

**WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS IN KENYA:  
A CASE OF NYAMIRA COUNTY**

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## **DECLARATION**

This project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my family, friends and colleagues for their unwavering support and encouragement throughout my academic journey.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>CIDP</b>	County Integrated Development Plan
<b>IEBC</b>	Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission
<b>IIDEA</b>	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
<b>KPHC</b>	Kenya Population and Housing Census
<b>UN</b>	United Nations

## OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

<b>Cultural Factors</b>	encompasses set of beliefs, moral values, traditions, language and behavioral rules commonly held by a community or defined group of people.
<b>Drivers</b>	a factor which causes a particular phenomenon to happen or develop.
<b>Economic Factors</b>	a variable that has the potential to impact and shape someone's financial situation. This may include things like income, employment status, and education.
<b>Elective Position</b>	a position held by virtue of being voted for by simple majority.
<b>Political Factors</b>	set of rules that regulate the operations of political institutions and their interactions with society. It includes government policies and leadership.
<b>Women Leadership</b>	a state of being led by women; women being at the helm of a decision making institutional structure.

## ABSTRACT

Despite constitutional and institutional frameworks aimed at promoting gender equality in Kenya, women's representation in elective political positions remains critically low, especially at the county level. The underrepresentation of women in elective leadership is a global challenge to the realization of gender equality and inclusive governance. This study investigates the drivers of women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. The specific objectives include the influence of cultural, economic and political factors on women's pursuit and attainment of elective offices. Anchored in Patriarchy and Feminist Theories, the study employed a descriptive survey design targeting 384 registered voters across the county's four constituencies. The study used structured questionnaires and interview schedules to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for quantitative analysis, while qualitative responses were examined thematically. The findings reveal that entrenched patriarchal norms, traditional gender roles, cultural taboos and exclusionary political party structures continue to suppress women's leadership ambitions. The study also found that, economically, limited access to financial capital, land ownership disparities, and the cost-intensive nature of political campaigns disproportionately affect women candidates. Politically, the study uncovers systematic exclusion of women in party nominations, limited media visibility and heightened vulnerability to electoral violence and character assassination. The study concluded that entrenched cultural resistance to female candidacy, financial inequities in campaign mobilization and political party biases significantly perpetuate systemic discrimination against women in leadership engagement. The report suggests that political parties, the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), and the Kenyan Parliament county governments, and gender advocacy organizations prioritize the implementation of gender-responsive policies and legal reforms. The study also recommends deliberate policy enforcement, targeted civic education, economic empowerment programs, gender-sensitive electoral reforms and the institutionalization of quota systems. It further calls for sustained political will and policy enforcement to dismantle the patriarchal structures that hinder women's leadership. The research contributes to the discourse on gender, governance and politics in Kenya and offers practical recommendations for policymakers, political actors and civil society to bridge the gender leadership gap at the county level.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The involvement of women in elected leadership is seen as a crucial component of development, given that women make up fifty percent of the global population (World Bank, 2013). Strong women leadership for democratic government is essential; unfortunately, due to restrictive legislation and institutional impediments, women continue to be marginalized in politics around the world leading to low women leadership in elective positions. Such under-representation is a rights issue with detrimental societal effects, as perspectives and experiences of more than half the population are never taken into account.

According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (2008), women exhibit elective leadership when they collaborate across party lines in parliamentary women's caucuses, even in the most politically charged settings, and when they advocate for gender equality issues like voting reforms, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws, and the abolition of gender-based violence.

#### **1.1.1 Women Leadership in Elective Positions**

As per calculations from UN Women (2023), there are currently 31 nations with women holding positions as Heads of State and/or Government, indicating that it may take another 130 years to achieve gender parity in top leadership roles. The reality of women

serving in legislative assemblies across the globe has an effect on the social, political, and economic facets of the countries they represent; nonetheless, they encounter significant barriers in gaining entry to these crucial legislative frameworks. Therefore, it is essential that these issues be identified and resolved in order to guarantee that democratic institutions are fully functional and that everyone's human rights be respected in full. Targeting all stages of women's admission into elective roles, as stated by IIDEA (2005), necessitates a concerted effort, from the beginning to the end, to ensure that they have the resources and means necessary to make a positive and constructive contribution to the advancement of their country as members of parliament.

Even Nevertheless, the majority of nations worldwide still lack gender balance, gender quotas have made significant advancements possible. As per the United Nations, Economic and Social Council (2021), countries with constitutionally enforced candidate quotas had higher representation of women in parliaments and local government, by five percentage points and seven percentage points, respectively.

In 1995, women accounted for 11% of lawmakers, while today they represent only 26.5% in single or lower chambers, based on data from the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Just six nations, either in the lower house or the single chamber, have 50% or more of their female citizens in parliament: Rwanda (61%), Cuba (53%), Nicaragua (52%), Mexico (50%), New Zealand (50%), and the United Arab Emirates (50%). Twenty-three more nations have reached or exceeded the forty percent threshold: six are in Africa, three are in Latin America and the Caribbean, one is in Asia, and thirteen are in Europe. There are 22 states in the world where the proportion of female lawmakers in single or lower

houses is less than 10%, with one lower chamber having no female legislators at all. In parliamentary seats, women account for 32% in Europe and Northern America, and 36% are found in Latin America and the Caribbean. They make up 26% of the population of Sub-Saharan Africa, with Eastern and South-Eastern Asia coming in second at 22%, Oceania at 20%, Central and Southern Asia at 19%, and Northern Africa and Western Asia at 18%.

It is important to acknowledge that while women have indeed achieved greater representation in elected roles, significant gaps remain between female leadership and that of males (Brown & Diekmann, 2013). Women make up just 21.8% of the national parliament, with only 17% of government minister positions held by women (United Nations Women, 2014). The international community will achieve both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and female basic rights through investing in gender-responsive political involvement. This will in turn involve women in decision-making processes and hence pave way for a more inclusive and resilient political processes.

Despite the rise of female candidates for public office in America, women are becoming less confident that voters will support them. The main causes of women's underrepresentation are due to this, as well as gender discrimination and the fact that women must put in more effort to show themselves than males. Males are still considerably less likely to regard this as a serious obstacle than women (32% of males do so), since they believe that women simply aren't as interested in holding elective positions. However, 57% of women believe that voters are not ready to elect them. Even so, a lot of people in America doubt that women will ever be able to get over the barriers

standing in the way of reaching gender parity in elective positions. Men will continue to hold more elective jobs, according to about half (48%) of respondents. ( Horowitz, J.M, Igielnik R. and Parker, K. (2018).

The desire among women to occupy elected roles has noticeably grown across Europe in recent years, yet true gender equality remains elusive. Furthermore, in industrialized democracies, gender equality in elected positions and resources has significantly improved during the previous fifty years. The number of women elected is higher than it has ever been, and while they have profited from bettering women's leadership over time, they still vote less frequently in most Western countries (Paxton et al. 2007; Norris 2002).

Madagascar, with a population of 22.92 million (World Bank, 2013), was rated 73rd in the world by the International Parliamentary Union (2014) for the proportion of female MPs. The French Colony denied girls leadership roles and access to school, favoring mainly boys' education. In spite of this, women in Madagascar remained immediately and actively engaged in the social and political realms of their community. Thanks to advocacy activities that, among other things, expanded women's involvement in elections and other leadership roles through women's empowerment and education, women ruled the nation throughout the majority of the nineteenth century (Women's Leadership and Political involvement, 2015).

Due to their enthusiasm in running for office and their unhappiness with the political organizations that were already in place, women actively founded and established their own political parties in the nation. The 30-50% movement, which sought to increase the

number of women in leadership positions in the Malagasy Parliament to 30-50%, and the development of a handbook that included information to educate the public about women in politics were the primary goals of the Women's Movement in Political groups, which was established with the intention of expanding women's access to elective leadership through various campaigns (Norad, 2013).By supporting female candidates running for office, advocating for them, and urging its supporters to cast their votes for these candidates, this activism helped women gain access to positions of electoral leadership.

Uganda is thought to have one of the most gender-sensitive constitutions in the world, and it has a number of laws and policies in place to address gender inequality. Successful women leaders are encouraged by the strategic goals of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), to which she belongs. Unfortunately, because laws and rules are primarily still on paper, execution is still the major obstacle. She is restricted by customs and firmly ingrained patriarchal beliefs, particularly in rural places. But the nation has come a long way toward achieving gender equality, with women's leadership mostly being established through separate women's elections.

From 131 in 2011 and a record-breaking 99 in 2006, women's representation in Parliament rose to 143 in 2016. Currently, 31% of parliamentary seats are held by women. Uganda's reserved seat system is effectively an add-on method, as women are elected alongside constituency members of parliament who are chosen by a first-past-the-post voting process. Rebecca Kadaga, 2013–4. But a number of barriers, including fear,

client list support, and incumbency advantages, have made it difficult for female candidates to win the general election (Tripp 2006). Men are given preference in the media, according to the African Centre for Media Excellence (2015), whereas women are underrepresented and lack the networks and resources to organize.

Kenya is said to have a strong and forward-thinking institutional, administrative, and legal structure that, if put into place, might eliminate the socio-economic and political disparities that still plague the country. The National Assembly has not yet passed the legislation that would create the framework for implementing the principle that "Not more than two-thirds of the members of elective or appointive bodies shall be of the same gender" (Article 27, clause 8), despite the fact that the 2010 Kenyan Constitution gives the State the authority to take legislative and other actions to carry out this principle. The Supreme Court declared in its 2012 advisory opinion that the National Assembly needed to enact the legislation by August 27, 2015, and that the State was required to create suitable legislation to carry out the gender equity mandate or face dissolution under Article 261 (5-7). Parliament attempted to enact the necessary legislation to ensure equal gender representation in 2015 (twice) and 2018 through constitutional amendments that aimed to develop a formula for achieving the required one-third representation for each gender in Kenya's bicameral legislature. In 2016, the court determined that the legislature and the attorney general had not moved to enact the laws required to uphold, honor, defend, and advance gender rights.

Data from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, IEBC (2022), which reveals that women continue to trail their male counterparts, presents a dismal picture of women's leadership in elective positions. From voter registration, which is the first step in the electoral process, out of the 22,120,458 registered voters, 10,862,268 were women, accounting for 49.11%. It will be noted that right from the presidential candidates position, women candidates were missing as all the four presidential candidates were male while out of the four deputy presidents, only one was a woman. At the gubernatorial position, whereas men were two hundred and forty three with twenty two women candidates, the results were that forty men and seven women were elected. At the Senatorial position, whereas men were two hundred and ninety two with forty seven women candidates, the results were that forty four men and three women were elected. At the Member of National assembly position, whereas men were one thousand eight hundred ninety nine with two hundred and thirty four women candidates, the results were that two hundred and sixty men and thirty women were elected. At the County Assembly, there were eleven thousand six hundred and thirty eight men and one thousand two hundred and ninety two women candidates out which one thousand three hundred and thirty six men and one hundred and fourteen women were elected. Compared to the 2017 General Election, there were more female candidates and elected members in the 2022 election, raising hopes that more women will be able to advance to elective positions with a stronger strategy.

### **1.1.2 Women Leadership in Elective Positions-Nyamira County**

Nyamira County covers an average area of 899.4km<sup>2</sup> (CIDP, 2018-2022) and borders Homa Bay, Kisii, Bomet and Kericho Counties. It has a population of 605 576 with 290

907 being men, 314 656 women and 13 intersex (KPHC, 2019). It has a total number of registered voters as 323,283 (IEBC, 2022). While the Gusii Community predominantly occupy the county, we have people from other communities especially in the urban centres and border lines by virtue of economic activities or neighbourhood.

The county's twenty county assembly wards are spread over four constituencies: Kitutu Masaba, West Mugirango, North Mugirango, and Borabu. Majority of the inhabitants follow and observe Christian beliefs dominated by the Catholic and Seventh Day Adventist followers. Traditionally, women's duties have been limited to the home and the children, with men being responsible for defending the community and livestock against attacks. The governor, deputy governor, and senator are all men. Further, all twenty members of the county assembly and the four members of the national assembly are men. (IEBC,2022).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Women in Kenya comprise 50.49% of the Kenyan population (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019) and 49.11% of the registered voters (IEBC Data report of 2022 Elections) their leadership in elective positions is low. It therefore follows that with proper awareness and resource mobilization; women can vie and win Elective Positions. The country however, continues to witness gender disparities in elective positions brought about by among others patriarchal structures which subordinate women to men. Whereas organizations like National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC), Kenya Electoral Assistance Programme (KEAP), Echo Network Africa (ENA), Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA) have been leading in campaigning for the

absorption of women in elective positions and while the Kenya Constitution 2010 gave an opportunity for women leadership in elective positions and other governance positions, women leadership in elective positions remains dismally low.

The percentage of women holding elective positions in Nyamira County and the nation as a whole is still low, despite the resolutions adopted and ratified at the UN Decade Conference in Nairobi in 1985 and the Abuja Declaration. This status persists despite the fact that Kenya has ratified most human rights conventions, such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (Yoon, 2004).

Numerous studies on women's involvement in political leadership and the political process have been undertaken nationally. For example, Lokoro (2018) studied the factors that influence women's involvement in political leadership in Turkana County's Central Constituency. Tundi (2018), conducted an investigation into the elements influencing women's involvement in political leadership in the Kimilili constituency, Bungoma County and Bochaberi (2009) did a study in Nyamira County on women's involvement in political processes. The first two investigations, however, were restricted to Constituencies, which made it difficult to extrapolate the results. While Bochaberi's study (2009) focused in Nyamira County, it was done in 2009 before the adoption of the 2010 constitution which brought with it the gender rule. The leadership of Nyamira women in elective positions following the adoption of the 2010 constitution has not been the subject of any research. As a result, there is a void that must be filled.

In Nyamira County, we have both governor (and his deputy) and senator being male; all members of the County and National Assemblies being men. Owing to this evidence of gender disparity in elective positions in the different elective positions within Nyamira County, the study investigated the determinants of women leadership in electoral positions in Nyamira County.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The objective of this research is to probe drivers of women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. Specifically the study seeks to:

- (i) To establish the extent to which cultural factors drive women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County.
- (ii) To establish the extent to which economic factors drive women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County.
- (iii) To establish the degree to which political factors drive women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The following research questions will serve as a guide for the study:

1. To what extent do cultural factors drive women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County?
2. To what extent do economic factors drive women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County?

3. To what degree do political factors drive women leadership in Elective offices in Nyamira County?

## **1.5 Justification and Significance of the Study**

### **1.5.1 Justification of the Study**

There is substantial evidence indicating that women possess untapped potential that can significantly enhance the social, economic, and political development of nations (Kelly Ann Krawczyk & Bridgett A. King, 2023). Although various recognized organizations have made notable progress toward empowering women, further efforts are needed to ensure that women meaningfully contribute their skills and competencies to community and national development. The continued underrepresentation of women in elected or appointed

leadership positions highlights the need for more deliberate and strategic interventions.

For such interventions to be effective, reliable information and empirical evidence on current trends in women's participation—both in terms of numbers and impact—are essential. A clear understanding of these trends will guide the formulation of systematic strategies aimed at addressing female underrepresentation in leadership. Thus, this study is justified by the need to provide updated, evidence-based insights that can inform initiatives seeking to enhance women's leadership in elective positions.

### **1.5.2 Significance of the Study**

The full and equal participation of women in political leadership is fundamental to establishing and sustaining strong, inclusive democracies. Women in elective positions not only champion gender equality but also broaden the scope of policy discussions and influence solutions crafted within political spaces. Their presence leads to increased attention to issues related to quality of life, equity, and marginalized populations (Volden, Wiseman & Wittmer, 2010). Evidence further shows that women legislators are more responsive to constituent needs and often prioritize social issues due to their historical roles in caregiving and community welfare (Camissa & Reingold, 2006; O'Connor, n.d.).

Women leaders also play a critical role in peacebuilding and post-conflict recovery, often advocating for stability, reconstruction, and conflict prevention due to their disproportionate exposure to the consequences of conflict. Their involvement promotes cross-sector collaboration, consultative policy-making, and institutional legitimacy (Inclusive Security Institute, 2009).

By examining women's leadership in elective positions, this study provides valuable insights to political parties, government entities, civil society organizations, and development agencies. It enhances understanding of the on-ground realities and strengthens efforts aimed at overcoming barriers to women's political participation, thereby contributing to improved governance and democratic growth.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The study will examine drivers of women leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County with respect to the 2022 General Elections. The study will focus on the General Elections since the six elections constituting the general elections (Presidential, Governor, Senatorial, National Assembly Member, Woman National Assembly Member, and County Assembly Member) were held simultaneously. By so doing, the underlying factors shaping the voting pattern will be deemed to be the same.

## **1.7 Assumptions of the Study**

Respondents will consent to take part in the study and provide truthful and accurate answers to the questions. Data collection instruments will be valid and reliable to collect information to answer the research objectives.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Literature Review**

Women have every opportunity to cast a ballot in elections and win public office. Today, when nearly half of the world's nations are regarded as democratic, it is more important than ever for all individuals to be included and involved in governance necessitating

sustainable peace and development. (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018). For more women to be elected there is need to introduce quota systems, carry out civic training for women and have political environments free of discrimination and violence. It is evident that women leaders in elective positions are more likely to make a difference and impact on legislation. They tend to advocate inclusive policies and react favorably to their constituents. (National Democratic Institute, 2019).

Since they are still socialized to believe that only males may hold elective positions, the conventional belief that women should focus on their household responsibilities has rendered this a "no go zone" for them. Kenya's fight for women leadership is hampered by retrogressive cultural and traditional practices, according to Omtatah (2008). These customs include the disinheritance of girls and women, forced marriages, female genital mutilation, bride price collecting, widowhood rites, the desire for sons and a lack of belief in the value of educating girls.

### **2.1.1 Cultural Factors and Women Leadership**

Since the fight for gender equality began, cultural factors have been identified as the biggest barrier for women in leadership roles globally (IPU, 2000, 2015; Norris & Inglehart, 2000; UN, 2000). The culture of a society provides the rules and regulations that its members must follow in order to function. Women's participation in extracurricular activities is influenced by culture (Kabeer, 2015; Lawless & Fox, 1999; Kameri-Mbote, 2016; Mwangi, 1996; Omwami, 2011). Notably, women are prohibited by cultural norms from pursuing elective positions since engaging in extracurricular activities is seen negatively by society (Mbarika et al., 2007; Musandu, 2008).

These cultural factors, when combined with religious factors—especially in States where citizens practice and obey Islam—have an impact on women's leadership because these States come to the conclusion that there may not be any female leaders, which in turn affects how women are viewed and treated in both public and private settings (Venny, et al., 2014). According to Tawo et al. (2009), women continue to experience oppression, discrimination, alienation, humiliation, marginalization, and exploitation in Nigeria as a result of male dominance, which Islam emphasizes. In Sudan and Northern Nigeria, where the Purdah marriage system is prevalent, women are frequently excluded from and denied a voice in decision-making. According to this custom, women must be physically isolated from men, cover their bodies, and remain within their homes. Married women should consequently stay at home to prevent them from being exposed to vices (Tawo et al., 2009).

In many African countries, where women are trained to be subordinate and obedient to their husbands, a man's honor is determined by his ability to govern his wife (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2008). In many regions of Africa, Christianity supports this viewpoint as well (Gouzou, Eriksson-Baaz, Olsson, 16 2009; AAUW, 2016). Furthermore, women who have divorced or are single are looked down upon because marriage is a sacred institution. All these factors likely contribute to the low number of female candidates for elective offices. Values, ideologies, and images make up a significant portion of the background whereby the socializing procedure affects work and family life yet many traits gained by men and women through socialization processes, have implications in the quest for elective positions. Cultural views of women continue to tell them that owning property is usually bad or undesirable, in contrast to men who are indoctrinated to

confidence, aggressiveness, and self-promotion (Koenig et al., 2011 as quoted in AAUW, 2016).

Omtatah (2008) asserts that socialization programs that prepare girls for household duties and boys for leadership roles also prevent women from advancing into elective positions. Many men find it difficult to comprehend the notion that they might be on the same platform as women as a result of this type of socialization. Due to the conflict between employment chances and parental/marital responsibilities, women are confined to household tasks and have limited time to be nurtured for electoral processes (Norris & Inglehart, 2001; White, 2012). The ability of women to assume elective positions is impeded by their familial responsibilities (Biegon, 2016; Kassilly & Onkware, 2010; Kameri-Mbote, 2016).

The Institute of Economic Affairs (2008) claims that women in Kenya are not afforded equal access to elective positions due to social, cultural, and traditional standards. FIDA-K (2013) says that there are communities which still think that being a woman is a curse to hold an elective position. By seeking elective positions, females in such communities are viewed as violating the gender-role norms (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2008) and such attempts are often met with dire consequences. Indeed Hon. Peris Tobiko, then Member of National assembly for Kajiado East Constituency, Kajiado County was cursed (to death, including those who would vote for her) by community elders for seeking an elective position, as it was against her Maasai culture (FIDA, 2013).

Women are generally uncomfortable traveling far, staying away from home for extended periods of time, going to bars, and interacting with men—all of which are necessary for political campaigns (Tripp, 2001; FIDA-K, 2013). Women who are interested in elective positions must take into account the possibility of societal stigma and being branded as "loose" or "unfit" mothers or wives (Kiamba, 2008; FIDA, 2013). Muhammad (2010) agrees that Politicians spend a lot of time traveling and frequently spend the night in hotels away from their homes while attending political events, with people identifying these women as being promiscuous.

### **2.1.2 Economic Factors and Women Leadership**

Economic resources can be a barrier to women since majority live below poverty line (Choundhary, R 2018). The majority of women's jobs are domestic spheres as moms and wives hence those who can progress their careers in business or entrepreneurs to gain financial strength are scarce. This hinders them from joining politics since they are perceived as weak and inferior (Kailiti, H.B 2018). Despite their vast population and other factors like the necessity for a suitable education, women may find it difficult to compete with their financially stable male counterparts (Djupe, P.A., McClurg, S.D., & Sockey, A.E. 2017).

In Africa, democracy is expensive, and a candidate must receive substantial funding before they can get a nomination to serve as a political party representative (Malik & Courtney, 2011). Women who are interested in running for office in political parties often fall short of their goals without strong financial backing since they are more likely to be outbid by the highest-bidding, typically male, candidates. In Kenya, political parties are not well-established to financially assist candidates; parties are supposed to be funded by

the candidates. It therefore follows that assets are important very important in deciding the types of candidates to be elected. For women to win elective positions, they have to be similarly equipped on a financial level to males (Mitullah, 2003).

Several individuals believe that for one to be elected, he or she has to give out cash especially in fundraisers. The aspiring candidates are assumed to be wealthy, and only a small number of people will provide financial support. A good elected leader is one who is able to show up in a number of fundraising events and who can afford to provide several contributions. (Wrong, 2009). The most generous among you will probably win an election; sadly, with the patriarchal systems in place, very few women are able to challenge the males for office. For women to seek such positions, substantial amounts of resources including finance, time, resources, and people are needed, with finances being the most challenging to get (Women Direct Service Centre, 2006:11). Many women's goals are hampered by this lack of resources when they try to apply for elective positions. Women's incapacity to hold elective positions is a result of poverty and unequal income distribution (Biegon, 2016; Kameri-Mbote, 2016; Sivi-Njonjo, 2016). Because they are typically not subsidized by the state, women who contribute to domestic work and child care have low incomes (Black & Erickson, 2003; Bryson, 2003).

In Kenya, Women are mostly affected by inability to raise requisite finances fuelled by traditional ways of controlling access to and control over the use of land, as well as the accrual of rewards, all of which disproportionately favour men. (Institute of Economic Affairs, 2008). Women won't even have a title deed to serve as security for a loan

because most family assets that could be pledged as security for bank loans could most probably be registered in the husband's name. With ballooning maintenance of campaign vehicles and associated transport costs, (Mitullah 2003, 231) then there is the issue of bribing voters both which eats into the candidate's budget, huge finances are required.

Studies indicate that when education levels rise, more women are encouraged to join the labor sector and their employment chances improve (Heath and Jayachandran, 2016). The less educated women are and the lower the number of women employed and working outside the house, the less it is expected that women will aspire to elective positions. Courage Mlambo's (2019) research, which comes to the conclusion that economic hurdles predominantly prevent women from entering elective roles, emphasizes the direct impact of women's economic backgrounds on their pursuit of elective positions.

Women's aspirations for elective positions and their level of education are positively correlated, according to recent research (Lovenduski and Hills, 2018; 110). Women with higher levels of education also exhibit greater interest in and aspiration for elective positions. The Maasai, Samburu, and Turkana are among the underprivileged communities in Kenya that prioritize the education of boys because their parents believe that their daughters will end up as brides in another man's home (Yiapan, 2002). The young ladies are unlikely to compete for elective office because they would grow up to be defenseless members of their communities. Therefore, increasing the number of women pursuing higher education is crucial to increasing the number of women in

elective leadership roles (Leigh, 2008; 10). This will significantly aid women in debunking the stereotype that they lack the qualifications to serve in elective office.

### **2.1.3 Political Factors and Women Leadership**

Active political parties are in a better position to mobilize massive rally attendance, conduct house to house campaigns and persuade indecisive voters to support their candidate because to their apparent numbers and commitment. Parties can either nominate candidates as flag bearers through primaries (democratic approach) or by use of high ranking party bureaucrats to select candidates (oligarchic approach). Such crucial decision –making executive structure is dominated by males leaving the nomination of candidates to be managed and run by a small group of influential party leaders who make sure that only candidates who are acceptable to the dictatorship are nominated. In such hierarchal decision-making processes women play a very minimal role (Makulilo, 2014; Meena & Makulilo, 2015).

Whichever nomination mechanism is employed, political party selection process determines who and who does not appear on the ballot. Winning the party's nomination ticket thus becomes essential in winning an elective position especially in areas popular with major political parties. Noteworthy is the fact that the main political parties' nomination procedures are defective to the point that many eligible candidates are actually shut out. Women are viewed as being weaker and more disposable (Nzomo, 2003; AWC Features, 2004) are particularly vulnerable. At the stage of party nominations, a significant number of female candidates give up their political aspirations due to frustration.

The idea of a highly institutionalized Western-style system and a performance-based understanding of elective posts are not shared by African politics or political institutions. In Kenya, the term "elective position" or "potential elective position" has taken on a more general meaning. Leading academics have stressed its inclusion of indications and expectations, as well as its inclusion of values, ethics, vision, and inspirational ideas attributable to the elective positions, which include; bringing community development to their electoral areas where those with the most development become popular, and providing financial assistance or otherwise, to individual or group needs. Most women become disadvantaged by the favoritism of men in the wealth distribution that is skewed. Such generic definition is caused by regional representation as prioritized in the electoral system's overall framework or model, according to Jo-Ansie (2001). In this system, one must be a citizen of a specific territory and registered to vote in order to run for an elective seat. Generally where women are married, they are referred to as the husband's property. When a lady moves into her husband's house after they have lived in the same town, rivals usually use this as an excuse to discourage voters prior to elections by emphasizing that they shouldn't pick and support an outsider as their leader. This hinders women from getting elective positions yet they can hardly be accepted at their home of birth for the same reason that they are married elsewhere.

Electoral violence during campaigns is a major scare to women aspiring for elective positions. Omtatah (2008) argues that violence is used by men to discourage women's electoral participation. According to Okumu (2008), such violence is frequently employed during electioneering seasons in an effort to quiet aspirant female leaders and

their activity in general. Although election violence affects both sexes, because of their more delicate physical characteristics and peaceful dispositions, women endure greater suffering than men. According to Okumu (2008), institutional or lack of legal protections can lead to physical, sexual, and psychological abuse of women, which can occur in the home and in the community. In an attempt to keep them from entering politics, female candidates have allegedly been held captive, fired at, or had their houses or other property set on fire. The danger of election violence has, in fact, demoralized a lot of women (Mitullah, 2003).

According to Omtatah (2008:59), participating in politically motivated violence during democratic elections is equivalent to yielding to the haughtiness and dictates of a crowd. According to Lamb (2002), women in Kenya who have served in elective posts have allegedly experienced rape, sexual harassment, mutilation, mental anguish, physical and psychological violence, and even death. The media is known to shape and influence people's attitude and behavior. In women leadership, the media makes women who may have never been known, to be known and even become national figures. Voters' perceptions of female candidates can be influenced by biased media representations of female leaders, which may discourage them from seeking elective office. Male stereotypes about women leaders exist, and they are occasionally unfavorably associated with "lesbians." Hillary Clinton's sexual orientation came under scrutiny on a regular basis in the mid-1990s (Worthen, 2014), and some American media outlets disparagingly referred to her as a lesbian (Wakeman, 2014, as mentioned in Worthen, 2014).

The media in Kenya has dedicated a significant amount of its coverage to issues regarding the violations of women's rights and tactics for prevention (Association of

Media Women of Kenya, 2006:1). While the media's emphasis on women's issues has been helpful, it has also contributed to the perpetuation of misogynistic beliefs and stereotypes about women. Women are frequently featured in the media as victims or when they fit traditional stereotypes associated with the female gender. Omtatah queries (2008:60) what positive outcomes can be expected from a media that perpetually presents women as disposable sex objects? According to Omtatah (2008), Kenyan media outlets regard women in this way and hold them to a moral standard that is not shared by the general public. Again media houses simply ignore women as they do not often regard women issues as newsworthy hence their issues are under-represented. Women are less likely to be the main characters even when they are in the news since they are included outside the serious section of the news agenda, unless of course they are all for the wrong reasons. The media has failed to give importance to women achievements and only focuses on their weaknesses as leaders. Such biased media coverage works against the interests of women. The public's pervasive belief that the media significantly affects credibility and influence in politics makes it difficult for women to gain attention from the media and public perception validity (Women Direct Service Centre, 2006:10).

The integrity and result of Kenyan elections are greatly influenced by the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission, which is in charge of supervising the entire electoral process. An independent electoral body was assumed to assure the conduct of impartial and free elections when the IEBC was established as a statutory entity. Some claim that most of Kenya's election laws are incompatible with holding free and impartial elections (Mwagiru 2002; Wanjala 2002; Mulei n.d.). This may be evidence of the

numerous allegations about ongoing electoral irregularities under its supervision. The fact that it depends on Treasury for funding of its activities, including the holding of elections, contributes to the issue, as does the ongoing issue of insufficient funding. Once more, relying on the national police to uphold law and order and stop violence associated to elections has not been successful. Numerous instances of election-related violence have been documented, and the police have done little to stop them from happening or to punish those responsible.

#### **2.1.4 Women Leadership in Elective Positions**

Women leadership in elective positions has been demonstrated in order to be socially advantageous (World Economic Forum, 2017), and it is an issue of women's right to equal access and opportunity. Although there has been progress in the last 25 years, much more work is still required to reach the 30 percent threshold.

A priority should be given to "take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and "increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership," according to G.1 and G.2 of the Beijing Platform for Action, which was the result of the Fourth World Conference on Women. The Sustainable Development Goal, SDG Target 5.5—which demanded that women have equal access to leadership opportunities and full and effective participation in political, economic, and public life at all decision-making levels—was used in the 2015 release of the 2030 Agenda to emphasize how urgent it was to achieve equity for women in leadership. Articles 7 through 9 of the United Nations Convention to End Discrimination Against Women expressly address women's political equality, while Article 7b addresses women's equal participation at all levels. State Parties agree to take all necessary steps to

end discrimination against women in the nation's political and public spheres, paying special attention to ensuring that women compete on an equal basis with men and have the freedom to engage in. Collectively, these pledges state that achieving women's rights to equality requires equal opportunity in elective positions. Women's leadership has been shown to have a number of positive social effects, including the reduction of inequality (WEF, 2017), a rise in cross-party and cross-ethnic collaboration (Markham, 2013), and a higher priority given to social problems including health, education, parental leave and pensions.

Furthermore, it has been shown that women leaders have a particularly positive impact on women in their communities. Voter turnout, women's political activity, and attitudes about women serving in public office are all positively correlated (Schlozman, Burns, and Verba, 2001). Future women leaders in elective posts may be significantly influenced by these role models. Time utilization is one obstacle to the political leadership of women and involvement. According to the International Labour Organization (2018), women in the region provide unpaid care for up to four times as long as men do, preventing them from participating in the political and economic sectors. Unpaid care work is one of the biggest obstacles preventing women from entering politics (Tadros, 2014). Furthermore, studies reveal that social norms often result in prejudices against female candidates who possess household traits (e.g., married and having children), placing women in a precarious position (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth, 2018). Therefore, women must challenge the stereotypes associated with caring work and ideal qualities in female candidates.

## **2.2 Theoretical Framework**

A theoretical framework, according to Clifford et al. (2010), was a collection of ideas that acted as a guide for study and assisted a researcher in determining what to measure and what conclusions to make. Theories gave researchers the analytical skills they needed to comprehend, explain, and forecast a certain situation.

### **2.2.1 Patriarchy Theory**

According to Walby (1990), patriarchy is a set of structures and ideas that let men to rule over women and keep them from gaining wealth or positions of authority. The term is now typically used to describe a system that maintains women in a variety of inferior roles and power dynamics where men dominate women (Bhasin 2006:3). "Patriarchy" is a term used frequently by feminists to characterize the uneven power relations between men and women. Because of this, feminists refer to the notion known as "patriarchy" to describe a way of thinking that, like other concepts, may be used to better understand the reality that women experience.

Patriarchy uses gender norms as a mechanism to keep women in the home as wives and mothers (Bari, 2005; 4). As a result, women are not welcome in public spaces like politics (Ackelsberg and Shanley, 2018). Men's predominate societies, which erect a "glass ceiling" for women, are the source of deep-rooted cultural restrictions for women. Women lack the motivation to challenge gender inequality, which is why most patriarchal societies prefer voting men over women (Dana, 2009, p. 67).

In other instances, it is held that women should always be considerate to men. Consequently, a girl is trained from birth to believe she is less than a guy. It depends more on nature than nurture how boys and girls develop their social skills in this area. Therefore, roles are assigned based on a person's gender. According to Sperandio (2009) (p. 53), successful women are portrayed as those who respect and obey their husbands. A woman cannot object to anything a man does or says, and she also cannot disagree with cultural norms. Most of the time, it is thought that a lady belongs in her home. She is therefore limited to employment in the domestic environment. This suggests that a woman's role is to care for her husband, cook and clean the kids at home. The male, on the other hand, is expected to provide for and lead his family; as a result, he can pursue elective roles in the workplace. According to this argument, women have less influence overall, even when it comes to speaking for themselves (Cubillo & Brown, 2003).

On the other side, most males will struggle under a woman's leadership. Women are not appropriate for elective professions that require one to be strong and think analytically, according to men who claim that women always use their emotions rather than analytical thinking when carrying out daily tasks. Only women who accept the challenge of leadership will be able to disprove these gender preconceptions (Coleman, 2002, pp. 82–83). There are situations where female leaders are expected to "think like a man and act like a woman". Due to the significant obstacles that women in elective positions encounter from male harassment, they often withdraw and become more solitary. To go through obstacles, one needs to be a tough lady. (Eddy, 2009).

Conflicting duties are also a significant barrier for women seeking elective positions. This is so that she can care for the child and put her career on hold to support her family, both of which she is expected to do as the child bearer. It is challenging for women to balance job and family as a result. (Dean et al, 2009). The majority of women worldwide are reluctant to accept elective posts because of the heavy responsibilities of family life. Prioritizing their family's needs over any other demands should be their top priority (Schuler et al., 2006). Women are discriminated against since tradition says that they should be content taking care of their families rather than running for office.

Because of the above, the International political system has thus been historically created by men for men and excludes women in many ways. One of the main ways patriarchy maintains power in politics is through the male-dominated organizational structure of political parties. Parliaments and other high-ranking elective seats are known to be guarded by political parties. As a symbol of democracy, parliament should ideally not exclude, restrict, or practice gender discrimination (Palmieri, 2011). In contrast to what is commonly believed, women experience discrimination and disadvantage in political parties. This discrimination begins with the requirement for a cash deposit during candidate registration, which many women find difficult to raise because of their lower socioeconomic and political clout relative to men (OSCE ODIHR, 2014; 16).

According to Barnes and Cassese (2017), women are more inclined than males to blame systematic discrimination for inequality. Because party structures prefer the viewpoint and agenda of men, such discriminations have finally led to the marginalization of

women in electoral posts. Once more, the ideologies of the various political parties influence how they treat women in leadership. Right-wing and conservative parties typically have more patriarchal attitudes about women. The smaller percentage of female candidates for high-ranking positions in various parties serves as evidence of this. Nonetheless, because they have a track record of promoting women in politics and seeing more women run for office and win leadership positions, leftist and liberal parties are perceived as being more accepting of women (Morgan and Hinojosa, 2018).

It is imperative to acknowledge that a growing proportion of female party members does not necessarily equate to elective positions. Many political parties employ the marginal seat syndrome to uphold the current quo and patriarchal rule while looking gender sympathetic and welcoming. Here, political parties field female candidates in electoral areas where their chances of winning are minimal (Palmieri, 2011; 10). While political parties may have differing opinions on a range of sociopolitical issues, parties are thought to be less transparent than parliaments when it comes to having established laws that are fair to all candidates in terms of gender equality, according to Palmieri (2011; 75). According to Caul (1999; 83), the majority of parties have implemented the quota system (which mandates percentages of women) and the goal system (which recommends percentages of women) to help overcome these barriers. These policies and processes, according to the Quota Project (2009), are meant to ensure that in legislative assemblies, women comprise at least a crucial minority of thirty or forty percent.

However, in addition to the reasons mentioned above, women who want to become politicians encounter more difficulties as a result of the patriarchal structure of politics, such as work schedules that are often incompatible with raising a family. This makes it especially difficult for women to fully engage with their employment tasks, as they are typically (according to patriarchal standards) assigned as the primary responsible figure for family matters. Women are usually burdened more than men because of strange work schedules, especially at night, or the incompatibility of the legislative cycle. Mothers find it more difficult to work in the workplace because of the patriarchal nature of politics. In terms of infrastructure, most parliaments are not well suited to satisfy the demands of women, especially nursing mothers. Verge and de la Fuente (2014) have identified a number of tactics that devalue women in politics, such as time management techniques, gendered informal punishments, super-surveillance of women's performance, gendered rituals in party bodies' daily operations, and informal networking. Women generally find it challenging to manage their obligations to their relatives and their professions because politics is a patriarchal field.

Women in Kenya's patriarchal society are primarily responsible for taking care of the home, which discourages females from participating in traditional political activities. The patriarchal structure of Kenyan society has resulted in decades of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) against women. Abuse of female leaders began in colonial times, when several were killed in the 1952 state of emergency declared in response to the Mau Mau uprising, while others endured various forms of humiliation. When women attempted to

run for elective positions, state agents attacked them, including Nobel Prize winner Wangari Maathai (Kassilly & Onkware, 2011).

### **2.2.2. Feminist Theory**

Tong, R. (2001) defines feminist theory as a body of ideas that considers the diversity of women around the world. In order to confront traditional philosophical viewpoints and address issues affecting humanity, feminism advocates for the overarching patriarchal order to be replaced with one that places a higher priority on equal rights, justice, and fairness. It focuses on gender politics, power relations, and sexuality in order to understand the nature of inequality. A large portion of feminist theory, while often offering a critique of social relations, also focuses on studying gender inequality and advancing the rights, interests, and concerns of women (Lorber, J. 2010). Feminism therefore provides women with theoretical and ideological tool for opposing gender-based oppression and promoting a socioeconomic and political agenda that is more inclusive. It also considers the social diversity and identities of women, who should be included in political reform and social growth and have a voice. The same patriarchal beliefs also inform society's expectations of women in elective positions. It is the duty of women to take up the cause of and provide for all social welfare needs, particularly those of women, children, and other oppressed groups. In addition, compared to their male coworkers, they are required to maintain higher moral, artistic, and ethical standards.

One of the main tenets of the feminist perspective on women in leadership is that the differences among women—class, ethnicity, color, generation, etc.—have a substantial

impact on their interests and objectives (Lovenduski, 2002). The house is viewed as the domain of women, and politics is seen as the domain of men, according to the gender roles that are taught to women and men. As a result, women are prevented from holding elective positions by household duties and parental responsibilities. Feminist ideology's further male conspiracy theory is predicated on the notion that males discriminate against women, which explains why they are underrepresented in elective positions. The power, prestige and desirability of elective positions in these traits are perceived as being male dominated and women finding it difficult to compete with men, has also been considered as a factor affecting the amount of representation of women (Clark 1991:70–75). Men's stereotyped views of women to be dependant, submissive, non-competitive, irrational, less competent, and less objective were reported by Broveman et al. in 1975.

Swantz (1985) reports on the rise of female leaders in Tanzania, where he discovered that husbands frequently discouraged their spouses from assuming voluntary leadership positions. According to his views, women who had to take issues into their own hands after becoming widows or divorced or in other situations where they were autonomous, have emerged as women leaders. Politics is a game of power, and to succeed in this game one must be aggressive, yet women have feminist attributes of passivity, sensitivity, and lack of aggression. This is represented in the situation in Kenya. Studies on sex role socialization conducted in the 1980s revealed that girls were still passively picking up political behavior from their mothers during this time period (Bennet, 1993).

Feminist ideas are many and varied, with the goal of analyzing women's experiences with gender subordination, the reasons for women's oppression, the ways in which gender inequality is perpetuated, and potential remedies. (Katherine C. J. and Michelle J. B.,

2008, Encyclopedia of Social Problems). Gender equality is promoted by socialist and liberal feminism. Feminisms that make the case that gender inequality results from structural factors rather than from a person's characteristics, decisions, or interpersonal interactions. J. Lorber (2010). The structural causes of women's underrepresentation in the workforce include their forced entry into low-wage, underappreciated jobs, their heavy workloads from home and childcare, and their unequal access to chances in politics, education, and health care. These injustices require serious attention since they become ingrained in social structures on a national and worldwide level.

According to liberal feminist theory, achieving gender equality in the legal system and political spheres requires both structural and legal changes. It develops from liberal political theory, which holds that women may alter politics and laws through legal and political channels to achieve gender justice. The focus on personhood and agency is a fundamental tenet of liberal feminism's historical development. Liberal feminists usually stress the importance of a State that protects and grants equal rights and opportunities to all of its citizens, regardless of gender. Thus, existing processes and conventions are altered to incorporate women. (Katharine, S., Ramona, R., Autumn, G., and Christina, L., 2008). Women will naturally support laws that advance gender equality if they are fairly represented in elective positions.

Equal rights for women in politics, the law, and society are the goal of liberal feminism in order to achieve significant legislative changes regarding property rights, women's voting rights, and political power. (Epure, M. 2014). Additionally, discrimination was rendered

unlawful, which paved the door for equal compensation. According to this passage from Epure, liberal feminism has made it feasible for women to enjoy legal rights and for laws to be free from discrimination. Other policies like affirmative action and mandated quotas can also be employed to raise the proportion of women. Thus, a gendered social order that has undergone reform would achieve gender parity and remove gender inequity. Because of this, women are seen by liberal feminism as an interest group that has unique difficulties in terms of mobilization and representation within a pluralist society. It also acknowledges that liberal rights theory is adequate to achieve gender equality within a liberal political system (Mackinnon, C.A. 2010).

The socialist feminist theory identifies connections between women's exploitation and oppression. Socialist feminists disagree with the notion that one's gender is predetermined by genetics and hold that the oppression of women and class structure are directly related. Moreover, the status of women must change in both the public and private spheres due to the fact that societal roles are not inborn (Freedman, B.E., 2002). The foundation of gender discrimination is a male-controlled capitalist hierarchy, which is completely destroyed in a radical feminist political theory in favor of the reconstruction of a society based on complete gender equality.

### **2.3 Conceptual Framework**

According to Flick (2015), a conceptual framework is a theoretical depiction that categorizes a theory that is being examined and the correlation between the variables

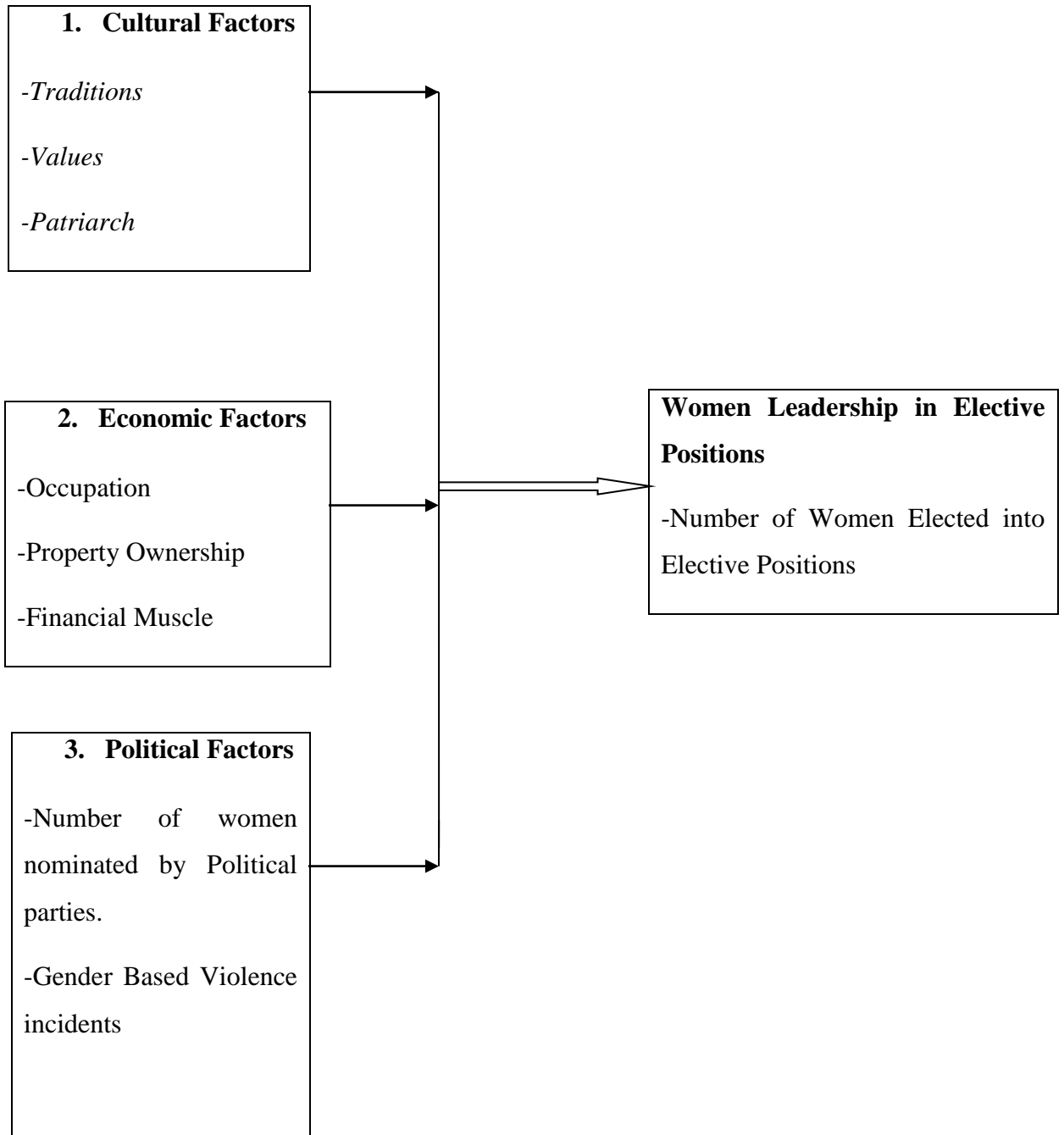
under investigation. It entails developing theories regarding the connections between the study's variables and illustrating those connections diagrammatically or visually.

Women's leadership in elective positions will be the dependent variable in this study, with cultural, economic, and political aspects serving as the independent variables. Empirical research demonstrates how cultural elements, such as customs and values, affect women's leadership in elective roles. The empirical literature demonstrates that women's leadership in elective posts is driven by economic criteria such as marital status, property ownership, occupation, and financial prowess. The empirical literature also demonstrated that women's leadership in elective roles is driven by political factors including political parties and election regimes.

**Independent Variables**

**Dependent**

**Variable**



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The primary research methods used in the study are identified in this chapter, along with the target population, sample plans, data collection instruments and methods, research design, ethical issues, data processing and presentation, and the dependability and validity of the research tools.

##### **3.1.1 Research Design**

The primary investigation methods utilized in the research were identified in this chapter, along with the target population, sample plans, data collection instruments and methods, research design, ethical issues, data processing and presentation, and the dependability and validity of the research tools.

##### **3.1.2 Target Population**

All objects in any field of study are collectively referred to as a population, or the "universe" (Taylor, Bodgan, & De Vault 2015). A target population is a portion of the general demographic that was chosen as the intended audience for a study based on shared qualities. The 323 283 (IEBC 2022) individuals who were registered to vote in the four constituencies of Nyamira County during the 2022 General Election would be the target population for the study.

**Table 3.1 Target Population**

<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Registered Voters</b>
Kitutu Masaba	106,269
West Mugirango	88,199
North Mugirango	64,750
Borabu	64,065
<b>Total</b>	<b>323,283</b>

### **3.1.3 Sampling Technique**

A condensed group selected from an easily available population is called a sample (Lewis, 2015). The practice of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population so that the selected group contains elements typical of the characteristics found in the entire group is known as sampling. (Flick, 2015).

Using (Krejcie-Morgan Formula, 1970)

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1-P)}{(ME^2 * (N-1)) + (X^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where :

n = sample size

X<sup>2</sup> = Chi – square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N = Population Size

P = population proportion (.50 in this table)

ME = desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

For this study at 95% Confidence Level with degree of freedom 1,

$$X^2 = 3.841$$

$$ME = 0.05$$

$$\text{Population Proportion} = 0.5$$

$$N = 323,283$$

$$X^2 * N * P * (1 - P) = (3.841)^2 * 323283 * 0.5 * (1 - 0.5) = 310432.50075$$

$$\{ME^2 * (N - 1)\} + \{X^2 * P * (1 - P)\} = 809.16525$$

$$n = 310432.50075 / 809.16525 = 383.6454 \approx 384$$

The study therefore had a target of 384 respondents registered as voters across Nyamira County.

### **3.1.4 Data Collection Instruments**

The inquiry made use of primary data. According to Bresler and Stake (2017), effective components for a structured survey included questionnaires that had been thoroughly tested and standardized. The study used closed questions that produced information relevant only to the study's main goal. A semi-structured questionnaire was used for the research since both qualitative and quantitative information were utilized.

Likert scale questions were utilized to collect quantitative data. The Likert scale has five levels: strongly disagree, disagree, moderately, agree, and strongly agree. According to Brinkmann (2014), the scale gauged levels of perception, attitude, value, and behavior.

Utilizing a Likert scale enabled replies to be transformed into a quantitative format for simple computer-based software data analysis. To gather qualitative data (in-depth

information), open-ended questions were used to solicit respondents' opinions on a variety of relevant topics.

### **3.1.5 Data Collection Procedure**

According to Brinkmann (2014), the systematic, precise gathering of information relevant to the study is known as data collection. Data for the study gathered using the drop and pick approach, which involves dropping and then picking up questionnaires. This ensured that survey participants have enough time to answer. However, permission from the respondents sought before involving them, and an introduction letter to be used in the field was first received from the institution.

Participants will be guaranteed the strictest secrecy regarding any information they want to provide. In any case, they filled out the questionnaires in an anonymous manner.

### **3.1.6 Reliability of Research Instruments**

The study assessed the validity and reliability of the pilot data. Face validity was evaluated by examining the readability and clarity of the questionnaire items as interpreted by pilot participants, and any item that was poorly understood, inconsistently interpreted, or misaligned with the study objectives was revised accordingly. Reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the internal consistency of a scale by comparing the variance of individual items to the variance of the total score; the coefficient is mathematically derived using the ratio of item variances to total variance to determine how well the items collectively measure the same construct.

As shown in Table 4.2

**Table 3. 1: Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability Coefficients**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
Cultural Factors	0.873	Reliable
Economic Factors	0.825	Reliable
Political Factors	0.622	Reliable
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.773</b>	<b>Reliable</b>

**Source: Field Data (2025)**

All variables recorded Cronbach’s Alpha values above the standard 0.7 cutoff, indicating acceptable reliability. Cultural Factors had the highest coefficient (0.873), followed by Economic Factors (0.825), while Political Factors recorded a lower but usable coefficient of 0.622. The overall reliability value of 0.773—computed from the aggregated item variances and total scale variance—further confirms satisfactory internal consistency of the data collection instrument. These results align with recommendations by Warmbrod (2014) and Polgar and Thomas (2009), who consider a Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.7 or higher indicative of adequate reliability.

### **3.1.7 Validity of Research Instruments**

Validity is the extent to which the conclusions drawn from the data analysis accurately represent the phenomenon being studied. According to Orodho (2003), validity is the result of a previous qualitative procedural examination of the research instruments to determine whether or not they are truthful, accurate, relevant, and appropriate in eliciting the data required for the study. The instrument was validated based on how the data to be

collected relates to how well the items sample significant parts of the study's goal (Orodho, 2003).

Colleagues and research specialists evaluated the instruments' content validity by assessing how well they measured and covered the study's specific topics or aims. The specialists gave the researcher advice on the things that needed to be fixed. The instrument was fine-tuned to improve the items' validity by including the adjustments on the questions. By examining if the questions were assessing the intended outcomes, such as linguistic clarity and whether respondents comprehended each question consistently, the validity of the study was confirmed (Orodho, 2003). The researcher established validity by identifying areas of ambiguity and uncertainty, which enabled the questions to be rewritten so that respondents could understand them better and replies from different respondents were collected uniformly (Orodho, 2003).

### **3.1.8 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Since both kinds of data were gathered, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques must be used. The researcher used qualitative methods to analyze answers to open-ended questions. Such information was transcribed, and then reviewed for consistency, accuracy, response errors, omissions, and other irregularities. The major topic of each question was then identified and compared as part of the data analysis process utilizing the content/thematic analysis method (Mackey & Gass, 2015). The researcher grouped, examined, and presented the key concepts in a narrative format.

To evaluate the data and determine the degrees of response concentration, descriptive statistics such as percentages and mean scores were employed. The correctness and

consistency of the Likert Scale data were examined. Once coded and imported into SPSS (V.22), a data sheet was generated for analysis. The data collected was cleaned and verified for accuracy, and the answers were coded.

The relationship between the study's measurable variables was assessed using regression analysis. To ascertain the associations between the variables in the study, correlation and multivariate regression analysis were also employed. All statistical tests were conducted at the 5% significance level, and the results were presented using tables and figures.

The equation below displays the linear regression model of the independent variables vs the dependent variable;

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 K + \beta_2 L + \beta_3 M + e$$

Where

Y is women leadership in elective position

K is culture

L is Economic Factors

M is Political Factors

$\beta_1$  to  $\beta_3$  are beta coefficients

$\alpha$  is the y intercept and e the error term. It is assumed that the error term has a constant variance and a normal distribution with a mean of 0.

### **3.1.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethics, according to Dooley (2007), is the study of good and wrong behavior. The historical trend in civil and human rights can be understood as including ethics. Since ethics can act as a guide for one's behavior, most professions include ethical rules that must be followed. Respondents were treated confidentially and with great care to ensure their identity. As a result, this study abided by all ethical principles by following accepted research methodologies. Furthermore, the goal of this study was to generate knowledge that would benefit the general public and government policymakers, rather than being carried out for personal benefit.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a descriptive analysis of study variables, the research findings, subsequent interpretation, and discussion of the results. The first part of this chapter presents the demographic and descriptive analysis that provides the characteristics of the target participants and study variables. The second part delves into thematic analysis and tests of hypotheses and subsequent outcome interpretation and discussion.

#### 4.2 Response Rate

**Table 4. 2: Response Rate**

<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Response	372	96.875
Non-Response	12	3.125
<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2025)**

As shown in Table 4.1, the study achieved a response rate of 96.875%, with 372 out of 384 distributed questionnaires being returned. The overall response rate was classified as exemplary based on typical acceptable response rates of 50%, advocated by Field (2018) and Babbie (2010). For academic research, the authors argued, a response rate of 50% is considered adequate, while a response rate of 70% or more is considered exceptional. Therefore, the response from the target participants was rated exceptionally for data analysis and conclusion.

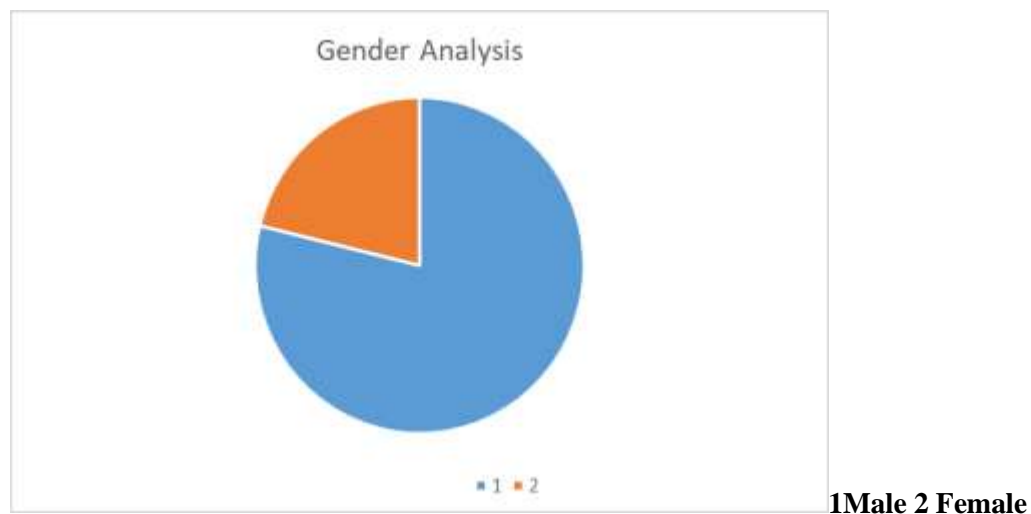
### 4.3 Demographic analysis

#### 4.3.1 Gender Analysis

*Table 4. 1 Gender Analysis*

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	242	65.1
Female	130	34.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source: Field Data (2025)**



**Figure 4.1 gender response**

As shown in Table 4.2, out of the 372 sampled respondents, the majority, 65.1% (f=242) were male respondents, while the female respondents constituted 34.9% (f=130). This marked gender imbalance is reflective of broader societal dynamics in Kenya, particularly within the political and civic spheres, where women continue to face underrepresentation and marginalization. Women's participation in leadership, particularly at the county level, is still low, and implementation of the 2010 Kenyan

Constitution's mandate for gender parity under Articles 27(8) and 81(b) has been poor (Kenya National Gender and Equality Commission [NGEC], 2021).

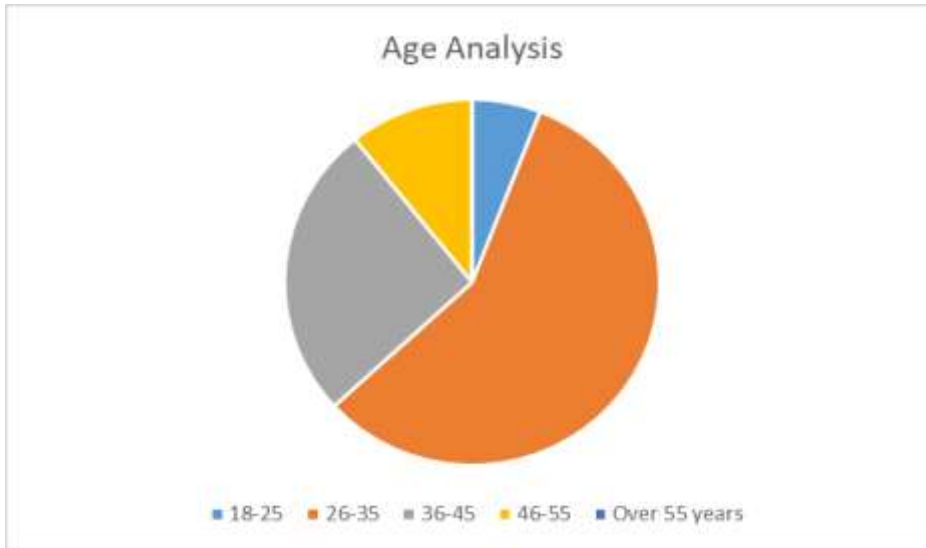
The results are consistent with Johnson and Christensen's (2019) observations in various social science studies, particularly those conducted in environments where traditional gender roles could impact public participation or survey access. This imbalance can sometimes lead to a male-centric perspective if not carefully managed, yet it also reflects the broader societal context of male dominance in public spheres, including politics, in many parts of Kenya and sub-Saharan Africa (Mutua, 2013; Tripp et al., 2006). The overrepresentation of male voices in this study might provide a robust understanding of the prevailing attitudes and potential resistance to women's leadership from a male perspective, which is crucial for identifying barriers.

#### **4.3.2 Age Analysis**

**Table 4.2 Age Analysis**

<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>18-25</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>5.9</b>
<b>26-35</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>57.2</b>
<b>36-45</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>26.1</b>
<b>46-55</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10.8</b>
<b>Over 55 years</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data (2025)**



**Figure 4.2 age analysis**

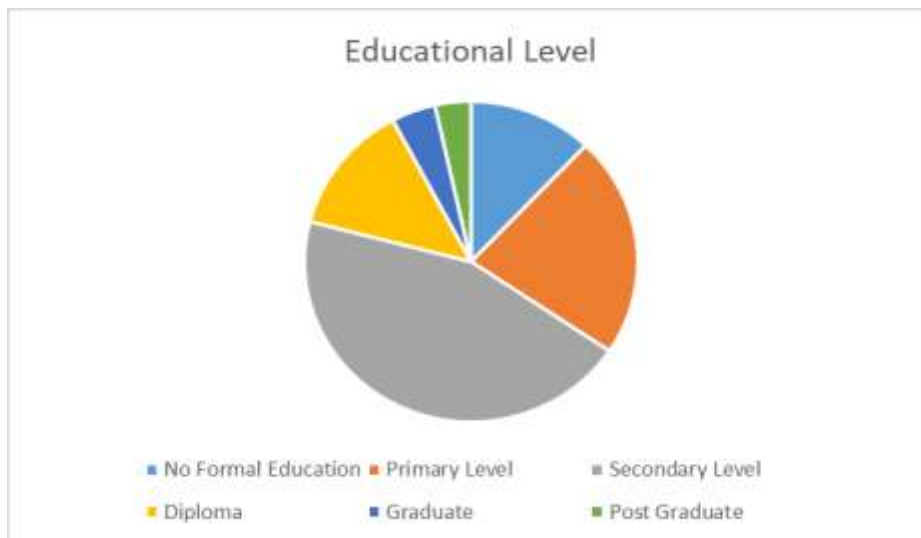
As shown in Table 4.1, The Outcome of age distribution revealed that the largest proportion of respondents, 57.3% (f = 213), fell within the 26–35 age bracket This was followed by respondents aged 36–45 years, constituting 26.1% (f = 97), while those aged 46–55 years comprised 10.8% (f = 40), and the youngest cohort, aged 18–25 years, at 5.9% (f = 22). The age profile of the respondents indicates a predominantly young to middle-aged participant group, which is highly relevant for understanding contemporary perspectives on leadership. The outcome suggests that the majority of respondents are likely active members of the workforce and potentially more open to evolving societal norms regarding leadership roles.

### 4.3.3 Educational Analysis

**Table 4.3 Education Level**

<b>Education Level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
No Formal Education	45	12.1
Primary Level	83	22.3
Secondary Level	166	44.6
Diploma	49	13.2
Graduate	16	4.3
Post Graduate	13	3.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source: Field Data (2025)**



The result shown in Table 4.3 shows the highest proportion of respondents had attained secondary education, comprising 44.6% (f = 166) of the sample. Those with primary education comprised 22.3% (f = 83), while diploma holders consisted 13.2% (f = 49), and

individuals with no formal education at 12.1% (f=45). Only a small fraction of the respondents had attained university-level education, with 4.1% (f=16) holding undergraduate degrees and 3.5% (f=13) having postgraduate qualifications. With the largest group of participants having attained secondary education, accounting for 44.6% of the total, indicates a foundational level of formal education across a significant portion of the sample. This is generally associated with higher civic engagement, greater political awareness, and a more critical understanding of social issues, including those related to gender equality in leadership (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995; UNDP, 2011). These respondents are likely to provide well-articulated views on the various drivers.

The finding corroborates with the findings of Wamai (2018) and Mutua (2016) that Higher education levels are often associated with greater political awareness, confidence, and capacity to contest or engage in leadership processes. Therefore, the relatively low number of graduate and postgraduate respondents may reflect broader structural limitations that inhibit educational mobility and, by extension, leadership aspirations for many, particularly women.

#### **4.3.4 Role of Key Stakeholders in Women Leadership**

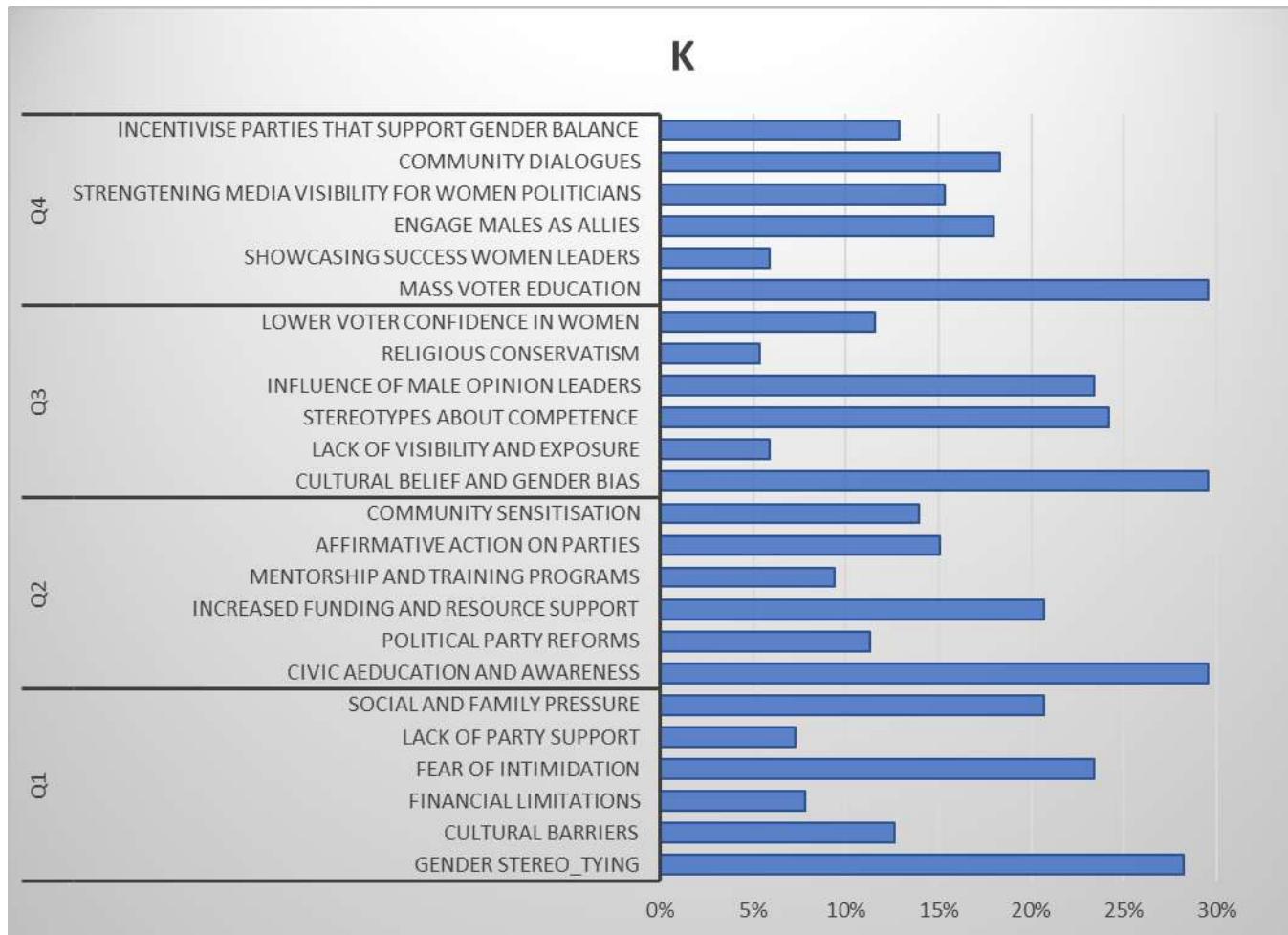
A thematic analysis of the qualitative information collected from key informant interviews is presented in this section, offering comprehensive insights into the political, social, and cultural elements affecting women's leadership in elected office in Nyamira County. The insights from these interviews complement the quantitative findings by offering rich contextual details and explanations for observed trends. The responses from a total of 35 key informants were categorized and quantified thematically, as

presented in the provided interview result tables are presented in Table 4.8.

**Table 4. 3: Interview Analysis**

		Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
1. Why do you think most women never contest for other elective positions other than for the County Woman Member of the National Assembly?	Gender Stereotyping	10	28
	Cultural Barriers	4	13
	Financial Limitations	3	8
	Fear of Intimidation	8	23
	lack of party Support	3	7
	Social and family Pressure	7	21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
2. What do you think can be done to encourage women to contest in elective positions other than the County Woman Member of the National Assembly?	Civic education and awareness	4	11
	Political party Reforms	7	21
	Increased funding and Resource Support	3	9
	Mentorship and Training Programs	5	15
	Affirmative Action on Parties	5	14
	Community Sensitization	10	30
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
3. What do you think are the reasons most voters don't vote for women candidates (other than for the County Woman Member of the National Assembly) whenever such women contest elective positions?	Cultural Belief and Gender Bias	8	24
	lack of visibility and exposure	8	23
	stereotypes about Competence	2	5
	Influence of male Opinion Leaders	4	12
	Religious Conservatism	10	30
	Lower voter confidence in Women	2	6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>
4. What do you think can be done to encourage voters to vote for women candidates in other elective positions other than the County Woman Member of the National	Mass Voter Education	10	30
	Showcasing Success Women Leaders	2	6
	Engage Males as allies	6	18
	Strengthening media visibility For Women Politicians	5	15
	Community Dialogues	6	18

Assembly?	Incentivize parties that support gender Balance	5	13
	<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>



**Key**

Q1: Why do you think most women never contest for other elective positions other than for the County Woman Member of the National Assembly?

Q2: What do you think can be done to encourage women to contest in other elective positions other than the County Woman Member of the National Assembly?

Q3: What do you think are the reasons most voters don't vote for women candidates (other than for the County Woman Member of the National Assembly) whenever such women contest elective positions?

Q4: What do you think can be done to encourage voters to vote for women candidates in other elective positions other than the County Woman Member of the National Assembly?

**Objective (i): To establish the extent to which cultural factors drive women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County.**

Table 4.8 presents the results of key informant replies, which clearly show that cultural dynamics are a major obstacle to women's wider participation in elected politics outside of the National Assembly as County Woman Members. When asked why most women avoid contesting other elective positions, notably, 28% (f=10) of the informants cited gender stereotyping as the primary reason discouraging women from contesting for different seats. Respondents highlighted that leadership is still viewed through a patriarchal lens where women are perceived as caregivers and supporters rather than leaders or decision-makers. This is compounded. This is further supported by direct mentions of cultural barriers such as taboos and social norms (13%, f=4) that reinforce the belief that women should not challenge men in public life. Moreover, 21% (f=7) pointed to social and family pressure, which includes expectations that women prioritize domestic responsibilities over public service. This cultural impedance is further reinforced when examining voter behavior. When asked for reasons voters don't support women candidates, "Religious Conservatism" was the most frequently cited reason by 30% (f=10) of informants, indicating that faith-based cultural interpretations significantly impact electoral outcomes. These cultural perceptions also influence voter attitudes. When asked why voters often reject female candidates, 24% (f=8) of informants cited

cultural beliefs and gender bias, while 30% (f=10) highlighted religious conservatism, which further legitimizes male dominance in public leadership. This was closely followed by “Cultural Belief and Gender Bias” at 24% (f=8), and “Influence of Male Opinion Leaders” at 12% (f=4), suggesting that community gatekeepers and traditional authority figures play a crucial role in perpetuating cultural norms against women’s political ascent. Informants also noted “Stereotypes about Competence” at 5% (f=2) and “Lower voter confidence in Women” at 6% (f=2), reflecting internalized biases that stem from cultural narratives about women’s leadership capabilities. This indicates that deep-seated cultural and religious ideologies are not only discouraging women from contesting but also undermining their chances at the ballot box.

To address these cultural impediments, 30% (f=10) of informants strongly recommended “Community Sensitization,” on encouraging women to contest, and 30% (f=10) of the respondents advocated for “Mass Voter Education.” These proposed solutions underscore the perceived need for direct interventions to shift cultural mindsets, challenge stereotypes, and redefine perceptions of women’s roles in politics. 18%, (f=6) “Engaging Males as Allies” (18%, f=6) and “Community Dialogues” (18%, f=6) further emphasize the importance of actively engaging cultural stakeholders in fostering a more supportive environment. Thus, while cultural factors are currently more accurately described as hindrances, the interviews reveal a critical understanding of how their transformation could powerfully “drive” women’s leadership in the future.

**Objective (ii): To establish the extent to which economic factors drive women’s leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County.**

The key informants were asked why women avoid contesting positions beyond the Woman Representative seat, 8% (f=3) of respondents cited “Financial Limitations”. As shown in Table 4.8 the key informants’ interview outcome shows that Economic limitations were also highlighted as significant barriers, though to a slightly lesser extent than cultural ones. 8% (f=3) of respondents identified financial constraints as a key reason women shy away from competitive elective positions, with many noting that women often lack personal wealth, access to campaign financing, or business networks compared to their male counterparts. The interview data consistently identifies economic factors as a significant barrier, fundamentally shaping who can and cannot afford to participate in competitive elective politics, thereby indirectly “driving” women out of certain races. While this percentage might seem lower than cultural and political factors in Question one, its critical nature is echoed throughout the responses. Women, who generally have less access to independent financial resources than their male counterparts, are frequently discouraged by the hefty expense of campaigns.

The suggestions for encouraging women to contest further highlight the perceived importance of economic empowerment. “Increased Funding and Resource Support” was recommended by 9% (f=3) of informants. Encouragingly, 9% (f=3) of the respondents recommended increased funding and resource support as a solution to help more women contest broader elective positions. This implicitly recognizes that robust financial backing is a necessary “driver” for women to overcome the prohibitive costs of campaigns, including mobilization, media visibility, and logistics. Additionally, 14% (f=5) advocated for affirmative action within political parties, especially financial support and reserved funding quotas. Notably, 30% (f=10) emphasized community sensitization as a broader

approach to addressing both economic and cultural limitations, reflecting an understanding that women's economic empowerment is often culturally constrained. This view supports the argument that women's economic marginalization is deeply intertwined with societal norms and will require both financial interventions and community-level ideological shifts to overcome.

**Objective (iii): To establish the degree to which political factors drive women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County**

The result of the key informants Presented in Table 4.8 identified political party structures and the broader political environment as significant contributors to women's underrepresentation. When asked why women rarely contest other seats, 23% (f=8) of informants cited "Fear of Intimidation" as an important political concern. This point to a hostile political environment that can deter women from engaging in more competitive races. 7% (f=3), 7% (f=3) cited "Lack of Party Support, emphasizing that most parties in Nyamira County favor male candidates for high-stakes political positions. Political parties often fail to implement internal gender policies or provide equitable access to nominations and campaign resources for female aspirants. The result highlights how political party structures can act as gatekeepers, often sidelining women for high-stakes nominations. These findings underscore how the prevailing political landscape can "drive" women away from certain elective positions.

On the question of how to encourage more women to contest and be elected, 21% (f=7) of the informants called for political party reforms, indicating a pressing need for structural change within party systems to create space for female participation. This

emphasizes the critical role of internal party dynamics, including transparent nomination processes and equitable support for female aspirants, as fundamental “drivers” of women’s entry into elective politics. “Furthermore, mass voter education (30%, f=10), community dialogues (18%, f=6), and engaging men as allies (18%, f=6) were viewed as key strategies to change political attitudes and foster acceptance of women’s leadership. This emphasizes the critical role of internal party dynamics, including transparent nomination processes and equitable support for female aspirants, as fundamental “drivers” of women’s entry into elective politics. “These approaches reflect a broad understanding among informants that political barriers are not only institutional but also social and ideological, requiring inclusive strategies that target both voters and political actors. This indicates that a supportive political infrastructure, including proactive party engagement and strategic media leveraging, can serve as powerful “drivers” for women’s leadership in Nyamira County

#### **4.4 Descriptive Analysis**

The descriptive statistics pertaining to the study variables—political, economic, and cultural influences influencing women politicians in Nyamira County—are shown in this section.

##### **4.4.1 Cultural factors and Women Leadership**

The participants were requested to specify the degree to which they believe various cultural factors impact female politicians in Nyamira County. Specifically, the study examined how cultural beliefs and practices influence women’s pursuit of elective leadership positions. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The results are presented in Table 4.4

**Table 4. 4: Cultural factors**

<b>Cultural Factor</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
<b>Home</b>	55 (14.8%)	44 (11.8%)	92 (24.7%)	131 (35.2%)	50 (13.4%)	372	3.94	0.91
<b>Permission</b>	55 (14.8%)	54 (14.5%)	129 (34.7%)	92 (24.7%)	42 (11.3%)	372	3.67	0.54
<b>Status</b>	90 (24.2%)	98 (26.3%)	128 (34.4%)	32 (8.6%)	24 (6.5%)	372	2.95	1.26
<b>Derogation</b>	96 (25.8%)	54 (14.5%)	110 (29.6%)	92 (24.7%)	20 (5.4%)	372	4.00	0.88
<b>Taboo</b>	0 (0.0%)	22 (5.9%)	22 (5.9%)	262 (70.4%)	66 (17.7%)	372	3.51	0.69
<b>Voting</b>	25 (6.7%)	71 (19.1%)	60 (16.1%)	132 (35.5%)	84 (22.6%)	372	3.43	1.08
<b>Mean Score</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.42	0.87

**Source: Field Data (2025)**

As shown in Table 4.4, a significant portion of respondents, 35.2% (f=131), moderately agreed that A woman's role is in the home and not seeking elective positions, while 24.7% (f=92) agreed and 13.4% (f=50) strongly agreed. The response shows that, in total, 73.3% (f=273) expressed some level of agreement with this culturally conservative view. The outcome indicates that the respondents recognized that traditional gender roles persistently shape perceptions about women in politics. In contrast, only 14.8% (f=55) strongly disagreed, and 11.8% (f=44) disagreed. According to these statistics, women's political participation in the nation is still significantly hampered by traditional gender role expectations.

When asked about the belief that women must seek permission or blessings from their spouses before contesting in politics, 34.7% (f=129) of the respondents agreed, 24.7% (f=92) moderately agreed, and an additional 11.3% (f=42) strongly agreed. Collectively,

70.7% (f=263) of the respondents acknowledged the role of male approval in shaping women's political decisions. This trend affirms that familial structures still function as political gatekeepers, and women are not always seen—or do not see themselves—as autonomous political agents. The outcome mirrors the findings of Moe and Kabera (2024) in Turkana County, Kenya that local political dynamics and cultural expectations significantly influence women's participation in elective roles.

Respondents were also asked whether they believe that most women who enter politics are single, divorced, widowed, or past menopause. As shown in Table 4.4, a considerable proportion, 34.4% (f=128) agreed, while 8.6% (f=32) moderately agreed and 6.5% (f=24) strongly agreed. In contrast, 24.2% (f=90) strongly disagreed, and 26.3% (f=98) disagreed. The nearly even distribution of responses, where 49.5% were in agreement in comparison to 50.5% in disagreement, reflects a prevailing cultural narrative that women with less family responsibility are more likely or more permitted to engage in public life, reinforcing stereotypes that associate political ambition with marital status.

Similarly, the respondents were also asked whether women who enter elective positions are branded with all sorts of derogatory names. As shown in Table 4.4, a majority of respondents, 29.6% (f=110), agreed and 24.7% (f=92) moderately agreed, while 5.4% (f=20) strongly agreed. The combined responses comprising 59.7% (f=222) suggest that moral scrutiny and social labeling of female politicians remain widespread in Nyamira County in Kenya. As shown in Table 4.4, a notable minority of 25.8% (f=96) strongly disagreed with the presented notion, indicating resistance. This resistance, coupled with the observed cultural policing through derogatory naming, underscores how social norms can suppress women's political aspirations.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether it is taboo for a woman to challenge a man in elective positions. As shown in Table 4.4, an overwhelming majority of 70.4% (f=262) moderately agreed, with an additional 17.7% (f=66) strongly agreeing. In total, 88.1% (f=328) were in favor of this viewpoint. As shown in Table 4.4, only 5.9% (f=22) disagreed or strongly disagreed. This finding exposes the deep-seated patriarchal norms that frame political competition as inherently male, with female candidacy seen as disruptive or unnatural. Such cultural taboos serve as informal social laws that inhibit women's participation even in contexts where legal frameworks allow it. Women are thus required to navigate not only formal political processes but also entrenched gendered expectations that are rarely codified but widely enforced.

Finally, the respondents were asked whether most women vote for men instead of their fellow women. The outcome presented in Table 4.4 revealed that 35.5% (f=132) moderately agreed, 22.6% (f=84) strongly agreed, and 16.1% (f=60) agreed. The outcome shows that in total, 74.2% (f=276) of respondents believe women do not support each other electorally. This result may be attributed to internalized cultural norms that favor male leadership or to skepticism about the electability or competence of female candidates.

In summary the cultural factors index recorded a mean of **3.42 (SD = 0.87)**, suggesting that respondents moderately agreed that cultural norms affect women's leadership outcomes, though opinions varied moderately across the sample. The outcome of the current study underscores the fact that cultural factors have a profound and multidimensional influence on women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. Women's leadership seems to be rooted in deep-rooted patriarchal beliefs,

traditional gender roles, and cultural taboos. From perceptions of appropriate gender roles to the requirement for spousal approval to reputational stigma and intra-gender distrust, the cultural terrain remains a formidable challenge to women's political empowerment. Despite legislative provisions supporting gender equality, the socio-cultural ecosystem continues to be defined by patriarchal norms that construct female leadership as abnormal, suspect, or morally questionable.

The study outcome aligns with the findings of Onamu et al. (2024) that in Nakuru and Narok counties, leadership is socially construed as a male domain, and women who deviate from this norm often face resistance.

#### **4.4.2 Economic factors**

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they believe various cultural factors impact female politicians in Nyamira County. Specifically, the study examined how cultural beliefs and practices influence women's pursuit of elective leadership positions. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The results are presented in Table 4.5

**Table 4. 5: Economic Factors**

<b>Economic Factor</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
<b>Dependence</b>	23 (6.2%)	60 (16.1%)	102 (27.4%)	136 (36.6%)	51 (13.7%)	372	3.85	0.81
<b>Cost</b>	43 (11.6%)	37 (9.9%)	120 (32.3%)	126 (33.9%)	46 (12.4%)	372	3.77	0.64
<b>Muscle</b>	19 (5.1%)	38 (10.2%)	105 (28.2%)	96 (25.8%)	114 (30.6%)	372	2.89	1.16
<b>Ownership</b>	0 (0.0%)	22 (5.9%)	236 (63.4%)	90 (24.2%)	24 (6.5%)	372	4.03	0.98
<b>Collateral</b>	125 (33.6%)	157 (42.2%)	29 (7.8%)	31 (8.3%)	30 (8.1%)	372	3.61	0.79
<b>Mean Score</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.78	0.65

The respondents were asked to indicate whether Women depend on their spouses for their day-to-day upkeep and other family requirements. As shown in Table 4.5, A significant proportion (36.6%, f=136) of either moderately agreed or 27.4% (f=102) agreed, and 13.7% (f=51) strongly agreed. In total, 77.7% (f=289) agreed that Women depend on their spouses for their day-to-day upkeep and family requirements. In comparison, only 23.3 % (f= 83) disagreed or strongly agreed to the question. The findings reveal that most women in Nyamira County are economically dependent on their male partners, a condition that significantly restricts their financial autonomy—an essential factor for effective political participation. This outcome aligns with Mwatha and Kinyua (2023) conclusions that in rural Kenyan contexts, women’s economic reliance on male household members often disqualifies them from pursuing political office. This is because they are unable to finance their campaigns or confront entrenched patriarchal structures within political institutions. The outcome further corroborates Oduor and Omondi (2021) demonstrations that women with limited access to independent income sources face systemic barriers when attempting to engage in political processes in Kisii

County, in Kenya. The economic marginalization serves as both a direct and indirect constraint on their political agency.

Respondents were also asked whether they believed that elective positions require substantial financial resources to secure a win. As presented in Table 4.5, more than 78.6% (f=292) of participants either agreed (32.3%, f=120), moderately agreed (33.9%, f=126), or strongly agreed (12.4%, f=46) with this assertion. These findings indicate a broad consensus that electoral contests are heavily capital-intensive and largely inaccessible to candidates lacking significant financial backing—particularly women. The perception that elections function as capital-driven enterprises reflects structural barriers that exclude economically disadvantaged aspirants from viable political competition. This pattern echoes the findings of Ongeru and Mberia (2024), who documented that in Kisii and Nyamira counties, women often withdraw from electoral races during the early phases due to the prohibitive cost of campaigning, compounded by limited access to donor funding, personal savings, or asset-based collateral. Similarly, Chege and Wanjiru (2022) observed parallel dynamics in rural Murang'a County, where financial exclusion significantly curtailed women's political engagement.

Respondents were further asked whether they believed that women lacked the financial capacity to compete with men in electoral contests. As shown in Table 4.5, a significant majority—84.6% (f=315)—supported this assertion. In particular, 28.2% (f=105) agreed, 25.8% moderately agreed, and 30.6% strongly agreed. In comparison, only 15.3% (f=57) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. These results highlight a widespread perception that structural economic disparities place women at a disadvantage in political competition. The findings are consistent Mugo and Njogu (2022) demonstration that men

benefit from political patronage, giving them an electoral edge as they dominate the wealth-generating sectors of the economy. They also noted that women face informal “pay-to-play” barriers like high nomination fees, which disadvantage underfunded female candidates. The outcome of the current study further supports Nanjala and Kirwa (2023) findings that financial precarity remains a central obstacle to meaningful political inclusion of women in Uasin-Gishu County.

Respondents were further asked to reflect on the gendered dynamics of family resource ownership. As illustrated in Table 4.5, a significant majority (93.5%,  $f = 350$ ) agreed to varying degrees. Specifically, 63.4% ( $f = 236$ ) agreed outright, while an additional 24.2% ( $f = 90$ ) indicated moderate agreement. These findings suggest that traditional patterns of asset ownership continue to privilege men, thereby limiting women’s control over household resources. This structural imbalance constrains women’s capacity to finance political campaigns or secure credit, effectively restricting their political and economic participation. The results align closely with Njuguna and Mutai (2023), who argue that women’s limited asset ownership directly hampers their ability to engage substantively in political processes. Similarly, the findings are consistent with Wekesa and Barasa (2021), who report that in Bungoma County, male-dominated inheritance and property regimes significantly undermine women’s economic autonomy and, consequently, their political agency

Finally, the respondents when asked whether women “have nothing worth discharging to commercial banks as collateral. As shown in Table 4.5 75.8% ( $f=282$ ) of respondents disagreed. Specifically, 33.6%, ( $f=125$ ) strongly disagreed while 42.2%, ( $f=157$ ) respondents absolutely disagreed. Contrary However, the minority that agreed (24.2%,

f=90). These findings suggest that, although women may appear economically dependent, many are believed to possess assets—albeit ones that are often unrecognized by formal financial institutions. This perception reflects broader systemic issues in asset recognition and documentation. The outcome resonates to FIDA-Kenya (2023) reports that most rural women lack title deeds despite their central role in agriculture, limiting their access to credit.

In summary the economic factors index had a mean of **3.78 (SD = 0.65)**, indicating relatively strong agreement that economic empowerment supports women's leadership participation, with relatively low variability in responses. The outcome equally concurs with Kanyinga and Long (2021) assertions that that informal ownership norms and male-biased land inheritance practices continue to exclude women from formal credit markets in Kenya, reinforcing structural gender inequalities.

The outcome in the second Objective affirms that economic inequality is a major structural impediment to women's participation in elective politics in Nyamira County. From financial dependence on spouses, to limited ownership of property, and inability to meet the high costs of campaigning, the data demonstrates that economic empowerment is directly linked to political viability. The outcome is echoed by the conclusions of UN Women Kenya (2023), which noted that lack of economic capital is a critical reason for low numbers of women contesting positions beyond the reserved seat of County Woman Representative. The economic constraints force women to self-select out of competitive races, leaving men to dominate positions like Member of National Assembly, Senator, and Governor. a similar finding by Kamau and Wamue-Ngare (2023) who emphasized the need for gender-responsive campaign financing, including public funding for female

candidates, waivers on nomination fees, and reforms in property rights. The economic barriers are not just about money — they represent a broader gendered distribution of opportunity and agency.

#### 4.4.3 Political factors

Respondents were asked to assess the extent to which various political factors influence women’s leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County, specifically focusing on their impact on female politicians. Responses were gathered in relation to six key political statements, evaluated using a five-point Likert scale. The findings, which reflect both enabling and constraining political dynamics, are summarized and presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Political Factors**

<b>Political Factor</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Moderately Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>STD</b>
<b>Weakness</b>	45 (12.1%)	133 (35.8%)	98 (26.3%)	84 (22.6%)	12 (3.2%)	372	3.89	0.61
<b>Parties</b>	22 (5.9%)	19 (5.1%)	66 (17.7%)	146 (39.2%)	119 (32.0%)	372	4.12	0.34
<b>Abuse</b>	26 (7.0%)	32 (8.6%)	114 (30.6%)	154 (41.4%)	46 (12.4%)	372	3.95	0.58
<b>Violence</b>	45 (12.1%)	133 (35.8%)	98 (26.3%)	84 (22.6%)	12 (3.2%)	372	3.84	0.68
<b>Quota</b>	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	70 (18.8%)	258 (69.4%)	44 (11.8%)	372	3.93	0.71
<b>Mean Score</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	<b>3.95</b>	<b>0.58</b>

Source: Research data 2025)

The respondents were asked to indicate their views on whether Women lack the resilience to endure the demanding nature of political campaigns. As shown in Table 4.6, the majority of the respondents disagreed (35.8%, f=133), strongly disagreed while (12.1%, f=45) agreed. In total 47.9% (f=178) Disagreed, signaling a rejection of the

stereotype that women lack political stamina. However, 26.3% (f=98) agreed and 22.6% (f=84) moderately agreed, meaning that nearly half (48.9%, f=182) still held some reservations that Women lack the resilience to endure the demanding nature of political campaigns. The outcome ambivalence reflects Wangui et al. (2023) who observation that although some segments of society now appreciate women's political strength, gendered perceptions of physical and emotional weakness still subtly shape campaign strategy and support. Women are often discouraged from participating in night meetings, long-distance mobilization, or intense rallies due to presumed fragility.

Respondents were asked whether women lack the resilience to withstand the rigorous demands of political campaigns. As presented in Table 4.6, a majority (47.9%, f=178) disagreed with this view. Particularly, 35.8% (f=133) strongly disagreed while 12.1%, (f=45) disagreed absolutely. However, 26.3% (f=98) agreed, while 22.6% (f=84) moderately agreed—indicating that 48.9% (f=182) still harbored doubts about women's political stamina still held some reservations that Women lack the resilience to endure the demanding nature of political campaigns. This divided opinion highlights the persistence of gendered stereotypes, even amid shifting attitudes. The outcome ambivalence reflects Wangui et al. (2023) observation that while perceptions of women's political capacity are improving, underlying biases regarding emotional and physical endurance remain influential. The study similarly supports Otieno and Mwangi's (2022) demonstrations that campaign strategies in several Kenyan counties are often shaped by assumptions about women's supposed limitations, affecting both candidate support and party nomination dynamics.

Respondents were asked whether major political parties are structured in ways that favor men during nominations. As shown in Table 4.6, a significant majority agreed: 39.2% ( $f=146$ ) moderately agreed, 32.0% ( $f=119$ ) strongly agreed and 17.7% ( $f = 66$ ) agreed—bringing total agreement to 88.9% ( $f=331$ ). These findings highlight entrenched party-level gatekeeping as a major barrier to women’s political advancement in Nyamira County. This aligns with Kamau (2021), who found that party nomination processes in Kenya are often opaque and male-dominated, systematically disadvantaging female aspirants. Similarly, Chege and Ndungu (2022) report that informal party networks and patronage systems tend to marginalize women, limiting their access to competitive political positions despite constitutional gender equity provisions. The findings align with Musila & Owino (2023), who observed that opaque nomination processes, biased financing, and male-dominated party leadership systematically hinder women’s access to competitive nominations.

Respondents were asked whether women face abuse and are morally judged during political campaigns. As shown in Table 4.6, a substantial majority (84.4%,  $f=314$ ) agreed with the statement: 30.6% ( $f=114$ ) agreed, 41.4% ( $f=154$ ) moderately agreed, and 12.4% ( $f=46$ ) strongly agreed. In contrast, only 15.6% ( $f=58$ ) disagreed or strongly disagreed. These findings indicate that gendered verbal abuse and moral scrutiny remain widespread in Nyamira County’s political environment. This aligns with Muthoni and Wanjiku (2022), who found that women candidates across Kenya often face character attacks targeting their morality. Similarly, Njoroge (2023) reported that public discourse during campaigns frequently weaponizes cultural and gender norms to delegitimize female aspirants and discourage their political participation. The results support FIDA-Kenya

(2023) and UN Women (2023) reports that women candidates are often labeled as bad mothers or immoral to damage their reputation.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree that women are particularly vulnerable during episodes of political violence. As shown in Table 4.6, responses were divided: 47.9% ( $f=178$ ) either disagreed or strongly disagreed, while a slight majority of 52.1% ( $f=194$ ) agreed to some extent. This division may reflect constituency-level variations in exposure to political violence and differing perceptions of risk. The findings align with Oloo and Kimanthi (2021), who observed that women in politically volatile regions of Kenya are disproportionately targeted through intimidation and physical harm. Similarly, Akinyi and Otieno (2022) found that gender-based political violence remains a significant barrier to women's participation, particularly during contested elections and party primaries. Nevertheless, as noted by Owino & Kerubo (2022), women face a double risk in violent political environments — both as political actors and as targets of gender-based violence. They are less likely to recover from politically motivated assaults and more likely to withdraw from the race or future participation altogether.

Respondents were asked to give their views on the impact of the Kenyan Government's one-third gender rule on women's leadership. As shown in Table 4.6, there was unanimous agreement on its positive contribution: 69.4% ( $f=258$ ) moderately agreed, 18.8% ( $f=70$ ) agreed, and 11.8% ( $f=44$ ) strongly agreed. This 100% consensus underscores widespread recognition of the one-third gender rule as an effective mechanism for promoting women's political inclusion. These findings align with Wanjiru and Mwangi (2021), who found that the rule has significantly increased women's

visibility in county assemblies. Similarly, Gichuhi (2022) reported that the policy, though inconsistently implemented, has reshaped political discourse by institutionalizing gender equity and pressuring parties to consider female candidates seriously. The finding supports Chege and Muthoni (2023), who argue that while the gender rule boosts women's visibility, it also reinforces the idea of separate, non-competitive roles.

Respondents were asked whether independent female candidates face greater challenges than those supported by political parties. As shown in Table 4.6, a clear majority agreed: 61.8% (f=230) moderately agreed, 17.7% (f=66) agreed and 14.5% (f=54) strongly agreed, while only 5.9% (f=22) disagreed. These findings suggest a strong perception that party affiliation offers critical structural and financial support that independent female candidates often lack.

In summary Political factors scored a mean of **2.85 (SD = 1.02)**, reflecting general disagreement with the view that political institutions support women's leadership, with high variability showing strong differences in perception among respondents. This aligns with Kilonzo and Wanjala (2021), who found that women running without party backing face exclusion from mainstream campaign networks and voter mobilization platforms. Similarly, Oduol (2022) noted that party endorsement legitimizes candidates in the eyes of voters, making it significantly harder for independent women to compete effectively.

#### **4.4 Correlation Analysis**

This section examines the correlation between the study identified factors – cultural, political, and economic – hypothesized to drive women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County, to establish the nature and association among them. The nature and direction of the relationship between were established through the Pearson correlation

analysis, tested at the 0.05 significance level. The result of the correlation analysis is presented in **Error! Reference source not found.**

*Table 4. 7: Correlation Analysis*

**Correlations**

		cultural_factors	political_factors	Economic_factors
cultural_factors	Correlation	1		
political_factors	Correlation	.336**	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	1	
Economic_factors	Correlation	.387**	.147**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.004	

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

**Source: Field Data (2025)**

Firstly, the correlation analysis revealed a statistically significant, positive relationship between cultural and political factors ( $r = .336$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ), indicating a weak to moderate association. This suggests that prevailing cultural norms in Nyamira County—particularly those reinforcing traditional gender roles—are closely linked to the nature of political structures and practices affecting women’s leadership. The Outcome is Consistent with recent studies of Owusu & Darko (2023) and UNDP (2024), affirmation that cultural beliefs can shape and even constrain formal political opportunities, such as party nominations and voter attitudes. Therefore, addressing political barriers to women’s leadership must also involve transforming the socio-cultural environment, as sustainable political reforms are more effective when aligned with evolving societal attitudes toward gender equality.

Secondly, the result shown in Table 4.7 indicates a statistically significant, positive correlation between cultural and economic factors ( $r = .387$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). The result suggests a weak to moderate association between economic and cultural norms in Nyamira County an indication that cultural factors are they are closely linked to the economic realities shaping women's leadership potential. The outcome aligns with contemporary research by the World Bank (2024) and Chen & Wong (2023), emphasis that cultural practices—such as gendered labor roles, customary inheritance laws, and societal expectations—often limit women's access to and control over financial resources. In contexts where financial authority is culturally reserved for men, women are less likely to accumulate the wealth or collateral needed for political campaigns.

Thirdly, the analysis outcome revealed a statistically significant but very weak positive correlation between political and economic factors ( $r = .147$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ). The outcome indicates a limited direct association between political structures and the economic conditions affecting women's leadership in Nyamira County. Despite the fact that the relationship is statistically meaningful, the low strength suggests that political actions—such as gender quotas or party-level financial support—may not directly translate into improved economic empowerment for women without the mediation of other factors, particularly cultural norms. The current study outcome finding aligns with broader political economy literature of Bienen & van de Walle (2023) and UN Women (2023,) which underscores that economic change often requires more than policy—it requires cultural shifts that enable women to access and utilize financial resources meaningfully. The weak correlation underscores the complexity of the political-economic nexus in gender leadership, cautioning against siloed interventions and emphasizing the

importance of holistic approaches that integrate cultural, political, and economic strategies to support women’s participation in elective leadership effectively.

#### 4.5 Regression Analysis

The study sought to examine the extent to which cultural, economic, and political factors drive women’s leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. A multiple regression analysis was conducted with women’s leadership outcomes as the dependent variable and cultural, economic, and political factors as predictors.

**Table 4. 8: Model Summary**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.450 <sup>a</sup>	.323	.315	.29700

a. Predictors: (Constant), Political factors, Economic factors, Cultural factors

The regression model yielded an  $R^2$  of 0.323, indicating that approximately 32.3% of the variance in leadership outcomes is explained by the three predictors (Table 4.9). Although this leaves a considerable proportion unexplained, the explained variance is meaningful in social science research and demonstrates that the predictors are collectively influential..

**Table 4.9: Anova**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.751	3	.250	2.838	.038 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	32.461	368	.088		
	Total	33.212	371			

a. Dependent Variable: Women Leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Political, Economic, Culture.

The ANOVA result presented in Table 4.10 tested whether the regression model as a whole was statistically significant in predicting women’s leadership outcomes. The results showed that the model was indeed significant,  $F(3,368) = 2.838, p = .038$ . This indicates that, collectively, cultural, economic, and political factors provide a meaningful contribution to explaining women’s leadership outcomes beyond what would be expected by chance. The significance of the overall model confirms that the chosen independent variables are relevant for understanding women’s leadership, even though their individual contributions may vary in strength and direction. Put differently, when considered together, the three predictors significantly improve the model’s explanatory capacity compared to a model with no predictors.

**Table 4. 10: Regression Coefficients**

		<b>Coefficients<sup>a</sup></b>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	3.982	.288		13.846	.000
	CultureC	.100	.070	.085	1.441	.150
	EconomicC	.055	.036	.080	1.538	.025
	PoliticalC1	-.168	.069	-.144	-2.437	.015

a. Dependent Variable: Leadership

The first objective was to establish the extent to which cultural factors drive women’s leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. The regression coefficient for cultural factors was positive but statistically insignificant ( $B = 0.100, \beta = 0.085, t = 1.441, p = .150$ ). This indicates that although cultural attitudes appear to exert some influence, they do not significantly predict women’s leadership outcomes once economic and political

variables are taken into account. This finding implies that traditional beliefs around gender roles, though still present, may be gradually losing their direct impact on electoral outcomes. The insignificance could also suggest that culture operates indirectly—perhaps reinforcing political or economic barriers rather than independently determining women’s leadership success. These results align with emerging literature that point to a slow but noticeable shift in cultural perceptions, where younger and more educated populations are more accepting of women in leadership.

The second objective was to determine the extent to which economic factors influence women’s leadership in elective positions. The regression results showed a positive and statistically significant effect of economic factors on leadership outcomes ( $B = 0.055$ ,  $\beta = 0.080$ ,  $t = 1.538$ ,  $p = .025$ ). This finding confirms that access to financial resources plays a crucial role in enabling women to contest and succeed in elective politics. In the context of Nyamira County, where campaigns require substantial financial investment, women who possess personal income, employment stability, or access to credit are better positioned to mount competitive campaigns. Conversely, women who depend on male-controlled household resources are disadvantaged. These results reinforce earlier studies in Kenya and other African contexts, which highlight that financial constraints remain one of the most persistent barriers to women’s political participation.

The third objective was to establish the degree to which political factors affect women’s leadership in elective positions. The regression coefficient for political factors was negative and statistically significant ( $B = -0.168$ ,  $\beta = -0.144$ ,  $t = -2.437$ ,  $p = .015$ ). This suggests that, in Nyamira, the prevailing political environment actively hinders rather

than promotes women's participation and success in elective leadership. This negative relationship is consistent with evidence that major political parties are structurally biased against women, often marginalizing them during nominations, denying them access to campaign resources, and exposing them to hostility, intimidation, and political violence. Far from empowering women, political structures in their current form reinforce gender exclusion. Therefore, Hypothesis 3, which argued that political factors significantly drive women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County, was supported, but with a negative effect. This finding underscores the role of political gate keeping and institutionalized bias as the greatest impediments to women's political advancement in the county.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the study's findings, drawing upon the data analysis and interpretations presented in chapter four. It synthesizes the key insights derived from both quantitative and qualitative data to form concise conclusions regarding the cultural, economic, and political factors influencing women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. Furthermore, this chapter highlights the significant contributions of this research to existing knowledge in the field of gender and politics. Based on the study's outcomes, actionable recommendations are put forth, targeting relevant stakeholders to inform policy implications and foster a more equitable political landscape for women. Finally, avenues for future research are suggested, building upon the foundations laid by this study to address remaining gaps and explore emerging trends in women's political empowerment.

### **5.2 Summary of the Study Findings**

The study aimed to establish the extent to which cultural, economic, and political factors drive women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. The response rate achieved was high, with a significant number of distributed questionnaires being returned, classified as exemplary based on acceptable response rates. The reliability of the data collection tool was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with all variables exceeding the conventional threshold, indicating satisfactory internal

consistency and reliability. Cultural Factors exhibited the highest reliability, followed by Economic Factors and Political Factors, with a strong overall Cronbach's Alpha value. Demographic analysis revealed a male-dominated sample, reflecting broader societal gender imbalances in Kenya's political and civic spheres. The age profile indicated a predominantly young to middle-aged participant group, suggesting a focus on contemporary perspectives on leadership. Educational attainment was diverse, with a foundational level of formal education across a significant portion of the sample.

Regarding cultural factors, the study revealed that cultural norms and beliefs strongly shape and often limit women's pursuit of elective leadership in Nyamira County. The study found strong evidence that deep rooted gender roles significantly hinder women's political participation. A substantial portion of respondents expressed agreement with the view that a woman's role is in the home and not seeking elective positions. These cultural views manifest in expectations that women should remain in domestic roles and seek permission from male family members before pursuing public office. Furthermore, a significant number acknowledged the role of male approval in shaping women's political decisions, indicating the persistent hold of patriarchy. The belief that it is a taboo for a woman to challenge a man in elective positions garnered overwhelming agreement, exposing deep-seated patriarchal norms. The study also revealed that a majority of respondents believe women do not support each other electorally, indicating a lack of intra-gender solidarity. These findings align with observations in other Kenyan counties regarding cultural influences on women's leadership. Interview data further reinforced these cultural barriers, with key informants citing gender stereotyping and religious

conservatism as primary reasons for women avoiding other elective positions or voters not supporting them.

In terms of economic factors, the research indicated that financial constraints are a major structural impediment to women's political advancement. The study highlighted that many women in Nyamira County rely financially on their spouses or male family members, which affects their ability to finance political campaigns independently. A significant proportion of respondents agreed that women depend on their spouses for their day-to-day upkeep and family requirements, highlighting economic reliance on male partners. The study also found that the vast majority of respondents recognized that elective positions require a substantial amount of money to win, reflecting the perception of elections as capital-driven enterprises. A large majority of respondents supported the assertion that women lack financial muscles to compete with men. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that traditional property ownership structures still favor men, leaving women without economic leverage. These outcomes are consistent with research on household financial dependence and campaign financing challenges for women in rural Kenyan settings. Interview data supported these quantitative findings, with key informants citing financial limitations as key reason women avoid competitive elective positions, and recommending increased funding and resource support as a solution.

Regarding political factors, the study revealed a complex interplay of systemic barriers and potential structural drivers. While there were mixed opinions on women's political stamina, a very strong consensus emerged that major political parties are structured to

favor men in nominations. Women often find themselves sidelined during party nominations, with male candidates receiving preferential treatment. The nomination processes are typically opaque, male-dominated, and sometimes financially demanding, making it difficult for women to compete on equal footing. A similarly high number of respondents agreed that during campaigns, women are abused and viewed as immoral. The one-third gender rule was universally acknowledged for its positive impact. Additionally, the majority believed that independent female candidates face more challenges than those backed by parties. These findings align with studies on discriminatory party processes and gender-based abuse during campaigns. Interview data corroborated these points, with key informants citing fear of intimidation and lack of party support as significant concerns. Political party reforms were strongly recommended as a crucial step to encourage more women to contest.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the study's findings, it can be concluded, with a high degree of certainty, that cultural factors represent a formidable and pervasive barrier to women's leadership in elective positions in Nyamira County. The study concludes that cultural norms, beliefs, and traditional gender roles continue to act as strong deterrents to women's political leadership in Nyamira County. These barriers are deeply embedded within the fabric of traditional gender roles, societal expectations, and even religious interpretations, collectively acting to discourage women's political participation. This manifests not only in overt discrimination but also in subtle yet powerful influences on voter behavior, often

resulting in a marked preference for male candidates. Transformative change must address deeply ingrained societal attitudes and cultural narratives.

Similarly, the study concludes that economic factors pose a significant impediment to women's ability to contest for elective positions. It is concluded that financial dependency and systemic economic exclusion limit women's ability to compete politically. The study reveals a pattern of financial dependency on male partners, coupled with limited access to personal wealth and assets, and the increasingly prohibitive costs associated with political campaigns. This confluence of factors creates a substantial financial disadvantage for women, often leading to self-selection out of competitive races. The lack of economic leverage, rooted in traditional property ownership structures that favor men, further exacerbates this disparity.

Finally the study concludes that while Political factors, potentially offer some avenues for progress, they also contribute to a challenging environment for women. The research concludes that political parties and systems in Nyamira County remain male-dominated and structurally biased. Without internal reforms and policy enforcement, women's political participation will continue to be constrained. The discriminatory structures prevalent within major political parties, coupled with the documented prevalence of gender-based abuse and intimidation during campaigns, create a hostile atmosphere that systematically disadvantages women. While affirmative action policies, such as the one-third gender rule, have shown a positive impact, the entrenched biases within party systems and the vulnerability of female candidates to abuse underscore the need for comprehensive reforms. The interplay of these factors, as highlighted by the correlation

analysis, suggests that a holistic approach is necessary to address the multifaceted challenges facing women in Nyamira County's political landscape

#### **5.4 Contribution of the Study to Knowledge**

This study significantly contributes to the existing body of knowledge on women's political leadership in several ways. Firstly, it provides empirical evidence specifically from Nyamira County, Kenya, offering localized insights into the complex interplay of cultural, economic, and political factors that often remain generalized in broader African contexts. By detailing the specific cultural taboos (like challenging men in elective positions, spousal permission) and their pervasive influence, the study enriches the understanding of how deeply entrenched social norms manifest as concrete barriers to women's political aspirations in a particular setting.

Secondly, the research highlights the interconnectedness of these factors, demonstrating that economic disempowerment is often culturally reinforced (example gendered asset ownership) and that political structures frequently reflect and perpetuate these cultural biases (like party nomination processes favoring men). The correlation analysis, showing a significant positive relationship between cultural and political factors, and cultural and economic factors, empirically supports the need for holistic interventions rather than siloed approaches. Furthermore, the qualitative data from key informant interviews provides rich, contextualized explanations for the observed quantitative trends, offering a nuanced understanding of the "why" behind the statistics and thus enhancing the theoretical framework for analyzing gender and political participation in similar patriarchal societies.

## **5.5 Recommendations for Policy Implication and Practice**

The study recommends that Policy-makers should prioritize the robust implementation and enforcement of existing gender parity laws, such as Article 27(8) and Article 81(b) of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, focusing specifically on electoral processes to ensure equitable access for women beyond nominated seats. This includes establishing mechanisms for gender-responsive campaign financing, potentially through public funding for female candidates or waivers on nomination fees, and enacting stricter penalties for gender-based abuse and intimidation during campaigns.

The study additionally recommends Political parties to undertake comprehensive internal reforms to dismantle male-dominated structures and promote gender-sensitive nomination processes. This includes adopting transparent and fair primary elections, actively recruiting and mentoring female aspirants, and implementing mandatory quotas for women in party leadership positions and viable electoral nominations. Parties should also provide targeted financial and logistical support to female candidates to level the playing field.

The study further recommends Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and Community Leaders to intensify community sensitization and mass voter education programs aimed at challenging deep-seated cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes that hinder women's political participation. These initiatives should foster dialogues that engage both men and women as allies in promoting gender equality in leadership, emphasize the competence and capacity of female leaders, and counter religious conservatism that legitimizes male dominance.

Finally the study recommends that financial institutions should develop innovative and accessible financial products tailored for women in politics. These products should address issues such as lack of collateral by accepting alternative forms of security or offering gender-responsive micro-financing for campaigns. Equally, development partners should also invest in programs that promote women's economic empowerment more broadly, recognizing its direct link to political viability, and support initiatives that aim to shift gendered asset ownership patterns.

### **5.6 Suggestions for Further Research**

Firstly, future research could conduct a longitudinal study to assess the long-term effectiveness of community sensitization and voter education programs on shifting cultural attitudes and increasing voter support for female candidates in Nyamira County and similar regions. This would involve tracking changes in perceptions and voting patterns over several election cycles.

Secondly there should be a qualitative study focusing on women who have successfully overcome cultural, economic, and political barriers to win elective positions in Nyamira County or similar contexts would offer valuable insights. Such case studies could identify specific strategies, support networks, and personal attributes that contribute to success despite challenging environments.

Finally there should be a Comparative Study of Rural vs. Urban Contexts: A comparative study Should examine the differences in cultural, economic, and political barriers faced by women in rural areas (like Nyamira County) versus urban centers in Kenya could

provide valuable insights into context-specific challenges and solutions, informing more targeted interventions.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I-Questionnaire

#### SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Your name (Optional)

.....

2. Your gender? (Tick as appropriate)

Male [ ]

Female [ ]

3. Your age bracket?

18-23 [ ]

24-29 [ ]

30- 35 [ ]

36-41 [ ]

42-47 [ ]

48-53 [ ]

54-59 [ ]

60 and above [ ]

4. What is your highest Level of Education?

No Formal education [ ]

Primary [ ]

Secondary [ ]

Diploma [ ]

Undergraduate [ ]

Post Graduate [ ]

5. Constituency where you are registered as a voter.

Kitutu Masaba [ ]

West Mugirango [ ]

North Mugirango [ ]

Borabu [ ]

## **B. CULTURAL FACTORS DRIVING WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS**

*By checking (✓) the appropriate box next to each of the questions below, you can express your view.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
A woman's role is in the "home" and not seeking elective positions.					
Women need permission/ blessings from their spouses to enter into					

elective positions.					
Most women who enter elective positions are single, divorced, widowed or past menopause.					
Women who enter elective positions are branded all sorts of derogatory names.					
It is a taboo for a woman to challenge a man in elective positions.					
Most women vote for men instead of their fellow woman.					

**C. ECONOMIC FACTORS DRIVING WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS**

*Mark the relevant box next to each of the questions below with (√) to express your response.*

	Strongly	Disagree	Agree	Moderately	Strongly
--	----------	----------	-------	------------	----------

	disagree			Agree	Agree
Women depend on their spouses for their day to day upkeep and other family requirements.					
Elective Positions require substantial amount of money for one to win.					
Women lack financial muscles to compete with men.					
Family resources are “owned” by the man.					
Women have nothing worth discharging to commercial banks as collateral.					

**D. POLITICAL FACTORS DRIVING WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN ELECTIVE POSITIONS**

*Tick (√) in the relevant box next to each of the following questions to express your response.*

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Agree	Moderately Agree	Strongly Agree
Women are weak and cannot withstand the torturous campaign schedules.					
Major political parties are structured to favour men in nominations.					
During campaigns, women are abused and viewed as immoral.					
Women suffer most during political violence					
The one third gender rule has seen women nominated into elective positions.					

## **Appendix II: Interview Schedule for Key Informant**

1. Why do you think most women in never contest for other elective positions other than for the County Woman Member of National Assembly?
2. What do you think can be done to encourage women to contest in other elective positions other than the County Woman Member of National Assembly?
3. What do you think are the reasons most voters don't vote for women candidates (other than for the County Woman Member of National Assembly) whenever such women contest elective positions?
4. What do you think can be done to encourage voters to vote for women candidates in other elective positions other than the County Woman Member of National Assembly?

### **Appendix III: Approval Letter**

## **Appendix IV: Authorization Letter**

## **Appendix V: Nacosti**

## **Appendix VI: Nyamira County Map**