

**DETERMINANTS OF WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP: A
CASE OF LARI CONSTITUENCY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Women involvement in political leadership in Kenya continues to exhibit a low trend. Despite certain advancements in women's political representation during the 2022 electoral cycle, Kenya continues to face challenges regarding the limited involvement of women in political leadership roles. The study aimed to explore elements that impact women's involvement in the political landscape within the unique context of Kenya with focus on cultural factors, social factors, economic and political factors. The study was supported by a theoretical framework that incorporated feminist theory, gender socialization, resource-based and patriarchal theories. The research utilized a descriptive research design. The research was centered on the residents of Lari Constituency, situated in Kiambu County, Kenya, as the selected target population. The combined population of this particular group totaled 135,303 individuals, consisting of 67,061 males and 68,238 females. The sample size was 398 participants. The research used structured questionnaires for data collection. The research employed a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical methods to analyze data. A multiple linear regression model was employed to assess the correlation between the variables. The correlation results showed that cultural factors, social factors, economic and political factors are positively and significantly correlated with women participation in political leadership in Kenya. Cultural factors, social factors, economic factors and political factors can explain 75.8% of the variations in women participation in political leadership in Kenya. The regression results demonstrated that cultural factors significantly and positively impact women's participation in political leadership ($\beta=.235$, $p=0.040$). Social factors significantly and positively impact women's political leadership participation ($\beta=.322$, $p=0.000$). Economic factors are positively and significantly related with women's leadership participation ($\beta=.280$, $p=0.010$). Political factors significantly and positively influence women's leadership participation ($\beta=.220$, $p=0.000$). The study concluded that cultural factors, social factors, economic and political factors are positively and significantly related with women participation in political leadership in Kenya. It is recommended that cultural awareness campaigns be intensified, specifically targeting regions or communities where traditional gender

roles are deeply ingrained. The educational curriculum incorporates gender studies and leadership training from an early age. Moreover, economic empowerment programs should be scaled up, ensuring women have equal access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, thus solidifying their financial independence and capability to venture into politics.

Keywords: *Cultural factors, social factors, economic factors, political factors, political leadership, women participation, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

The participation of women in political leadership is a critical and ongoing global issue that reflects broader societal dynamics. Globally, women parliamentarians constitute only 25%, falling short of the 30% target set in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (United Nations, 2021). Despite some progress in regions like Europe and Canada, where female political participation has increased, gender balance in political representation remains unachieved. Studies across various regions highlight cultural and structural barriers: in Central Asia and Europe, patriarchal norms influence women's perception of political leadership (Lipovka et al., 2023); in the Middle East and Gulf states, historical discrimination and social status limit women's political involvement (Abu-Chaled, 2022); in China, entrenched patriarchal attitudes, especially in rural areas, hinder female participation (Lijia, 2021). Similarly, in Malaysia, factors like education, economy, and social issues affect women's political roles (Samsudin & Daud, 2019), while in Pakistan and Jordan, gender-based oppression and socio-economic factors like age, family income, and regional affiliation are identified as significant impediments to women's active involvement in politics (Ali, Bibi, & Sardar, 2021; Alelaimat, 2019).

Furthermore, from a regional perspective, Ako and Champion's study in Ghana (2023) highlights the positive impact of religious affiliations, financial status, and leadership skills on women's political participation. Vyas-Doorgapersad and Shava's research in South Africa (2022) points to factors such as stereotyping and financial dependence as barriers to women's political participation, compounded by a lack of political will among different parties. Muhammed's study in Ethiopia (2023) reveals that patriarchal systems have systematically excluded women from various spheres, limiting their roles primarily to domestic activities. In Kenya, Nyangweso's research (2020) highlights the influential role of religious leaders in shaping attitudes toward gender equality in politics, recognizing them as authoritative figures in society. Kenyatta's findings (2023) emphasize the importance of political goodwill in enhancing women's political

involvement. Nyaga's research (2021) in Meru County identifies cultural expectations around domestic roles as a barrier to women pursuing political careers, pointing out how early gendered training solidifies these roles and limits women's political aspirations from a young age. The determinants impacting the involvement of women in political leadership are complex and shaped by a confluence of social, political, cultural, and economic forces.

This comprehensive analysis explores the multifaceted influence of cultural, social, economic, and political factors on women's political participation. Cultural factors, including traditional gender roles, religious beliefs, and societal customs (Nyaga, 2021; Ali, 2022; Yemenu, 2020), often restrict women's access to political leadership by reinforcing subordinate roles and limiting mobility. Social factors, such as societal norms, education levels, and women's empowerment (Lipovka et al., 2023; Abu-Chaled, 2022; Samsudin & Daud, 2019; Muhammed, 2023), play a significant role in either dissuading or encouraging women's political engagement. Economic factors, including income levels, campaign funding availability, and employment status (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Shava, 2022; Kim, 2022; Hailemariam & Yang, 2023), determine women's capacity to participate actively in politics. Finally, political factors such as affirmative action policies, political culture, and party support (Cascais, 2019; Ako & Campion, 2023; Mlambo & Kapingura, 2019) are crucial in shaping the environment for women's involvement in political leadership.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Mumporeze and Nduhura (2019), many women still do not experience gender equality in all aspects of life, as they continue to suffer from politico-ethnic exclusion, unemployment, poverty, heavy domestic responsibilities, gender-based violence, and limited access to healthcare services. Legal changes and policies aimed at promoting gender equality have unquestionably improved but are not sufficient. Various interventions have been developed to enhance women's participation in political leadership. These interventions are encompassed in international instruments and initiatives such as the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the Beijing Platform for Action (Arnold & Loughlin, 2013).

The level of women's involvement in political leadership in Kenya has always remained low. Despite certain advancements in women's political representation during the 2022 electoral cycle, Kenya continues to face challenges regarding the limited involvement of women in political leadership roles, as evidenced by the Kenya National Assembly in 2023. The recent election results in Kenya have shown a noteworthy rise in the representation of women in key political posts, including the appointment of seven female governors, three senators, and 26 female Members of Parliament. As we celebrate this noble achievement, it is of paramount importance to mention that the gender equality struggle is still far from over. The Constitutional bar minimum of 33 per cent provided by the Constitution of Kenya 2010 (Institute for Education in Democracy, 2020).

The issue of underrepresentation of women in Lari Constituency becomes even more apparent when we look at the specific numbers and wards involved. Since independence, there has not been a single female member of parliament in Lari Constituency. In the 2013 and 2017 general elections, all the Member of County Assembly (MCA) positions were filled by men, making it a total of zero female MCAs. Even in the most recent 2022 election, the data from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) indicates that out of the five elected MCAs, only one is a woman. This is a stark gender imbalance, and it's crucial to address this issue by promoting gender equality and inclusivity in all wards of Lari Constituency to ensure a more representative and diverse political landscape.

However, it is important to acknowledge that these figures still indicate a significant underrepresentation of women relative to eligible positions within the Kenya National Assembly in 2023. In the context of Kenya, it is evident that women, despite comprising 52% of the total population and 60% of registered voters in the country, face significant gender disparities in political representation, as highlighted by Madsen (2020). This disparity highlights the ongoing difficulties and restrictions that women confront in Kenya's political system. The study's main goal was to assess how Kenya's cultural, social, economic, and political factors affect the proportion of women who participate in political leadership. The study will use a case study approach and focus on Kenya's Kiambu region's Lari Constituency.

This study was driven by a research gap in the existing literature, which has neglected to explore the impact of cultural, social, economic, and political factors on the involvement of women in political leadership within Kenya. Specifically, the study concentrated on the Lari Constituency in Kiambu. Prior research, exemplified by Nyangweso's (2020) study, has examined the intricate dynamics among religion, gender, and politics in Kenya. This investigation has provided insights into the obstacles encountered by women in political leadership roles, as well as the ways in which cultural and societal norms can either facilitate or impede their participation. The research conducted by Kenyatta (2023) focused on the analysis of women's involvement in the political sphere in Kenya following constitutional revisions. The study emphasised the significance of political goodwill in this context. The study conducted by Mutua and Asumputah (2021) recognised the advancements achieved by women in attaining parity in social, economic, and political spheres, while also acknowledging the difficulties they face in conforming to established political norms that are predominantly male-oriented. Hence, conducting of the study was worthy.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- i. To assess the effect of cultural factors on women participation in political leadership in Kenya.
- ii. To establish the effect of social factors on women participation in political leadership in Kenya.
- iii. To determine the effect of economic factors on women participation in political leadership in Kenya.
- iv. To examine effect of political factors on women participation in political leadership in Kenya.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study significantly contributes to academic research, policy formulation, and women's empowerment in Kenya. Academically, it enriches the existing knowledge on women's political participation by examining economic, social, and political factors in a localized Kenyan context. These insights offer a nuanced perspective, aiding researchers in gender studies, political science, and development studies to further explore women's political involvement. The study also serves as a valuable comparative tool for scholars examining women's political roles across different

cultures and locations. For policymakers and government officials in Kenya, the study provides empirically grounded insights into the myriad factors influencing women's political involvement, guiding the development of targeted policies and programs. It aids in creating a more supportive environment for women in political leadership, thereby fostering inclusive governance. Finally, for women in Kenya, particularly in the Lari Constituency, this study sheds light on the specific challenges they face in politics. By offering an understanding of these obstacles and potential strategies to overcome them, the study empowers women to advocate for more inclusive political processes and encourages their active participation in leadership roles, promoting gender equality in Kenyan politics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review is presented in sections.

Theoretical Literature Review

Theoretical literature refers to scholarly works that focus on the development, interpretation and discussion of theories in a particular field of study (Rocco & Plakhotnik, 2009). The feminist, gender socialization, resource-based view and patriarchy theories informed the study's context.

Feminist theory

The theory was developed by Maxine Baca Zinn in the 1970s. Feminist theory primarily focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Equality between women and men means that they must be treated equally by the law. According to Santos, Silva, and Klasen (2021), achieving gender equality necessitates ensuring that women possess equal rights to those of males. Feminist theory was highly relevant for assessing the impact of cultural factors on women's participation in political leadership in Kenya. This theoretical framework seeks to understand the various ways in which gender inequalities are perpetuated and sustained in society, often due to deeply entrenched cultural norms and values. In the Kenyan context, where cultural factors like traditional gender roles, community beliefs, and even religious practices can significantly influence women's roles in public and private spheres, Feminist theory provides an essential lens for unpacking how these cultural elements either empower or constrain women's political participation.

Gender Socialization Theory

The theory was developed in 1982 by Ann Oakley. The theory asserts that societal norms, roles, and expectations related to gender are learned from early childhood through various influential institutions such as family, schools, and media (Zillmann & Weaver, 2013). Pioneering work by Ann Oakley in 1982 emphasized the role parents play in this process, demonstrating that even choices of toys and activities can steer children towards societal expectations of their gender. This gender socialization shapes individuals' interests, self-perceptions, behaviors, and skills, thereby contributing to the perpetuation of gender norms and stereotypes (Stockard, 2006).

The theory was relevant in establishing the effect of social factors on women's participation in political leadership in Kenya. This theory posits that individuals learn gender roles and behaviors from their immediate social environments, such as family, education systems, and media, starting from a very young age. Furthermore, social factors like male dominance in family decisions, lack of educational opportunities for girls, or societal views on what constitutes "appropriate behavior" for women can severely limit their political ambitions and opportunities. Gender Socialization Theory allows for an in-depth examination of these ingrained social factors, shedding light on how they can be addressed or mitigated to enhance women's participation in political leadership. By using this theory, researchers can develop a more nuanced understanding of the social barriers women face and suggest more targeted solutions to improve their political engagement.

Resource-Based View Theory

The underlying theory was posited by Edith Tilton Penrose in 1959. The theory established that resources within an organization are valuable when making economic sense in production. McIvor (2009) showed tangible and intangible resources are the type of resources available within an institution and need to be utilized fully. Hafeez, Malak, and Zhang (2007) posited that the sole resources accessible for the purpose of production encompass tangible or intangible assets. Tangible resources are distinct and effectively recognizable in the organization. The theory was highly applicable for analyzing how economic factors affect women's participation in political leadership in Kenya. The Resource-Based View (RBV). Economic factors such as limited access to funding, unequal financial support from political parties, or the cost of campaigning can be significant barriers for women seeking political leadership positions. Therefore, applying RBV

Theory to this objective helps to highlight the importance of economic resources in shaping women's participation in politics and suggests that addressing economic disparities is crucial for fostering gender equality in political leadership in Kenya.

Patriarchy Theory

In 1976, Heidi Hartmann proposed the patriarchy theory. Hartman identified two primary axes through which male dominance and control are exerted over various domestic and societal activities. One factor that contributed to the first group's advantage was the better physical strength exhibited by the male members. Hartman argues that the disparity in men's material power and women's economic dependence on them serves to reinforce the perception of men as superior and women as inferior, as highlighted by Lorde (2003).

The theory was highly relevant when examining the objective of finding out the effect of political factors on women's participation in political leadership in Kenya. In Kenya, as in many other countries, patriarchal norms have influenced political institutions and practices, resulting in a significant gender gap in political leadership. By applying the Patriarchy Theory, researchers can analyze how these ingrained power dynamics, including the predominance of male leadership and traditional gender roles, affect women's access to political leadership positions. This perspective allows for a deeper understanding of the challenges women face in Kenya's political landscape and can inform strategies to promote greater gender equality and women's participation in political leadership roles.

Empirical Literature Review

The research conducted by Ako and Campion (2023) aimed to gain insight into the multitude of elements impacting the involvement of the female gender in political party leadership within the context of Northern Ghana. The study was carried out in four constituencies within the Tamale region, employing a quantitative methodology. Questionnaires were administered, and regression analysis conducted using the Ordinary Least Squares approach. The study adopted women indulgence in party leadership as the dependent variable, with religious affiliations, educational background, financial position, social preconceptions, and leadership qualities serving as the independent variables.

The main findings show that there is a considerable and favourable association between women's participation in political roles and variables including religious inclinations, economic standing, and leadership abilities. At a 1% level of statistical significance, this association is significant. Social stereotypes, on the other hand, were found to have a strong negative connection that was statistically significant at the 1% level. However, this link did not approach statistical significance. The study found a negative correlation between the educational background and the outcome variable.

The study by Lipovka, Yerimpasheva, Rakhimbekova, and Zakirova (2023) examined the effect of power distribution within families on women's perceptions of political leaders. This research is significant because it is the first to explore this topic across post-socialist countries in Central Asia and Central Europe. The authors used data from 6,869 women who participated in the Life in Transition Survey III and employed quantitative research methods, including multivariate linear regression models and correlation coefficients. The key findings of the study reveal that in families where men have more power (patriarchal and patrilocal families), there is a higher level of gender stereotypes, which then impacts women's views on political leaders. Surprisingly, the study found that when decisions in the family are made jointly by both spouses, it does not lower the level of gender stereotypes. This research contributes to existing theories by providing new insights into how family power dynamics can shape women's internal beliefs, particularly in the context of emerging economies.

Muhammed (2023) in Ethiopia found that patriarchal systems have systematically excluded women from social, economic, and political life, limiting their roles to domestic activities. Similarly, Aubyn (2022) pointed out that these cultural beliefs create a political system inherently biased towards men. In Somaliland, Abdi (2021) stated that religious beliefs further complicate women's political participation. The interpretation of Islamic law, in particular, can either empower or severely restrict women's involvement in politics and public life. Nyaga (2021) in Meru County found that cultural expectations around domestic roles prevent women from pursuing political careers. From childhood, girls are groomed for domestic duties, while boys are

trained for roles that lead to leadership skills. This cultural training cements gender roles and limits women's political aspirations.

The study conducted by Kenyatta (2023) examined women's political participation of Kenya, focusing on the progress and challenges in the wake of constitutional reforms introduced in 2010. These reforms included the gender principle and a quota system aimed at promoting gender parity in political representation. The study found that despite these legal frameworks, the desired one-third gender representation in government institutions has not been achieved. Elections in 2013 and 2017 did mark a historic high in the number of women in legislative and executive roles, but deep-seated barriers such as societal norms, financial limitations, political party structures, and gender-based violence still impede women's full participation. Utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data, the study concluded that political goodwill is essential for improving women's political involvement. It also emphasized the importance of scrutinizing power dynamics within political parties, as they are the main avenues for women's entry into politics. Lastly, the study called for the state and other stakeholders to actively implement policies designed to support gender equality.

The study by Mutua and Asumputah (2021) explored elements that impacted women indulgence in political leadership in Kenya, specifically in Machakos County. Employing a descriptive survey method, the study focuses on social, economic, personal factors, and political structures. It examines how these elements affect women's involvement in the political process within the Orange Democratic Movement party. The research sample consisted of 143 respondents drawn from a larger population of 476 members across the five Sub-Counties of Machakos. These respondents were women employed permanently by the county government. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection, utilizing SPSS for data analysis. The findings reveal that while women are key players in public participation and have gained some voting rights and representation, their numbers are still low in parliament and even lower in heads of state positions worldwide. According to the study, women are making progress in attaining social, economic, and political equality but still face challenges. One notable conclusion is that women who stay in politics for a long time tend to adapt to traditional, male-dominated ways of political functioning.

Summary of Research Gaps

The study has identified knowledge gaps from the reviewed studies. The identified gaps fall into three distinct categories: context, concept, and methodology. The research gaps identified in various studies highlight the need for a comprehensive understanding of factors affecting women's political participation in Kenya. Ako and Campion (2023) identified a conceptual gap in understanding specific cultural factors in Kenya, despite their study on cultural factors impacting women's political participation. Lipovka et al. (2023) and Nyangweso (2020) noted contextual gaps in their studies on family power and religion & politics, respectively, due to a lack of Kenyan context. Abu-Chaled (2022), Bhalla (2021), and Michael (2019) all pointed out methodological and contextual gaps in their literature reviews, focusing on global perspectives, cultural attitudes, and barriers in Kenya without primary data.

Vyas-Doorgapersad & Shava (2022), Bhatti and Ali (2020), Vein and Sowda (2022), United Nations (2022), Farah (2023), Muhammed (2023), Aubyn (2022), Abdi (2021), Nyaga (2021), Samsudin and Daud (2019), Makulilo (2022), Helen (2021), Ali, Bibi, and Sardar (2021), and Mutua and Asumputah (2021) all identified contextual gaps due to focusing on regions outside Kenya, such as South Africa, Pakistan, Ghana, Somaliland, Malaysia, Tanzania, Nigeria, and Ethiopia. Their studies, ranging from literature reviews to qualitative interviews, highlighted various factors - from cultural beliefs and religious interpretations to media influence and societal attitudes - affecting women's political participation, but not specifically within the Kenyan context. Yemenu (2020) identified a conceptual gap, focusing on institutional, societal, and individual factors in Ethiopia, which necessitates a broader assessment in Kenya.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

A diagrammatical representation of a conceptual framework demonstrates the connection between dependent and independent variables. The structure makes it easier for the reader to quickly identify the intended graphic or diagrammatic correlations between the study's variables. Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework.

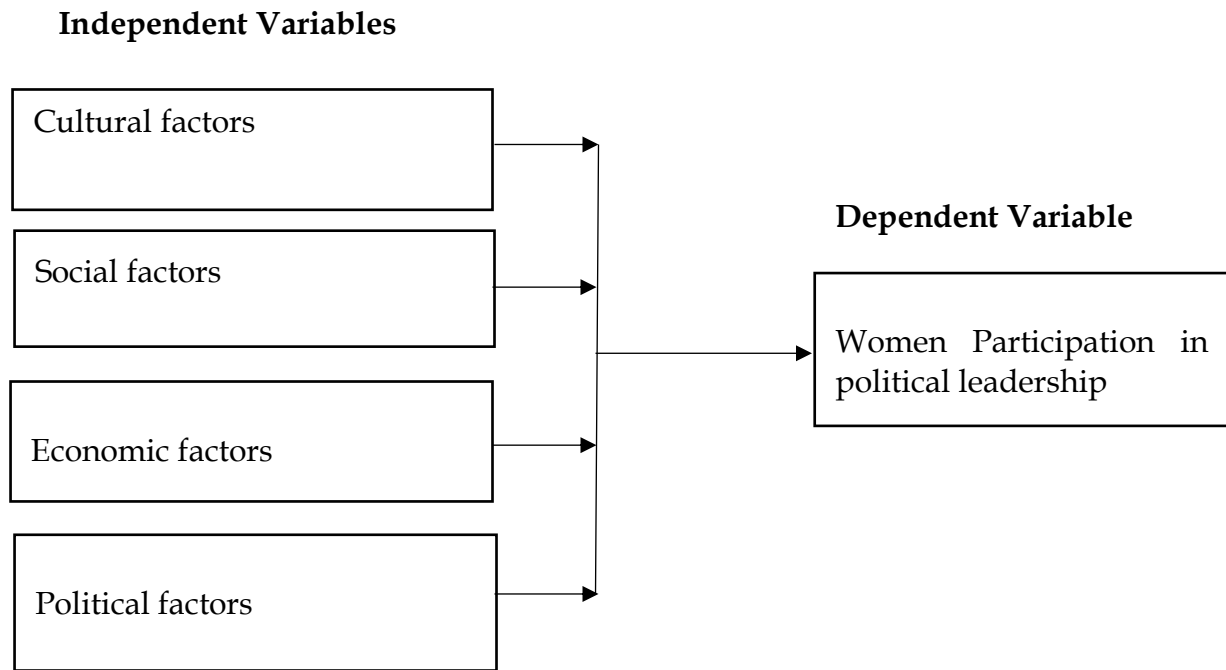


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The section highlighted the methodology adopted to analyze the study.

Research Design

Research design refers to the comprehensive approach selected to systematically and logically integrate many elements of the research, to effectively address the research problem. The design used for this study was a descriptive approach, which allowed for the comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation by considering its many aspects. It enabled the depiction of the current state of affairs, specific predictions, factual narration, and characterization of individuals, groups, or situations. This design involved formulating research objectives, gathering information through questionnaires, and analyzing the data using descriptive statistics (Kumar, 2019). This study used a descriptive research methodology to make it easier to examine all the variables affecting women's engagement in political leadership in Kenya's Lari Constituency. When attempting to present a thorough overview of a particular phenomenon, in this case, the

various elements influencing women's engagement in politics, descriptive research proved especially helpful.

Target Population

Target population represents an entire group of unique characteristics with some shared qualities, to be applied to the study's findings generally. The inhabitants of Kiambu County, Kenya's Lari Constituency, were the target demographic for the study. Data from the 2019 census showed that there were 135,303 people living in this area, with 67,061 being men and 68,238 being women. The study focused on these citizens to examine the variables influencing women's participation in political leadership within the constituency.

Sampling and sampling technique

In this study, stratified random sampling was used to select a representative and balanced sample of 398 respondents from the Lari constituency. This method involved dividing the total population into distinct, comparable subgroups and then selecting samples from each subgroup to ensure diverse demographic representation. The sample size was precisely calculated using the Yamane formula, considering the total population of 135,303 and an error margin of 0.05, resulting in approximately 398 respondents. This sample was then proportionally apportioned across the different categories within the population. Such a systematic approach ensured the accuracy and reliability of the study by providing a comprehensive overview that accurately reflected the constituency's diversity.

Data Collection Instruments

The structured questionnaires in this study were administered to a selected sample of the target population in Lari Constituency, Kiambu County, Kenya. The respondents who participated in filling out the questionnaires included both men and women who were aged 18 years and above and were residents of Lari Constituency. This broad selection aimed to capture a diverse range of perspectives on the subject. The specific individuals who responded to the questionnaires were drawn from various categories within the constituency, such as different age groups, educational backgrounds, and socioeconomic statuses, to ensure a representative sample that reflected the demographic diversity of the population.

Data collection procedure

NACOSTI and the relevant authorities' permits in Kiambu County allowed for ethical and legal compliance. These permits facilitated access to the study area and participants while upholding the principles of informed consent, privacy, and confidentiality throughout the data collection process.

Data processing and Analysis

The process of data analysis entails inspection, cleansing, transformation and modification of data with the aim of coming up with new information, conclusions which are informing and support the researcher in making concrete decisions (Creswell, 2014). In the analysis of quantitative data, both inferential and descriptive statistics were used, with the assistance of statistical software (SPSS version 22). Tables and graphs were employed to present the qualitative data effectively. To measure the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable explained in the model, the multiple linear regression model was utilized. The multiple regression model was as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \dots \dots \dots (3.1)$$

Where;

Y = Participation in political leadership; X₁ = Cultural factors; X₂ = Social factors; X₃ = Economic factors; X₄ = Political factors; B₀ = Constant; β₁- β₄ =Coefficients of determination; ε = Error term.

FINDINGS

This chapter presented the results of data analysis and presentation. The chapter specifically presented the analysis of the response rate, results from the pilot study, demographic information, descriptive statistics and inferential analysis. The inferential analysis included the correlation and regression analysis.

Response Rate

The number of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents was 398. The respondents who participated in filling out the questionnaires included both men and women who

were aged 18 years and above and were residents of Lari Constituency. Out of the 398 respondents, 372 questionnaires were duly filled and returned, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Response Rate

Response	Response Distribution	Percentage
Returned	372	93.47%
Un-returned	26	6.53%
Total	398	100%

Based on the results presented in Table 1, the response rate was 93.47%. The response rate was deemed satisfactory for further analysis and the making of the inferences. Some scholars, such as Kothari (2004) and Babbie (2004), indicate that a response rate above 60% is sufficient for the analysis. Hence, the current study's average response rate was 93.47% and was considered sufficient.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data in a study. They provide simple summaries of the sample and the measures. The descriptive statistics are presented based on percentages, mean and standard deviation. A Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1= Strongly Disagree, 2= Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly Agree) was used.

Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Factors

The descriptive statistics of cultural factors is presented in Table 2

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Cultural Factors

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Traditional gender roles in our culture hinder women from taking on leadership positions in politics.	6.50%	9.40%	3.00%	34.10%	47.00%	4.06	1.21
Religious practices in our community support and promote women's engagement in politics.	10.20%	2.70%	6.50%	51.10%	29.50%	3.81	1.33
Customary practices and traditions in our culture have a positive impact on women's political participation.	12.90%	11.80%	8.10%	26.60%	40.60%	4.01	1.01
Gender bias in our community's decision-making processes is a significant barrier to women's participation in political leadership.	9.10%	13.40%	6.80%	24.30%	46.40%	4.04	1.37
Average						4.02	1.17

The study found that 81.10% (34.10%+47.00) of the respondents agreed that traditional gender roles in our culture hinder women from taking on leadership positions in politics while 15.90% (6.50%+9.40%) disagreed with the statement with those who remained neutral being 3.00% The mean score of the statement was 4.06 with a standard deviation of 1.21. This implied that most of the respondents agreed that traditional gender roles in our culture hinder women from taking on leadership positions in politics. In addition, the study found that 80.60% (51.10%+29.50%) disagreed with the statement that religious practices support and promote women's engagement in politics while only 12.90% (10.20%+2.70%) agreed. Those who remained neutral were 6.50%. The mean score of the statement was 3.81 with a standard deviation of 1.33. This implied that the

majority of respondents believe religious practices in their community do not promote women's political engagement.

The study found that 67.20% (26.60%+40.60%) disagreed that customary practices and traditions have a positive impact on women's political participation, while 24.70% (12.90%+11.80%) agreed. Neutral responses stood at 8.10%. The mean score was 4.01 with a standard deviation of 1.01. This suggests that traditional customs may not be supportive of women's roles in politics. Moreover, the study found that 84.20% (59.30%+24.90%) disagreed with this statement, and only 10.20% (5.60%+4.60%) agreed. Those neutral were 5.60%. The mean score was 4.09 with a standard deviation of 1.09, implying that many respondents feel empowerment initiatives have not successfully increased women's political participation.

In addition, the study found that 72.80% (42.50%+30.50%) disagreed, while 25.40% (7.30%+18.10%) agreed. Only 1.60% remained neutral. The mean score was 4.11 with a standard deviation of 1.00, suggesting that although there are awareness campaigns, they may not have a perceived positive influence on women's political involvement. The study found that 70.70% (24.30%+46.40%) agreed with this statement, whereas 22.50% (9.10%+13.40%) disagreed. Neutral respondents made up 6.80%. The mean score was 4.04 with a standard deviation of 1.37, indicating that many respondents view gender bias as a significant obstacle to women's political leadership in their community. The average mean score of the statement was 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.17. This implied that most of the respondents agreed with the survey questions.

Descriptive Statistics of Social Factors

The descriptive statistics of social factors is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Social Factors

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Social norms and stereotypes in our society limit women's ability to actively participate in political leadership.	14.00%	9.70%	4.30%	49.60%	22.40%	4.07	1.04
Women in our community have equal access to political education and training opportunities.	4.30%	15.30%	8.60%	26.90%	44.90%	4.02	1.24
Family support and encouragement have a substantial impact on women's decision to enter politics.	6.50%	10.80%	3.10%	41.40%	38.20%	3.94	1.19
Gender-based discrimination is prevalent in our society and acts as a barrier to women's involvement in political leadership.	10.80%	6.50%	5.60%	20.10%	57.00%	4.00	1.04
Average						4.01	1.15

The study found that 72.00% (49.60% + 22.40%) of respondents agreed with the statement that societal norms and stereotypes restrict women's active political participation, while 23.70% (14.00% + 9.70%) disagreed. Those who remained neutral accounted for 4.30%. The mean score of this statement was 4.07 with a standard deviation of 1.04. Besides, the study indicated that 79.50% (31.50% + 48.00%) agreed with the statement about the impact of women's educational

level on their political engagement, whereas 17.30% (5.50% + 11.80%) disagreed. Neutral responses stood at 3.20%. The mean score for this statement was 3.99 with a standard deviation of 1.30. The study revealed that 76.80% (54.10% + 22.70%) agreed with the statement about the importance of women's empowerment programs in promoting political leadership, while 17.30% (9.70% + 7.60%) disagreed. Neutral responses were 5.90%. The mean score for this statement was 4.03 with a standard deviation of 1.08.

Likewise, the study found that 71.80% (26.90% + 44.90%) concurred with the statement about equal opportunities for political education and training for women, whereas 19.60% (4.30% + 15.30%) disagreed. Neutral respondents were 8.60%. The mean score for this statement was 4.02 with a standard deviation of 1.24. In addition, the study showed that 79.60% (41.40% + 38.20%) concurred with the statement emphasizing the role of family support in women's political decisions, while 17.30% (6.50% + 10.80%) disagreed. Neutral participants represented 3.10%. The mean score of this statement was 3.94 with a standard deviation of 1.19.

The study found that 77.10% (20.10% + 57.00%) agreed with the statement addressing gender discrimination as a barrier to women's political leadership, while 17.30% (10.80% + 6.50%) disagreed. Neutral responses accounted for 5.60%. The mean score for this statement was 4.00 with a standard deviation of 1.04. On average, respondents appear to recognize various factors that impact women's political leadership in the community. The general mean score across all statements was 4.01, with a standard deviation of 1.15. This pattern suggests an overall agreement on several societal factors that influence women's political participation, both positively and negatively.

Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors

The descriptive statistics of economic factors is presented in Table 4

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Economic Factors

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Insufficient campaign funding is a major challenge that limits women's participation in politics.	9.70%	5.40%	6.50%	45.80%	32.60%	4.13	1.26
Women who are employed full-time are more likely to engage in political leadership roles.	11.60%	7.50%	3.50%	29.80%	47.60%	3.94	1.36
Women receive adequate financial support from political parties to run for political office.	5.00%	5.40%	2.20%	64.20%	23.20%	4.08	1.03
Economic empowerment programs have positively influenced women's involvement in politics in our community.	6.50%	11.80%	6.20%	24.50%	51.00%	4.02	1.20
Average						4.03	1.19

The study found that 75.80% (30.90% + 44.90%) of respondents agreed with the statement that a woman's income level in the community has a significant effect on their political participation, while 16.70% (7.50% + 9.20%) disagreed. Neutral responses constituted 7.50%. The mean score for this statement was 4.0, with a standard deviation of 1.3. Moreover, 74.80% (58.80% + 16.00%) of respondents concurred with the statement about women having equal access to campaign funds, while 23.10% (8.60% + 14.50%) disagreed. Neutral opinions represented 2.10%. The mean score for this statement was 4.05, with a standard deviation of 1.02.

In addition, 78.40% (45.80% + 32.60%) agreed with the statement highlighting the lack of campaign funds as a barrier to women's political involvement. Meanwhile, 15.10% (9.70% + 5.40%) disagreed. Neutral responses were 6.50%. The mean score for this statement was 4.13, with a standard deviation of 1.26. Likewise, 77.40% (29.80% + 47.60%) of respondents concurred with the statement that full-time employment encourages women's political engagement, while 19.10% (11.60% + 7.50%) disagreed. Neutral respondents accounted for 3.50%. The mean score for this statement was 3.94, with a standard deviation of 1.36. In addition, 87.40% (64.20% + 23.20%) agreed with the statement on the sufficiency of financial support from political parties for women candidates. In contrast, 10.40% (5.00% + 5.40%) disagreed. Neutral responses stood at 2.20%. The mean score for this statement was 4.08, with a standard deviation of 1.03.

Finally, the study found that 75.50% (24.50% + 51.00%) of respondents concurred with the statement about the positive impact of economic empowerment programs on women's political participation. Meanwhile, 18.30% (6.50% + 11.80%) disagreed. Neutral participants represented 6.20%. The mean score of this statement was 4.02, with a standard deviation of 1.20. On average, the findings suggest that financial and economic factors significantly influence women's political participation in the community. The overall mean score across all statements was 4.03, with a standard deviation of 1.19. This indicates a general agreement among respondents on the various economic challenges and supports related to women's political involvement.

4.4.4 Descriptive Statistics of Political Factors

The descriptive statistics of political factors is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Political Factors

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Affirmative action policies have significantly increased women's representation in political leadership.	5.40%	11.80%	5.70%	33.30%	43.80%	3.98	1.21
Political parties in our community have gender-sensitive policies that promote women's participation in leadership positions.	0.80%	5.40%	7.30%	54.20%	32.30%	4.12	0.82
Women receive strong support from political parties when they decide to run for political office.	4.00%	8.00%	4.90%	52.20%	30.90%	4.01	1.23
Women often face unique challenges during political campaigns, such as gender-based discrimination.	3.20%	20.20%	2.40%	54.60%	19.60%	4.12	1.21
Women's participation in politics has positively impacted our community's development.	7.10%	13.10%	6.50%	31.60%	41.70%	4.06	1.05
Average						4.00	1.13

The study found that 77.10% (33.30% + 43.80%) of respondents agreed with the statement that affirmative action policies have bolstered women's representation in political leadership. In

contrast, 17.20% (5.40% + 11.80%) disagreed. Neutral opinions were at 5.70%. The mean score for this statement was 3.98, with a standard deviation of 1.21. 73.40% (46.00% + 27.40%) of respondents concurred with the statement about an inclusive political culture in the community. Meanwhile, 22.60% (8.10% + 14.50%) disagreed. Neutral responses represented 4.00%. The mean score for this statement was 3.70, with a standard deviation of 1.24. Besides, 86.50% (54.20% + 32.30%) agreed with the statement regarding gender-sensitive policies in political parties. In contrast, 6.20% (0.80% + 5.40%) disagreed. Neutral responses were at 7.30%. The mean score for this statement was 4.12, with a standard deviation of 0.82.

In addition, 83.10% (52.20% + 30.90%) of respondents agreed with the statement about the robust support women receive from political parties. Meanwhile, 12.00% (4.00% + 8.00%) disagreed. Neutral opinions accounted for 4.90%. The mean score for this statement was 4.01, with a standard deviation of 1.23. Likewise, 74.20% (54.60% + 19.60%) of respondents concurred with the statement about the distinct challenges women encounter, such as gender bias. On the other hand, 23.40% (3.20% + 20.20%) disagreed. Neutral responses stood at 2.40%. The mean score for this statement was 4.12, with a standard deviation of 1.21. Finally, 73.30% (31.60% + 41.70%) agreed with the statement about the beneficial effects of women's political participation on community development. Meanwhile, 20.20% (7.10% + 13.10%) disagreed. Neutral responses were 6.50%. The mean score for this statement was 4.06, with a standard deviation of 1.05. On average, the data suggests a favorable perspective on women's political participation and its positive effects in the community. The combined mean score across all statements was 4.00, with a standard deviation of 1.13. This indicates a general consensus among respondents supporting women's roles and acknowledging the challenges they face in the political realm.

Descriptive Statistics of Women Participation in Political Leadership

The descriptive statistics of women participation in political leadership is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Descriptive Statistics of Women Participation in Political Leadership

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women in our community actively pursue political office positions.	1.90%	5.90%	7.80%	49.20%	35.20%	4.10	0.91
Women are actively engaged in political parties and their activities.	1.10%	13.70%	10.50%	40.30%	34.40%	3.93	1.05
Women have equal opportunities to be appointed to government positions in our community.	4.20%	6.70%	2.40%	56.10%	30.60%	3.98	1.06
Over the years, our community has made significant progress in achieving gender equality in political leadership.	1.90%	8.40%	9.40%	47.00%	33.30%	4.08	0.90
Women often face specific challenges in their political leadership roles, such as discrimination or unequal treatment.	0.00%	3.00%	5.60%	57.00%	34.40%	4.23	0.68
Women's participation in political leadership has positively	0.00%	12.70%	8.80%	40.30%	38.20%	3.96	1.07

impacted our
community's
development.

Average

4.05 0.94

The study found that 84.40% (49.20% + 35.20%) of respondents agreed that women in the community actively seek out political office positions. Meanwhile, 7.80% (1.90% + 5.90%) disagreed with this statement. Those who remained neutral were 7.80%. The mean score is 4.10, with a standard deviation of 0.91. In addition, it was found that 74.70% (40.30% + 34.40%) of the respondents concurred that women are actively involved in political parties and their activities. In contrast, 14.80% (1.10% + 13.70%) disagreed. Neutral responses accounted for 10.50%. The mean score is 3.93, with a standard deviation of 1.05. Besides, 86.70% (56.10% + 30.60%) agreed with the statement about women having equal opportunities for government appointments. Meanwhile, 10.90% (4.20% + 6.70%) disagreed. Neutral responses were at 2.40%. The mean score is 3.98, with a standard deviation of 1.06. Further, 80.30% (47.00% + 33.30%) of respondents felt the community has made substantial strides towards gender equality in political leadership. Conversely, 10.30% (1.90% + 8.40%) disagreed. Neutral responses made up 9.40%. The mean score is 4.08, with a standard deviation of 0.90.

Likewise, 91.40% (57.00% + 34.40%) concurred that women often confront unique challenges, like discrimination, in their political roles. Only 3.00% disagreed, and 5.60% were neutral. The mean score is 4.23, indicating strong agreement, with a standard deviation of 0.68. In addition, 78.50% (40.30% + 38.20%) of the respondents agreed with the positive effects of women's participation in political leadership on the community's growth. In contrast, 12.70% disagreed, and 8.80% were neutral. The mean score is 3.96, with a standard deviation of 1.07. On average, the respondents held a favorable view of women's roles, challenges, and contributions in the political landscape of the community. The combined mean score across all statements was 4.05, with a standard deviation of 0.94, showcasing a general consensus leaning towards the positive impact of women in politics.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis shows the association between the independent and dependent variables. The association can be positive, negative, or no association. The study results of the correlation analysis is presented in Table 7

Table 7: Correlation Analysis

	Women Participation Political Leadership	in	Cultura l Factors	Social Factor s	Economi c Factors	Politica l Factors
Women Participation Political Leadership	Pearson Correlatio n	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	Pearson Correlatio n	.698**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Cultural Factors	Pearson Correlatio n	.724**	.544**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Social Factors	Pearson Correlatio n	.750**	.645**	.596*	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Economic Factors	Pearson Correlatio n	.642**	.455**	.441*	.568**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Political Factors	Pearson Correlatio n		0.000	0.000	0.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				

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

The correlation results from Table 7 shows that cultural factors are positively and significantly associated with women participation in political leadership ($r=.698$, $p=.000$). Also, social factors cultural factors are positively and significantly associated with women participation in political leadership ($r=.724$, $p=.000$). Moreover, economic factors are positively and significantly associated with women participation in political leadership ($r=.750$, $p=.000$). Finally, political

factors are positively and significantly associated with women participation in political leadership ($r=.642, p=.000$). The study results concur with the findings of Chouchou (2022) who emphasized that collaborative efforts across societal segments could significantly elevate women's political representation, serving as role models for the younger generation. Ako and Campion (2023) found that various factors, including religious beliefs, educational background, socioeconomic status, societal biases, and leadership skills, determine women's leadership participation. Kenyatta (2023) stressed the importance of political goodwill in enhancing women's political involvement, while Mutua and Asumputah (2021) acknowledged the strides made by women towards achieving social, economic, and political parity, albeit amidst challenges.

Regression Analysis

The section will comprise of model fitness, analysis of variance and regression of coefficient. The results presented in table 8 indicate the model fitness.

Table 8: Model Fitness

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870a	0.758	0.755	0.1420326

a Predictors: (Constant), cultural factors, social factors, economic factors, political factors

The results from Table 8 shows that cultural factors, social factors, economic factors and political factors are critical determinants of women participation in political leadership in Kenya. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.758 (75.8%). This implied that cultural factors, social factors, economic factors and political factors can explain 75.8% of the variations in the dependent variable which is women participation in political leadership. Similarly, Table 8 provides the results on the analysis of variance (ANOVA).

Table 9: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	23.13	4	5.782	286.638	.000b
	Residual	7.404	367	0.02		
	Total	30.533	371			

The results indicate that the overall model was statistically significant. The results imply that cultural factors, social factors, economic factors and political factors are good predictors in determining women participation in political leadership in Kenya. This is supported by an F statistic of 286.638 and the reported p-value of 0.000 which is less than the conventional probability significance level of 0.05 implying that the independent variables (cultural factors, social factors, economic factors and political factors) are significant in predicting employee performance. Besides, the regressions of coefficient results are presented in Table 10.

Table 10: Regression of Coefficient

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	0.142	0.073		1.940	0.053
Cultural Factors	0.235	0.034	0.240	6.852	0.040
Social Factors	0.322	0.032	0.333	9.959	0.000
Economic Factors	0.280	0.042	0.261	6.743	0.010
Political Factors	0.220	0.029	0.238	7.487	0.000

The results from Table 10 showed that cultural factors are positively and significantly related to women participation in political leadership ($\beta=.235$, $p=0.040$). Moreover, it was found that social factors are positively and significantly related to women participation in political leadership ($\beta=.322$, $p=0.000$). In addition, the study found that economic factors are positively and significantly related to women participation in political leadership ($\beta=.280$, $p=0.010$). Finally, the study found that political factors are positively and significantly related to women participation in political leadership ($\beta=.220$, $p=0.000$). The study results are in agreement with the findings of Bhalla (2021) who argued that positive cultural attitudes foster women's political engagement. Abdi (2021) suggested that religious beliefs add complexities to women's political involvement, and Samsudin and Daud (2019) found that various factors, such as education, economy, social issues, health, and the environment, influence political participation. Makulilo (2022) noted that dominant cultural perspectives and practices present considerable barriers for women's meaningful engagement in leadership roles in Tanzania.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The sections present the conclusions and recommendations based on the findings

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that cultural factors significantly and positively impact women's participation in political leadership. Cultural factors encompass beliefs, values, norms, customs, and practices shared by a group of people. These elements shape the behaviors, perceptions, and actions of individuals within a particular cultural context. In relation to women's participation in political leadership in Kenya, cultural factors play a crucial role. Traditional gender roles may prescribe specific duties and expectations for women, often relegating them to subservient or passive roles. This can deter women from seeking political office or from being perceived as suitable candidates. Furthermore, certain religious and customary practices can either inhibit or support women's political participation. While some cultural movements advocate for gender equality and empowerment, deeply entrenched beliefs may still hinder women from assuming leadership positions.

Social factors significantly and positively impact women's political leadership participation. Social factors refer to societal forces that influence individuals' attitudes, behaviors, and interactions. These factors include education, family dynamics, societal norms, and peer influences. In the context of political participation in Kenya, social norms and stereotypes can pose barriers. Preconceived notions about the appearance of a leader or the roles women should occupy in society can limit their political aspirations. However, positive social influences, such as higher education levels and empowerment programs, can equip women with the tools and confidence needed to engage in political leadership. Support and encouragement from families and communities can either catalyze or curb a woman's decision to venture into politics.

Economic factors significantly and positively impact women's political leadership participation. Economic factors pertain to financial aspects that influence decisions and opportunities, including elements like income, access to financial resources, employment status, and economic policies. In politics, these factors are pivotal for women in Kenya. The ability to fund campaigns is a significant determinant of a candidate's viability. Women, often economically disadvantaged due

to societal structures, might find accessing resources for political campaigns challenging. Thus, economic empowerment becomes vital for their political participation. Women with steady incomes or gainful employment are more likely to consider and pursue leadership roles, highlighting the importance of economic independence in political decision-making.

Political factors significantly and positively impact women's political leadership participation. Political factors encompass elements related to governance, policy-making, political institutions, and the overall political climate. In Kenya, the political landscape can either enable or impede women in seeking leadership roles. For instance, affirmative action policies have been implemented to bolster women's representation. However, the existing political culture and practices can sometimes be exclusionary. While some political parties may advocate gender-sensitive policies, the tangible support women receive during campaigns can differ. Challenges unique to women, such as gender-based discrimination during campaigns, further complicate their political journey. Nonetheless, the positive impact of increased women's participation on community development underscores the need for a more inclusive political environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that cultural awareness campaigns be intensified, specifically targeting regions or communities where traditional gender roles are deeply ingrained. These campaigns should emphasize the importance of women's participation in political leadership not only as a right but also as an asset to the community. Additionally, collaborations with religious and community leaders can be vital in reshaping cultural narratives. By highlighting successful women leaders from these communities, newer generations can be inspired to envision a society where gender does not determine leadership capability.

In addition, based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that the educational curriculum incorporates gender studies and leadership training from an early age. This will challenge and change societal stereotypes associated with women and leadership. Additionally, mentorship programs should be established, pairing young women with established female leaders, providing guidance and inspiration. Families should also be targeted with awareness programs, emphasizing the importance of their support in nurturing future female leaders.

Besides, based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that government and non-governmental organizations establish funds specifically designed to support women's political campaigns. Workshops on campaign financing, budgeting, and fundraising can equip women with necessary skills. Moreover, economic empowerment programs should be scaled up, ensuring women have equal access to employment and entrepreneurial opportunities, thus solidifying their financial independence and capability to venture into politics.

Furthermore, based on the conclusions of the study, it is recommended that stringent policies be put in place to ensure political parties uphold gender-sensitive practices. This could involve mandatory quotas for female candidates or penalties for parties that engage in gender-based discrimination. Political training workshops, focusing on campaign strategies, public speaking, and policy formulation, should be tailored specifically for women, ensuring they are well-prepared for the challenges of the political arena. Furthermore, a monitoring body can be established to oversee the challenges faced by female politicians, providing necessary interventions when required.

The study suggests that subsequent research be conducted in a different sub-county other than Lari to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the variances impacting women's political participation. This would cater to the diverse and unique sociopolitical landscapes present across different sub-counties. It would be advantageous to integrate other variables such as digital literacy, the influence of local media narratives, grassroots mobilization effectiveness, impacts of local governance models, and the role of youth in shaping political perspectives. Investigating these variables might shed light on additional determinants and barriers influencing women's involvement in politics and offer a multifaceted perspective on the subject.

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