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Assessment of Women's Involvement in Leadership Practices within Higher Learning Institutions in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania.

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims to provide an in depth-understanding on women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions in Morogoro Municipality. The study adopted convergent research design under mixed research approach. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to sample participants in this study. Data were collected by using a semi-structured interview with 6 university administrators and questionnaire to 180 respondents. The qualitative data from key informants were analyzed inductively by using thematic analysis while quantitative data from academic staff, administrative and supportive staff were analyzed deductively by using descriptive statistics with the help of statistical package for social sciences(SPSS) version21.The researcher obtained official clearance and permit letter from relevant authorities. During data collection, all ethical standards were observed. The study revealed that socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices are lack of female role model in leadership position, lack of confidence to pursue leadership practices, societal expectations, and unconscious biases in the selection process for leadership however woman leaders can work successful as man leaders. The hypothesis test indicated that there is no significant relationship between socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership and challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership within higher learning institutions. This study concluded that women should put much effort on acquiring desirable academic qualifications to qualify for academic positions. Also women should invest much in hard working and career development to enable them occupies top leadership positions. Therefore, the study recommended the government to empower women through leadership training to gain leadership confidence. Also the policy makers are recommended to promote gender equity and quality within higher learning institutions.

KEY WORDS: Socio-cultural, involvement, women leadership, higher learning institutions

1. INTRODUCTION

Leadership is the process of social influence, which maximizes the effort of others, towards the achievement of a goal (Ndonye, 2022). According to the International Labour Organization reports, women who comprise over 50% of the world's population have not achieved much equality in any country in the world (Siddique et al. 2024). This denoted that even though the world encourages equality but still gender inequality exists, men and women can't be equal in all spheres that as men are powerfully than women. Gender inequality is widespread virtually in employment sectors. Statistics show that women are well represented in business administration enrolment figures and the rapid expansion of this sector has given them a healthy share of lower and middle-level management positions. This progress to a top executive job is however blocked. This implied that women are not allowed to represent in top leadership positions which favor mostly men. The research which was conducted in Australia shows that, women in the executive leadership were 34.7% compared to 65.4% men, women held 18.7% of full professorships only 19.3% of the presidents (vice chancellors) of colleges and Universities (Muleya et al, 2023). It is therefore quite evident that men dominate the governance and management levels of higher education institutions. The problems which hampered women to go beyond purely economic empowerment are resulted from discrimination, social/cultural beliefs educational qualification gender and political involvement (Shang 2022). This implied that women were not allowed to represent in top leadership which favors mostly men. In Africa countries women are regularly exposed to various form of physical, psychological, sexual and emotional violence. This specified that African women were touched in all form that these women were not given chance to speak anything in a society. For example, Ethiopia is one of the country still there is a lot to do on promoting women in political participation.

Likewise, in third world countries, women were not allowed to hold any positions but only men who were allowed to be administrative leaders, due to societal norms and cultural practices which deeply rooted to gender biases and gender discrimination that limit women opportunity. These women were given low positions (Carr et al, 2017). Bunch (2022) highlighted that even though female education has increased, women tended to get married and start bearing children immediately after graduation. This revealed that most African society perceive women as the family care, bearing children and for women who hold leadership position, these women may be given a heavier workload without adequate resources, recognition and awards.

In Tanzania communities, traditions perceive women as inferior to men (Pallangyo et al, 2022). Despite the international declarations of which Tanzania is a signatory, affirming the legal rights and equality of men and women available; literature shows that women still constitute a disproportionately small percentage of those participating in public decision. Given the nominally equal status of men and women in laws of most countries, it is only right that both sexes participate in decision making over matters affecting them (Moe et al, 2021). This revealed that government empower women to become leaders so that could represent others in different spheres. Furthermore, for women to become strong education leaders, they must be well prepared, work hard, persevere, practice good skills, develop and maintain strong support systems, uphold and protect their personal integrity and believe in themselves (Bayaga & Mtosa 2021). The country must educate women as no development and progress is possible if half of the population is not educated. Illiterate and untrained females are incapable of being involved in any developmental process. Under-representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions has negative implications on government policies and general education curricula which have lacked gender mainstreaming. Women have also lagged in education due to a lack of positive female role models. Therefore it's quite clear that within higher learning institutions in Tanzania few women are principles and **Statement of the Problem**

In Tanzania, the research reports that women do less to acquire educational leadership because family tasks, cultural and lack of confidence among potential female leadership prevent them from taking up leadership (Sales et al, 2020). This situation still exists in Morogoro higher learning institutions especially in Morogoro municipality despite advancements in gender equality; women remain under presented in educational leadership roles within higher learning institutions. Thus, this study aimed to assess the socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions, by identifying and promoting greater representation and empowerment in academia.

II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

General objectives

This study is aiming to assess women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions in Morogoro Municipality.

Specific objectives

- To identify the socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership within higher learning institutions
- To examine the challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership within higher learning institutions

Research questions

- What are the socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions?
- What are the challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between Socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership and challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership within higher learning institution in Morogoro Municipality.

III. REVIEW OF THE RELATED THEORIES

This section contains reviews of the theory relate to socio-cultural factors, and challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions.

Glass ceiling theory was popularized in the late 20th century, particularly in the 1980s, to describe the invisible barriers that prevent women and minorities from advancing to higher levels of leadership within organizations. While there isn't a single individual credited with 'developing' the theory, it emerged as a result of various researchers and feminists such as Gay Bryant shedding light on the persistent gender-based disparities in the workplace. The term 'glass ceiling' was reportedly coined by Marilyn Loden during a panel discussion in 1978, and it gained further prominence in the early 1980s. Loden used the term to describe the intangible yet substantial obstacles that women faced as they sought to progress in their careers. The term was further popularized in the mid-1980s with a 1984 *Adweek* profile of Gay Bryant, the publication of the 1984 book *The Working Woman Report* and a 1986 *Wall Street Journal* article on the topic (Weyer, 2007).

The Glass Ceiling Theory is highly relevant for studying socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership within higher learning institutions due to its focus on the invisible barriers that prevent women from ascending to top leadership positions. This theory summarizes the myriads of subtle and overt obstacles that women encounter, which are often rooted in deep-seated socio-cultural norms and institutional biases. These barriers can include discriminatory attitudes, gender stereotypes, and the organizational culture that favors male leadership. By applying the Glass Ceiling Theory, the study systematically identifies and analyzes these hidden impediments, providing a comprehensive understanding of why women are underrepresented in leadership roles within higher learning institutions.

Review of Related Empirical Studies

Socio-cultural factor affecting women's involvement in leadership practices in higher learning institutions

Bracken et al. (2023) investigated on women and leadership in Finland highlighted the societal factors influencing women's careers. Society sets standards, expectations, and customs for organizations and individuals, which affect female leadership by determining who can enter leadership roles. These social factors shape individual behaviours and consumer habits and are challenging to change due to their pervasive impact on various life dimensions. Despite stereotypes, it is essential to recognize and support women's efforts to reach their full potential. Both men and women should be encouraged in leadership, and creating a supportive work environment for young leaders is crucial.

Akpa et al (2021) identified organizational culture as a significant factor affecting leadership in Kenya. Organizational culture encompasses the shared realities, values, symbols, and rituals that shape norms and behaviours within an organization. Social culture barriers include entrenched norms, power dynamics, selection procedures, lack of mentorship schemes, exclusion from informal networks, and inadequate accountability for women's advancement, among others.

O'Connor (2020) studied factors influencing women's progression to leadership positions in Kenya, reporting that women live in a male-dominated world where gender power relations favour men. Despite women's significant contributions to societal development, they do not equally benefit from it. In educational management, women are underrepresented in administrative roles compared to their presence in the teaching force.

Porter and Serra (2020) examined factors affecting women's participation in leadership and decision-making positions in Ethiopia. Due to social discrimination, many women are illiterate, with girls often kept out of school. This results in a significant gender disparity in education and illiteracy. In India, role models play a crucial role in women's success in leadership positions by enhancing confidence and leadership capacities. However, in Africa, the few of female role models in higher education leads to confusion about leadership behaviours.

McCallen and Johnson (2020) defined support as the assistance provided to those in need, including institutional policies, senior management assistance, networking, mentoring, role models, and family support. Institutional policies, such as parental leave provisions and flexible work arrangements, are essential for women's success in higher education leadership. Conversely, the absence of family-friendly policies can hinder women's work-family balance, as seen in Vietnam, Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya.

Nielsen (2020) noted that Male domination poses a barrier to women's success in leadership in South Africa, where male management decisions often stagnate women's progress due to fears of losing power. The patriarchal culture conditions women to view themselves as less capable. Men are more easily accepted in leadership due to traits like assertiveness and competitiveness, which differ from traditional female nurturing characteristics.

Gardiner and Finn (2023) discussed "intra-gender micro-violence," where male-dominated structures constrain women's social relations with other women. They identified micro-aggressions such as disassociating, suppression of opportunity, and judgment based on physical attributes. Anwar (2024) supported this, noting that traditional models reveal how women sometimes consciously or subconsciously restrict each other in their professional fields. These studies indicate that career obstacles for women are both externally imposed and internally enacted, often due to gender and work assumptions.

Porter, & Serra, (2020) determined women participation and role models in India. Women succeed in leadership positions because of the part played by role models. Role models are essential to female leaders in the higher education setting. For instance, role models enhance women's confidence, improve their understanding of leadership capacities and are instrumental in developing a shared and trusted relationship through a personal support mechanism. However, the situation in Africa appears to be different because women are grossly under-represented in senior leadership positions resulting in a scarcity of female role models in higher learning institutions.

Challenges in promote women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions

Berouk (2019) examined women's participation in political leadership and decision-making in Ethiopia, revealed that many subtle barriers arise from individual negative attitudes, societal beliefs, and organizational prejudices. These factors contribute to the persistence of the glass ceiling and illustrate how women navigate various obstacles. Perceptions about female leaders reflect what people think they are and what they believe they should be. Despite these challenges, maintaining optimism and a positive attitude can help young leaders persist during tough times.

Mbalilaki and Onyango (2022) conducted a study to understand the reasons behind the underrepresentation of female teachers in school leadership positions in Sumbawanga, Tanzania. The findings revealed that the lack of consideration for gender during the appointment of school leaders was a significant barrier to the participation of female teachers in leadership roles. Surprisingly, factors such as qualifications and perceived inability to handle leadership responsibilities were not found to be significant reasons for the low participation of female teachers in school leadership.

Similarly, Mbepera (2015) investigated the factors influencing the limited presence of women in senior leadership positions in rural community secondary schools in Tanzania. The study identified various factors at individual, societal, and organizational levels that contributed to the issue. At the individual level, familial obligations and reluctance to accept positions in rural areas due to inadequate social services discouraged women from pursuing leadership roles. Organizational factors, such as opaque procedures for appointing school heads, further limited women's access to leadership positions. Negative societal attitudes, conservative expectations about women's roles, and ingrained beliefs in rural areas also hindered women from assuming leadership roles and even exposed them to potential risks and exploitation.

Al-Jaradat (2014) investigated the challenges faced by women in academic leadership positions in secondary schools in the Irbid Educational Area. The findings showed that women academic leaders encountered challenges ranging from medium to high levels. The most significant challenges were physical and organizational challenges, followed closely by personal and social challenges at a medium level.

In a study by Purdul et al (2020), the influence of gender stereotypes on institutional leadership in public secondary schools in Kajiado County was investigated. The study revealed that gender stereotypes hindered many female teachers from advancing to leadership positions in the education sector. The study concluded that men dominated women in institutional leadership due to traditional and cultural attitudes and societal expectations.

Ademe and Singh (2015) conducted a study on factors affecting the participation of women in leadership and management roles in public higher education institutions in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. The findings identified several factors that attracted women to leadership positions, including self-confidence, networking opportunities, self-esteem, a supportive organizational environment, and assertiveness. However, barriers such as stereotyping, patriarchy, lack of workplace support systems, limited academic qualifications, and absence of role models hindered women from assuming leadership roles. The study also highlighted instances where women were excluded from academic decisions and matters concerning them. Despite the implementation of affirmative action policies, the study revealed persistent misconceptions about their effectiveness in bringing about the desired change.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a convergent research design under the mixed research approach. A descriptive survey research design was utilized systematically to collect and analyze data on socio-cultural factors, and challenges of promoting women involvement in leadership practices which was conducted in Morogoro municipality. The study involved a total number of 186 participants on both academic and non-academic staff where 180 were academic staff, administrative and supportive staff to which the questionnaires were employed. Also interview guide was used to 6 universities senior administrators. Therefore simple random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to select respondents to enhance fairness and accuracy data collection process. The validity of qualitative instrument was established by making consultation with 3 different research experts and the reliability of the questionnaires were assessed using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient which indicated 0.792. Moreover, Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis and quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21 to insure summary of the numerical data, including measures such as means, frequencies, and percentages. Ethical considerations were ensured by using anonymity, confidentiality, and providing informed consent to participants before collecting the research data.

V FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions

Note 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 =strongly disagree

No	Statement	5	4	3	2	1	MEAN	SDV
1.	Women face societal expectations that limit their involvement in leadership practices in higher learning institutions	27.8	22.2	21.7	23.3	5.0	3.44	1.256
2.	Gender stereotypes hinder women's progress in leadership practices within higher learning institutions	5.0	22.2	34.4	29.4	8.9	2.85	1.027
3.	Women face unconscious biases in the selection process for leadership practices in higher learning institutions	19.4	28.9	25.0	21.7	5.0	3.36	1.166
4.	Lack of female role models in leadership position discourage women to involve in leadership position in high learning institutions	17.8	39.4	25.0	13.9	3.9	30.0	33.3
5	Socio-cultural expectations limit women's work- life balance to pursue in leadership position in higher learning institutions	12.8	30.0	33.3	18.9	5.0	3.27	1.065
6	Male dominance limits women's to involve in leadership practices within higher learning institutions.	7.8	20.0	30.0	29.4	11.7	2.83	1.124
7	Ability of women's to participate in leadership practices within higher learning institutions is influenced by economic empowerment	4.4	23.9	27.8	28.3	15.6	2.73	1.122
8	I consider a woman leader can work successful as a man leader within higher learning institutions.	14.4	43.3	21.7	17.2	2.8	3.50	1.030

9	Organizational culture actively supports women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions.	12.8	30.0	26.7	21.1	9.4	3.16	1.176
10	Women lacks confidence to pursue in leadership practices within higher learning institutions	22.8	23.9	22.2	24.4	6.7	3.32	1.253

Data in Table 1 indicates that 50% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that women face societal expectations that limit their involvement in leadership practices in higher learning institutions with mean scores of 3.44. This implies that, the society in which they live does not believe in the women's capabilities to take charge in institutional leadership. This finding is supported by to Bracken, et al, (2023) claimed that society sets standards, expectations and customs for organizations and individuals that subsequently affect female leadership. This shows that, society standards and expectations favour men than women in leadership position. This is contrary to information provided by university administrator 3 who said that:

"In higher learning institutions leadership positions are mainly determined by their academic qualifications which is guided by TCU, thus in order to occupy a top leadership positions, they must hold an associate professor and above, Head of Department must be a PhD holder, Dean of Faculty must be a Senior lecture or lecture and for Coordinators must have a Master degree" (university administrator 3, Personal communication May 2024).

This means that qualified women has equal chance to partake leadership positions in academic institutions as men do. This finding implies that women should struggle to enrich their academic capabilities to qualify for educational leadership positions. This finding is contrary to Glass Ceiling Theory which suggests that in educational institutions, women in academia often encounter barriers of preventing their progression into higher leadership roles such as chancellor, vice chancellor, principals, deputy vice-chancellors, directors and dean of faculty/school (Hurst 2020).

Data in Table 1 on the aspect of gender stereotypes that hinder women's progress in leadership practices within higher learning institutions specifies that 38.3% of participants disagreed and strongly disagreed that, there was no gender stereotypes that hinder leadership. This indicates that, in higher learning institutions there is equality in appointment of leaders the only criteria to be considered is level of education, leadership capacity and integrity. This finding implies that women need to work hard to have acquired experience, enough academic qualification and confidence so that they can qualify for leadership positions in higher learning institutions. This finding aligns with Bracken, et al (2023) claimed that women should not be expected to act differently than men, but rather female leaders must be able to act effectively according to the situation. This finding supports what university administrator 6 alleged that:

"Mostly public higher learning institutions fallow Tanzania government standing orders of 2009(D6; 1) which clarify that selection of candidates in different posts in the public service shall be based on merits" (university administrator ?, personal communication 6 may 2024).

This indicates that, there is no favouritism in the appointment of leaders, thus the applicant with desirable qualifications is appointed to hold a particular leadership position. This finding denotes that women should be prepared enough to meet the required qualities for appointment in any academic leadership position. The finding contradicts with the Glass Ceiling Theory which proposes that women are facing stereotypes in the working environment for their advancement in careers (Tabassum and Nayak 2020).

Data in Table 1 indicates 48.3% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that women face unconscious biases in the selection process for leadership practices in higher learning institutions with a mean score of 3.36. This signifies that women face prejudice when they are looking for top leadership position. This finding symbolizes that there is inferiority complexity in the mind of society on women who aspire for top academic leadership positions within higher learning institutions. This correlated to Storm et al (2023) suggested that many undetectable barriers are produced by individual's negative attitudes, societal beliefs and organisational prejudices. This shows that women need to be encouraged to participate in leadership practices confidently. This finding correlate with the information given by university administrator 4 who recommended that:

"In Islamic religion, there are limitation of women involvement in leadership practices which are publicised in a Quran AnNisa' chapter 4 verse 34 illustrated that, Men shall take full care of women with the bestowed more abundantly on the former than on the latter, and with what they may spend out of their possessions. And the righteous women are the truly devout ones, who guard the intimacy which God has [ordained to be] guarded" (university administrator 4, personal communication, may 2024).

This information connotes that women can't lead men, instead they have to obey the holy Quran. This finding is supported by Glass Ceiling Theory which insists that men are given priority for top management positions as an administrator than women (Wrigley et al 2002).

Data in Table 1 describes 57.2% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that lack of female role models in leadership position discourages women to involve in leadership position within high learning institutions by a mean score of 30.0. This symbolizes that female role models support women to imitate and follow his path in leadership position. This finding related with Porter, & Serra (2020) who explained that the role models enhance women's confidence, improve their understanding of leadership capacities and are instrumental in developing a shared and trusted relationship.

This finding associate with the information given by university administrator 2 who said that:

"When women do not see other women in top leadership positions, they may struggle to envision themselves in similar positions. Lack of representation can lead to a lack of belief in one's ability to succeed in leadership position. Also women may doubt their own abilities and potential as leaders. They might question whether they have what it takes to succeed in such position" (university administrator 2, personal communication, May 2024).

This signifies that lack of role models can create barriers to their own aspirations and ambitions. Therefore can lead to doubts about their own capabilities to succeed in such positions. This finding admits that the absence of women in top leadership position can contribute to lack of belief in one's ability to succeed in leadership position, ultimately impacting women's motivation, confidence, and aspirations in pursuing such positions. This finding aligns with Smith et al (2021) who said that the absence of a pool of female role models leads to confusion about how to act or behave as female leaders.

Data in Table 1 indicates 42.8% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that Socio-cultural expectations limit women's work-life balance to participate in leadership position in higher learning institutions by an average score of 3.27. This means that societal norms recognize women as primarily responsible for family caring. This finding embodied that women can fail to balance domestic duties and leadership responsibilities at sometimes. The finding is in line with Muberekwa & Nkomo (2016) explained that there is still a need for more men to participate in household responsibilities to enable women participate fully in work as their male counterparts do in Africa. The finding is contrary to university administrator 6 who emphasized that:

This limitation arises from a variety of interconnected factors that create barriers to women seeking to advance in managing their personal and family responsibilities, of caregiving. This making it challenging to achieve a healthy work-life balanced (university administrator 6, personal communication may, 2024).

This shows that women face challenge in balancing work responsibilities and family responsibilities. This finding indicates that men should help women to execute home responsibilities to enable women accomplish work responsibilities. This finding concerned with Glass Ceiling Theory of Chou et al (2005) proposed that the family barrier is creating hardship in the way of women's career advancement.

Data in Table 1 shows 41.1% disagreed and strongly disagreed about male dominance limits women to involve in leadership practices within higher learning institutions with a mean score of 2.83. This exactly means that there is gender equality in leadership practices in higher learning institutions. This finding denotes that there is balance of gender in leadership positions. The finding is dissimilar with O'Connor (2020) claimed that female live in a male dominated world where gender power relations are clearly in favour of males. This denotes that the world is highly affected by patriarchal system and this has resulted into exclusion of women in leadership positions. This finding is contrary to the information delivered by university administrator 6 that:

"In university level, the issue of male dominance are under control of law and policy of work which promote gender equality and equal opportunity policies in leadership practices"(university administrator 6, personal communication may 2024).

These information confirms that there are equal chances in leadership practices for both genders, thus women should be given an exposure in leadership so that people can see them. This finding declares that when women are given chance in leadership practices, they can enhance collaboration, cooperation and innovation to achieve institutions excellence. These findings agree with glass ceiling theory which explained that culture and society also support male dominance (Cohen et al, 2020).

Data in Table 1 indicates 43.9% disagreed and strongly disagreed that ability of women to participate in leadership practices within higher learning institutions is influenced by economic empowerment with a mean score of 2.73. This implies that economic power cannot influence leadership in higher learning institutions. This finding means that leadership in higher learning institutions is not about economic empowerment but educational qualification, experience, confidence and the reputation. This finding relates with Potokri & Perumal (2019) who explained that female leaders use reflection and self-assessment as tools to analyse difficult situations, and find better ways to energise themselves, transform and make positive changes. This means women have power of influencing others to work hard and accomplish their duties. The finding relates with information from university administrator 1 that:

"Leadership is not about economic empowerment but leadership is the matter of influence others, the power to impress other people to accept, to make good decision that make an organization to succeed and to interact where women in Africa societies are not interacting with men"(university administrator 1, personal communication may 2024).

This shows that, people are dynamic thus they can change and so women need to liberate themselves to accept changes which will qualify them for academic leadership positions. This finding relates to Storm et al (2023) who noted that being optimistic or maintaining a positive attitude, could help young leaders to persist and persevere in difficult times.

Data in Table 1 indicates that 57.7% respondents agreed and strongly agreed that woman leader can work successful as a man leader within higher learning institutions with a mean score of 3.50. This display that women can work successful as men in all duties assigned by their supervisor. This finding directs that men and women can do the same activities assigned but this gender differ in thinking, character and ways of solving problem arise in the organization. This finding supports Osumba (2021) who explained that in spite of their differences, female leaders emphasize both interpersonal relations and task accomplishment. This indicates that women have ability to work successful and bring changes as men do. These finding related with the information provided by university administrator 5 that:

"Leadership skills are not determined by gender, but by qualities like competence, vision, decision making abilities, effective communication, experience and qualification that matters. Women leaders are fully capable of leading higher learning institutions with excellence" (university administrator 5, personal communication may 2024).

The information provided by university administrator 5 illustrates that women leaders are capable and successful as men leaders within higher learning institutions. These findings relates with Madsen et al (2020) specified that promoting a work environment that supports young leaders is essential to men and women in leadership.

Data in Table 1 shows 42.8% agreed and strongly agreed that organizational culture actively supports women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions with the average score of 3.16. This indicates that organizational culture has influenced in the involvement of women in leadership practices. This finding explained that women leaders have to act and follow organization culture. These findings associate with Akpa et al (2021) who explained that organizational culture is defined as the realities, values, symbols and rituals held in common by members of an organization. These findings associates with information provided by university administrator 4 that:

Organizational culture actually helps in shaping attitudes towards gender equality and support women in leadership. Academic women leaders need to be a good role model to students especial in wearing style, speaking style, teaching style that attracts female students to imitate from them. Female teachers are the mirrors of the society so we insist them to wear decent dress like Hijab and baibui (university administrator 4, personal communication may 2024)

This means traditional women should wear respectful dresses that allow their daughter to imitate from their mother's behaviors. This finding relates to Porter, & Serra (2020) who clarified those female role models leads to confusion about how to act or behave as female leaders.

Data in Table 1 displays that 46.5% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that women lacks confidence to pursue in leadership practices within higher learning institutions with a mean score of 3.32. This situation caused a lot of women fear to participate in leadership practices within higher learning institutions. This finding tries to point out those women facing barriers and challenges in pursuing leadership practices that destroy their confidence and bringing fear to them. This finding supported Offermann & Foley (2020) indicated that women truly lack confidence at early stage in their career. This finding relates with the information provided by university administrator 2 that:

"When women do not see many other women in leadership practices, the issue become harder for them to visualise themselves in leadership. They can also have feelings of isolation" (university administrator 2 personal communication may, 2024).

This portrays that women become confident enough in leadership when they see other leading. This finding is contrary to Tabassum and Nayak (2020) documented that this stereotype can further marginalize women and undermines their confidence and aspirations in the workplace.

Table 2: Challenges of promoting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions

Note 5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, 1 =strongly disagree

S/N	Statement	Responses					MEAN	SDV
		5	4	3	2	1		
1	Community negativity views concern women leadership practices	27.8	23.3	15.6	27.8	5.6	3.40	1.301
2	Difficulty of dealings by certain women leaders with male colleagues and heads of departments.	9.4	23.3	18.3	29.4	19.4	2.94	1.134
3	Dominance of the belief that the right role of the woman is in her family not in community leaderships	9.4	25.0	18.3	33.9	13.3	2.83	1.217
4	Men believes women are weak in leadership	11.1	22.2	18.9	31.7	16.1	2.81	1.264
5	Prevailing belief that the women has poor skills compare to men leader.	5.6	30.6	14.4	31.7	17.8	2.74	1.224
6	Low acceptability levels of the women's authority by the women are who are working with her.	11.1	29.8	18.3	25.6	7.2	2.90	1.124
7	Prevalence of the traditional, informal relation rather than the professional relation between the women leader and her subordinate.	4.4	21.7	23.3	38.9	11.9	2.78	1.053
8	Poor professional culture with some women subordinates about the academic leadership work.	3.3	20.0	21.0	38.3	16.8	2.73	0.982
9	Low eagerness levels of some women leaderships to assume leading is just as assignments.	3.9	28.3	22.1	34.4	11.2	2.87	1.030

10	Women's leadership having feelings of psychological pressure due to the difficulty in balancing the needs organization objectives	12.8	28.9	18.3	32.2	7.8	3.07	1.199

Data in table 2 indicates 50.1% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the community negativity views concern women leadership practices by an average score of 3.40. This shows that community has impacted women to involve in leadership practices with higher learning institutions. This finding denotes that community has bad perception about women who are involvement in leadership practices. These finding associates with Christensen et al (2020) who described that, society sets standards, expectations and customs for organizations and individuals that subsequently affect female leadership. This finding agrees with the information provided by university administrator 4 that:

"Most of Africa society passive women as caregiving, bearing children and attain family responsibilities. This culture value doesn't allow women to become a top leader, for example areas which are controlled by ntemi, chiefs, most of this areas doesn't allow women to be leaders so when women decide to involve in leadership face a lot of obstacles in a society"(university administrator 4, personal communication may 2024).

This denotes that men need to dominate over women involvement in power. This finding relates with glass ceiling theory which explained that culture and society also supports male dominance (Benvillan, 2020).

Data in Table 2 shows that 46.8% of participants disagreed and strongly disagreed that no difficulty in dealings with certain women leaders with male colleagues and heads of departments within higher learning institutions with the mean score of 2.94. This implies that there are enough collaboration between subordinates and their fellow workers. This finding shows that good relationship between women leaders and their workers allows workers feel part of the institutions. These finding concurs with Maheshwari & Nayak (2022) who argued that in education leadership, collaboration between male and female employees is very important in school organization as it ensures high performance in organizational activities. These findings correlate with the information delivered by university administrator 5 that:

"Be a leader means you accept any challenges and obstacles that arises in your leadership practices so women leader are encouraged to be strong and stand in a line"(university administrator 3, personal communication may 2024).

This displays that challenges are part of leadership practices but women leader can find best way to solving it when it arises in leadership. This finding is related with information provided by Qadir (2019) who explained that through collaboration, the provision of quality education is achieved as teachers work together to achieve teaching and learning objectives as well as leadership goals.

Data in Table 2 indicates that 47.2% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that dominance of the belief that the right role of the woman is in her family not in community leaderships with a mean score of 2.83. This suggests that in most of higher learning institutions, women are educated enough to participate in leadership. This finding insists women to use their leadership traits effectively to lead others in a good path. This finding is dissimilar with Osituyo (2018) who explained that male counterparts are easily accepted in leadership positions because they are labelled to have the desired traits, which include assertiveness, competitiveness, forcefulness, self-reliance, dominance, and aggressiveness which differ from the nurturing characteristics of female traits. This finding disagrees with the information given by university administrator 6 who claimed that:

"Education civilized people that way in universities level, women were insisted to involve in leadership practices that's way the past leader who was deputy vice chancellor was a woman. This top leadership is free to every gender but most of women fail because of lack of enough qualification, fear and confidence" (university administrator 3, personal communication may 2024).

This open door for women to involve enough in leadership practices within the post announced in the university system. This finding is contrary with glass ceiling theory of Showunmi (2023) who insisted that women experience invisibility, exclusion, isolation, and lack of support within higher education due to the glass ceiling.

Data in Table 2 displays 47.8% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that men believes women are weak in leadership practices within higher learning institutions with mean score of 2.81. This directs that men accept women participation in leadership practices. This finding symbolize that there is a good cooperation between female and male leaders to bring changes in education within higher learning institutions. This is in line with Ramathuba & Maselesele (2015) who suggested that support is the total level of assistance or services given to a person in need. The finding differs from what university administrator 1 who said that:

"What make a person be a leader are leadership traits. Many women lack leadership traits, therefore they are not capable to rule others and innovates for new changes because most women do not have aggressive element like men to handle situation" (university administrator 1, personal communication may 2024).

This implies that women are weak to hold leadership practices within higher learning institutions. This finding is contrary to Tabassum and Nayak (2020) who documented that women are facing stereotypes in the working environment that marginalize women and undermine their confidence and aspirations in the advancement in careers.

Data in Table 2 specifies that 49.5% of contributors disagreed and strongly disagreed that prevailing belief that the women has poor skills compare to men leader within higher learning institutions with average mean score of 2.74. This addressed that women leaders have same skills of leadership as men

leaders. This denotes that women leaders share their skills of leadership within higher learning institutions. These findings associates with Offerman &Foley (2020) who asserted that the major things that influence women to leadership include making a difference, helping others, serving, and having the autonomy to make decisions and solve problems. This relate with university administrator 3 who said that:

"Women have leadership skills of communication, decision-making, problem solving, empathy, motivation, vision, collaboration, transparency and accountability which give them direction on how to lead others"(university administrator 3, personal communication may 2024).

This shows that women leader use leadership skills to rule others within higher learning institutions. This finding link with Potokri & Perumal (2019) found that women develop leadership behaviours through practice and taking risks.

Data in Table 2 indicates that 40.9% of participants agreed and strongly agreed that low acceptability levels of the women's authority by their fellow women's who are working with them within higher learning institutions with a mean score of 2.90. This means that female leaders face obstacles from women workers within higher learning institutions. This finding clarifies that women might have lower level of acceptability before their fellow women in a work setting. This finding is lined with Hopkins (2017) who mentioned that women co-workers usually feel threatened by the success of other women in their organisation. This finding is dissimilar with university administrator 2 who said that:

"Biologically women have such character of hatred and unacceptable nature which affect leadership practices" (university administrator 5, personal communication may 2024).

This indicates that such behaviour can negatively impact leadership practices by destroying respect to women leader. This finding agrees with Berouk (2019) who said that to achieve high-level positions requires a person to be determined and to keep on trying, no matter how many times you may be discouraged.

Data in Table 2 designates that 50.8% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed about prevalence of the traditional, informal relation rather than the professional relation between the women leaders and their subordinate within higher learning institutions by the average score of 2.78. This indicates that women leaders and subordinates can vary based on culture, institutional, and individual factors. This finding shows that women leaders are supported according to law and policy. This finding is line with Abdulrahman et al (2020) who said that there should be formulation of equal opportunity policies, changing the environment in which women work, and the attitudes towards educated women, flexibility in working hours, and reviewing of recruitment and promotion policies in higher learning institutions. This finding associates with university administrator 4 that:

"There is traditional top down hierarchical structure where information flows primarily in one direction from leader to the subordinate which emphasizes on collaboration, cooperation, good communication that encourage feedback, idea-sharing, and to encourage women leaders to build professional relationships with subordinates based on trust and mutual respect"(university administrator 4, personal communication may, 2024)

This indicates that women leaders need to provide duties according to hierarchy of specialization of worker. This finding insures top management to have good communication and cooperation that duty and all activity can run smoothly. These findings are contrary with Potokri & Perumal (2019) who identified that completing tasks, focus is always on development and mentoring others.

Data in Table 2 implies 55.1% of respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that there are no poor professional culture with some women subordinates about the academic leadership work within higher learning institutions of the average mean of 2.73. This indicates that poor professional culture does not exist between women leaders and their female subordinates within academic setting. This finding directs that women offer supportive, inclusive and empowering for their subordinates. These finding disagreed with Mlambo and Kapingura (2019) who explained that the cultures of organizations have been shaped by men. The information provided by university administrator 5 that:

"There is no poor professional culture among subordinates regarding academic leadership. In our university we insist promoting transparency, open communication, providing professional development opportunities and ensure there is a culture of collaboration toward education goal" (university administrator 2, personal communication may 2024).

Data in Table 2 directs 45.6% of the contributors disagreed and strongly disagreed that there are no low eagerness levels of some women leaderships to assume leading is just as assignments within higher learning institutions with the average score of 2.87. This directs that women do not face eagerness levels to assume leading is just as an assignment because women know their leadership rules. This finding indicates that women are capable to lead others in a good manner. This finding relates with Osumba (2021) who supported that women are interested in activities that are focused on bringing about change and positively impacting people's lives. This support the information given by university administrator 5 who recommend that:

"For some women, they think that, leading is an assignment because of having a lot of tasks that they want to fulfill in their homes and other business, they think when they are appointed them in leadership practices, and they cannot handle all situations at once. Other women fear to rule others" (university administrator 5, personal communication may 2024).

This shows that women leaders face challenges which allow them to feel leadership is an assignment. These finding relates with information given by Showunmi (2023) who explained that women's mentorship in the workplace plays an important role in helping women succeed by gaining managerial skills and confidence, resulting in increased promotion possibilities.

Data in Table 2 shows 41.7% of respondents agreed and strongly agreed that women's leadership having feelings of psychological pressure due to the difficulty in balancing the needs of organization objectives within higher learning institutions of the average mean score of 3.07. This symbolizes that women face challenges to balance organization objectives with family responsibilities. This finding direct that women had a lot of tasks to accomplish

which cause stressfully. This finding accepted that there is still a need for more men to participate in household responsibilities in order to enable women to produce quality work that is equal to their male counterparts in Africa (Muberekwa & Nkomo (2016). These findings were explained by university administrator 3 that:

"These women fail to balance the demand of organizational objectives with family responsibilities and society expectations which can create pressure for women's leaders" (university administrator 1, personal communication may 2024).

This shows that women leaders fail to balance organization responsibilities and family responsibility. This finding shown by Bracken et al (2023) indicated that Females leaders sometime need to choose between their families and their careers because of assumptions about gender and work.

Table 3: Hypothesis test ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	.113	2	.057	.797	.488[b]
1	Residual	.497	7	.071		
	Total	.610	9			

a. Dependent Variable: Current status of Women involvement in leadership

b. Predictors: (Constant), Socio-cultural Factors, Challenges of promoting women involvement in leadership practices

The data in Table 3, Multiple linear regression statistical technique was used to establish the relationship between Socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices and challenges of promoting women on current status of women involvement in leadership within higher learning institutions indicates that the p-value on the statistical test used was found to be 0.488 at a 0.05 significance level. This implies that a p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05; therefore, the stated null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted that there is no relationship between Socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership and challenges of promoting women on the current status of women involvement in leadership within higher learning institution in Morogoro municipality

VI SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study found that different ways occurs on assessing socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership practices within higher learning institutions includes societal expectations that limit their participation, gender stereotypes that hinder their progress and unconscious biases during the selection process. The lack of female role models can discourage women from pursuing leadership roles, while socio-cultural expectations often affect their work-life balance and ability to lead. Male dominance in leadership positions and economic disparities also contribute to these challenges. Despite these barriers, there is a belief that women can be as successful as men in leadership roles if organizational culture supports their involvement, though confidence remains an issue for some women. The findings also revealed that the p-value on the statistical test used was found to be 0.488 at a 0.05 significance level. This implies that a p-value is greater than the significance level of 0.05; therefore, the stated null hypothesis (H_0) was accepted that there is no relationship between Socio-cultural factors affecting women's involvement in leadership and challenges of promoting women on the current status of women involvement in leadership within higher learning institution in Morogoro municipality.

Conclusions

Based on research findings, this study concluded that there is potential for women to succeed in leadership roles if organizational cultures are supportive, transparent, promoting practices and ensure attractive incentives. These findings underscore the necessity for cultural change and supportive organizational policies to enhance women's leadership in higher learning institutions

Recommendations

Based on conclusion of the study, the study recommended the following to the government and policy makers that the government should empower women through leadership training to gain leadership confidence. The government should allocate a training budget for women to empower them to study, thus aiding in capacity building for leadership. The study recommends the government should prepare a mechanism to encourage women to become leaders through workshops, forums, and various seminars. Also Women should advice to put much effort on acquiring desirable qualification to allow them to participate in leadership practices. Nevertheless the study recommends policy makers to formulate policies for promoting gender equity and equality within higher learning institutions. Additionally, studies could investigate the role of male allies and gender-inclusive policies in fostering a more equitable leadership environment

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