially necessary for men. They noted that the lack of gender balance in their class rooms could have been as a result of insufficient outreach programmes for men students starting at the lower levels such as primary schools. The women respondents also felt that what was lacking in efforts to make gender and
development studies more gender responsive was the early lack of male involvement in the gender discourse while in primary and secondary schools.

The women respondents felt that men needed to understand their roles in relation to what gender and development studies advocate for as this was not the case. Concerning this one female respondent noted:

> Men feel that gender and development studies are a ‘women thing’ and that it is oppressing to them. The structure of masculinity is under threat when men choose gender and development studies and this is because in a gender class the gender equality dynamic is presented as a ‘fifty fifty thing’ which undermines men student dominance both in class and psychologically. On the other hand for women a ‘fifty fifty thing’ advocates for what they have always known but do not have the strength to implement due to compact socialization processes (O.I. Phyllis, 26/08/2015).

A challenge as noted towards realizing gender responsiveness in enrolments was men not wanting to compromise their dominance in classes. Undoubtedly women reported in the study as gaining from having the feeling of being represented in the gender and development studies classes and this enhanced their self-concept and gave them empowerment. Although women in the study were dominantly represented in the classes they acknowledged that having more men in their classes would make their discussions better and enrich both their experiences when it came to knowledge shared.

That is why women in the study advocated for gender media initiatives that could focus on featuring the equal participation of the sexes. Concerning this one female respondent noted:
Media initiatives need to be started that focus on power imbalances brought about by cultural sensitivities. This is because gender and development studies content is seen as feminism which invades on cultural sensibilities (O.I. Lydia, 8/08/2015).

The local media as a tool of disseminating information was viewed by most women respondents as not being sufficient in featuring gender and development studies instead it aggrandized features that encouraged male dominance. Women felt that both social and mainstream media could be useful tools in communicating and clarifying the concerns of gender and development studies.

4.5.1. Summary of Objective Four

Emphasis in career interventions should primarily be on moulding the content of gender and development studies to accommodate both women and men. While it is true that women have traditionally and historically faced discrimination and marginalization, the lack of a balanced curriculum in gender and development studies, will conform to widely held stereotypes and assumptions that the course sole focus is women.

Gender and development studies as a career needs to acknowledge feminist content, but place at the heart of its content an integrative approach that addresses both women and men’s needs and concerns. This approach will have gender and development studies increase the number of male students pursuing it, integrating difference and achieving diversity instead of it being predominantly a female concentrated career.

The study also held the assumption that gender and development studies enrolment interventions at the master’s level in Nairobi County can be made more gender responsive. This assumption was proven as the respondents gave suggestions such as
having gender based sensitization, outreach and awareness programmes, gender based workshops, seminars and conferences and gender based media initiatives among others which they felt would bring about gender responsive enrolments.

The researcher also noted that the interventions that were in the conceptual framework, tallied with those that were given by the respondents.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction
In chapter four the findings of the study were presented. This chapter presents a summary of the findings of this study which sought to establish the determinants of choice of Gender and Development Studies master’s programme in selected universities in Nairobi County. This chapter also presents the conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations as well as areas for further research.

5.1 Summary
This study sought to examine the determinants of choice of the master’s programme in selected universities in Nairobi County. As noted in chapter one of this study, in the statement of the problem, even if men and women have the same opportunities available to them, several factors condition their choices in different ways. This leads to gender imbalances in subject choice despite the gender responsive interventions by universities which are aimed at addressing such imbalances.

The first objective of the study was to identify the socio-cultural factors that influence master’s student’s choice to study gender and development studies. The findings indicate that the socio-cultural factors that influence student’s choice included: family relational networks, personal values, traditional values, social values, perceptions of the society, the socialization process, gender roles and feminine and masculine self-concept. The study noted that there were neither specific offices for career education within the gender and development studies departments nor was career counselling offered before the career choice. Consequently, in most gender and development studies departments, the career choice processes did not incorporate a gender
perspective that was the purpose of universities gender policies. Thus, while many women were aware of the benefits of gender and development studies and enrolled in high numbers, fewer men enrolled for the course. This could imply that gender policies that are aimed at creating awareness on gender issues for both women and men mainly impacted on the women. The study therefore underlines the lack of sufficient career education and career counselling in career choice leading to gender unaware enrolments in gender and development studies.

The second objective sought to investigate the effects of perceptions on the student’s choice of gender and development studies. The study found that women perceived gender and development studies as prestigious, participatory, empowering and economically sound. Despite effects perceptions, women felt that they had made the right career choice and were confident despite cultural constraints. Men perceived gender and development studies as a financially rewarding course but were more influenced by the patriarchal cultural ideals of the society. Perceived economic benefits therefore played a major role in the choice of gender and development studies for both women and men.

The third objective was to identify the constraints master’s students faced as they made their choice to study gender and development studies. The study noted that the major constraint faced was lack of adequate career supports. The men in the study had challenges in obtaining unbiased career information while women had access to this career information but said they still lacked its comprehensive application. The researcher noted if sufficient career counsellors and mentors could be availed, men could benefit from in-depth explorations of their choice and women could familiarize themselves with the diverse application contexts of gender and development studies.
The final objective was to suggest ways in which gender and development studies enrolment interventions at the master’s level could be made more gender responsive. Numerous suggestions for achieving gender responsive enrolments were acknowledged. Among them were gender sensitization, awareness and outreach programmes to be introduced at the primary and secondary levels of schools. The targeting of men student’s in introductory gender and development curricula in schools and universities was emphasized, with the equal participation of the men and women at its heart. The media was also suggested as an intervention mechanism which can promote gender responsiveness in the way it presented specific careers such as gender and development studies.

5.2 Conclusions
Gender and development studies programmes have the potential to be more aware in their accommodation of both women and men. This is because, even if the student’s choice of programme is influenced by social and cultural factors as well as perceptions, these factors are not static and can be altered. This can be done with gender sensitive career education to make an area of study that seems suitable and aligned to women’s issues and concerns accommodative for both women and men. This potential is displayed by the men who have enrolled and completed their M.A. in the Gender and Development Studies programme. Even though they form a minority; these men have enjoyed considerable recognition, promotions and better remuneration.

Student’s perceptions on their career choice were influenced by their individual perspective which was shaped by their background interests, academic background and the opinions of parents and friends. The students choosing gender and
development studies at the master’s level chose it because they perceived it to be an easy subject therefore granting them a higher opportunity of scoring good grades just like in any other humanity subject. This is an irony because it contains a stereotype which gender policies seek to rectify.

Constraints experienced by the students could be largely attributed as emerging from their past non-academic background in gender and development studies, their non-academic networks in the gender and development field and their lack of accrued knowledge of how the academic system worked in support of their career.

Emphasis in career interventions should primarily be on moulding the content of gender and development studies to accommodate both women and men. While it is true that women have traditionally and historically faced discrimination and marginalization, the lack of a balanced curriculum in gender and development studies, will conform to widely held stereotypes and assumptions that the course sole focus is women.

5.3 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for achieving gender responsiveness in enrolment and pursuance of gender and development studies in Nairobi County:

1. There is need to counter the social and cultural factors that determine the choice of M. A. Gender and Development Studies programme in Nairobi County. Universities in the Nairobi County therefore, should ensure that career education and advice incorporates the empowerment of women while supporting ideals that involve and include men.
2. Universities in Nairobi County should offer free career education courses beforehand to prospective gender and development students, in order to shape the individual perceptions of students with solid academic information about the course. The departments of Gender and Development Studies should spearhead such advocacy campaigns as they are well aware of the course aims and content. Advocacy will debrief students and eliminate misperceptions and stereotypes about the course.

3. The policy makers in the field of gender need to tailor their policies to reflect African realities. The diversity of women and men’s lives and the integration of African socio-cultural values, attitudes and perceptions, when drafting, formulating and implementing gender policies needs to be incorporated.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

This study focused on the determinants of choice of the master’s programme of gender and development studies in Nairobi County. Further research needs to be carried out to establish other determinants such perceived career barriers and supports play in career choice. A study should also be undertaken in other urban counties to establish the determinants of career choice in gender and development studies.
REFERENCES


KPMG (2014). *Cracking the code*. London: KPMG.


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Open and Closed ended Questionnaires for Master’s Students Taking Gender and Development Studies in Nairobi County

Dear Informant,

You have been selected as a respondent to assist in providing information on a study about determinants of choice of master’s programme in gender and development studies in Nairobi County, Kenya. Participation in this research is voluntary and if for any reason you do wish to respond to the questions you are free not to. You are required to respond to the items in this questionnaire in all honesty and sincerity. Any information that you provide will be treated with full confidentiality.

Section A: Personal Data

1. Gender Female □ Male □

2. Age (Tick as applicable)
   a. 20-29 □
   b. 30-39 □
   c. 40-49 □
   d. 50-59 □
   e. 60-69 □

3. Marital status of the respondents (Tick as applicable)
   a. Married □
b. Single □
c. Divorced □
d. Separated □
f. In a come-we-stay relationship □

Section B:

Reasons for Choosing to Study Gender and Development Studies at the Masters Level

1. Which of the following options best captures why you chose to study gender and development studies at the Masters level (Tick as applicable)

   a. Family advice □
   b. To understand better gender roles □
   c. To help or play a role in community development □
   d. To better understand society or be aware of the society □
   e. To enhance your educational experience □
   f. To enhance financial or career opportunities □
   g. For my personal interest □
   h. Any other reason (specify)...............................................................

   Could you please explain your option.............................................................

2. What or who influenced your choice (Tick as applicable)

   a. Events in the society such as career fairs □
   b. Educational background □
Objective One
Determinants and Socio-cultural Determinants of Subject Choice
1. Could you please name determinants or factors that you think influence subject choice?
   a. ........................................................................................................................................
   b. ........................................................................................................................................
   c. ........................................................................................................................................
   d. ........................................................................................................................................
   e. ........................................................................................................................................
   f. ........................................................................................................................................

2. Which determinant or factor most influenced your subject choice of gender and development studies?

3. Which of the following socio-cultural determinants or factors do you think most influenced your subject choice of gender and development studies?
   (Tick as applicable)
   a. Personal values                  □
   b. Traditional values              □
   c. Societal values                 □
   d. The socialization process       □
   e. Gender roles                    □
f. Feminine and masculine identity  

□


g. The perceptions of society  

□

h. Any other determinant (specify)..............................................................

Could you please explain your chosen determinant.................................

Objective Two

1. Which perception do you think most influenced your subject choice of gender and development studies (Tick as applicable)

a. Perception of acceptability  

□

b. Perception of prestige  

□

c. Perceptions of career prospects  

□

d. Perceptions of career relevance  

□

e. Trusted information and guidance  

□

f. Family and career balance  

□

g. Any other perception (specify)...............................................................

Could you please explain your chosen perception...........................................

Objective Three

1. Choose one among the following constraints that you experienced greatly when making you master’s choice of gender and development studies (Tick as applicable)

a. Availability of career information  

□
b. Availability of career counselling

c. Availability of career mentors

d. Availability of career role models

e. Availability of supportive career policies

f. Any other constraint (specify) ..........................................................

Could you please explain your chosen constraint ..........................................

Objective Four
1. Which of the following suggestion do you think can make gender and
development studies enrolment interventions more gender responsive in Nairobi
County?

   a. Gender sensitization, outreach and awareness

   b. Gender workshops, seminars and conferences

   c. Gender media initiatives

   d. Gender scholarships and part time jobs

   e. Equal participation between both sexes

   f. Gender educational content

   g. Gender educational socialization

   h. Any other suggestion (specify) .......................................................

Could you please explain your chosen suggestion ........................................
APPENDIX II

Interview Guide for Master’s Lecturers in Gender and Development Studies In Nairobi County

Dear Informant,

You have been selected as a respondent to assist in providing information on a study about determinants of choice of master’s programme in gender and development studies in Nairobi County, Kenya. You are required to respond to the items in this interview schedule. Any information that you provide will be treated with full confidentiality.

Objective 1

In your opinion, what do you think influences MA student’s choice to take gender and development studies?

In your view, how does one’s gender determine the student’s choice to pursue an MA in gender and development studies?

Objective 2

Can you elaborate the societal attitudes, opinions and beliefs associated with gender and development studies as a subject choice?

In your opinion, what do you think shapes these attitudes, opinions and beliefs?

Objective 3

(a) Explain some of the constraints faced by students of M.A Gender and Development in the course of their studies;
(b) In your view, do these differ along gender lines? Explain

**Objective 4**

Can you suggest enrolment interventions you think can be put in place to achieve gender balance in choice of the master’s programmes in gender and development studies in Nairobi County?
APPENDIX III

Research Permit from the National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
APPENDIX IV

Data Collection Approval Letter from Kenyatta University

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
OFFICE OF DEPUTY VICE-CHANCELLOR, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND OUTREACH

Ref: KU/DVCR/PGS/VOL1/16

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Dear Ms. Mwose,

RE: REQUEST TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA AT KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

This is in reference to your letter dated 3rd August, 2015 requesting for authorization to collect data at Kenyatta University towards your M.A. degree titled: Determinants of Choice of Masters Program: A Case of Gender and Development Studies in Selected Universities in Nairobi County, Kenya.

I am happy to inform you that considering the purely academic nature of your research, your request has been approved. It has been noted that your respondents are the Chairperson of the Department of Gender & Development Studies, lecturers and Masters students in the Department.

Yours Sincerely,

Prof. F. Q. Gravenir
Deputy Vice-Chancellor
Research, Innovation & Outreach
cc. Vice-Chancellor
Chairperson, Dept of Gender & Development Studies
APPENDIX V

Map of Nairobi County