

# Determinants Of Public Participation On Women's Leadership In Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya

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## **Abstract:**

*This study investigates the socio-economic determinants influencing women's participation in leadership in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. Drawing on feminist theory and participatory development theory, the research employs a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative data from 160 respondents through structured questionnaires and qualitative insights from focus group discussions with 20 key informants. The researchers identify critical socio-economic factors such as; income levels, educational opportunities, and resource access that, significantly, impact women's leadership roles. Qualitative findings underscore the importance of education and economic stability, with participants emphasizing that higher education fosters confidence in assuming leadership positions. Additionally, support systems such as women groups are pivotal in empowering women to pursue leadership roles. However, barriers such as limited access to quality education, high poverty levels, economic dependence, gender-based violence (GBV), insufficient networking opportunities, and entrenched cultural norms, hinder women's advancement in leadership. Statistical analysis reveals that 48.8% of respondents identified income level as a crucial determinant of leadership participation, followed by 22.5% citing access to social networks. Descriptive statistics indicate strong engagement in socio-economic activities, with the highest participation in mentorship and leadership development programs (mean = 4.62). The study highlights the perceived importance of public participation in promoting women's leadership, with 74.4% of respondents acknowledging its significance. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions that promote socio-economic empowerment, challenge gender norms, and enhance women's leadership representation in decision-making processes. Recommendations include community-wide gender sensitization programs, educational initiatives, and enhanced mentorship opportunities to facilitate women's active participation in leadership roles.*

**Keywords:** women's leadership, socio-economic determinants, Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, public participation, gender equality.

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## **I. Background To The Study**

Globally, women's leadership participation has increasingly garnered attention as a vital element in achieving gender equality and sustainable development. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 5, underscore the importance of empowering women and ensuring their full and effective participation in leadership across all levels of decision-making (Women, 2022). Despite global efforts to promote gender equality in leadership, women remain underrepresented in political, economic, and social leadership roles in many parts of the world. According to Olatunji, (2022), women held only 25.5% of parliamentary seats globally, illustrating persistent gender disparities in leadership positions.

A concerted effort has been made in several developed nations to increase women's leadership participation through legal frameworks, economic empowerment initiatives, and educational reforms. For example, countries in the European Union have implemented gender quotas and policies aimed at increasing the number of women in decision-making roles (European Commission, 2021). These efforts have yielded positive outcomes in some regions, with more women occupying leadership positions in both the public and private sectors. However, challenges remain, particularly in regions where socio-cultural factors and economic constraints continue to limit women's access to leadership opportunities.

In Africa, women's leadership participation has been shaped by a complex interplay of historical, cultural, economic, and political factors. While there have been notable advancements in women's leadership across the continent, such as the election of female heads of state in countries like Liberia and Ethiopia, many African nations still face significant gender disparities in leadership. According to the African Development Bank (2020), women constituted less than 25% of parliamentarians and less than 20% of senior management

roles across Africa. Socio-economic factors, including limited access to education, economic dependency, and deeply rooted cultural beliefs, have been identified as key barriers to women's leadership in the region (Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2023).

In Kenya, women's participation in leadership has seen gradual progress, especially following the enactment of the 2010 Constitution, which mandates gender parity in leadership positions. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) introduced the "two-thirds gender rule," aimed at ensuring that no more than two-thirds of elective or appointive bodies are comprised of the same gender. This legal framework has provided a foundation for increasing women's representation in leadership, both at the national and local levels. However, despite this constitutional provision, women's leadership participation remains below the mandated threshold, with only about 23% of parliamentary seats held by women in 2022 (Gebremeskel, 2022).

At the local level, in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, women's leadership participation faces significant challenges despite the constitutional provisions. Women's capacity for leadership is significantly influenced by socioeconomic variables, including access to public participation mechanisms, cultural beliefs, income levels, and education (Mutangirwa, 2016). Education is pivotal in empowering women, as those with higher educational qualifications are more likely to pursue leadership roles (Segovia-Pérez, Laguna-Sánchez, & de la Fuente-Cabrero, 2019). Conversely, women with lower educational attainment often encounter limited opportunities for leadership engagement. Economic independence also influences women's leadership participation, with financially empowered women being more likely to assert themselves in public and political spheres (Ette & Akpan-Obong, 2023).

Cultural beliefs, deeply embedded in society, further shape perceptions of women's roles in leadership. Traditional norms that prioritize male authority often restrict women's leadership aspirations (Bhatti & Ali, 2020). Public participation mechanisms, designed to ensure inclusivity in governance are essential for amplifying women's voices in decision-making processes. However, the effectiveness of these mechanisms varies across communities, often depending on the socio-economic and cultural landscape of the region (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

This study seeks to explore the socio-economic determinants of women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County, examining key barriers and opportunities that influence women's engagement in leadership. By investigating these factors, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on gender equality and provide insights for policymakers and community leaders in promoting women's representation in leadership positions.

### **Problem Statement**

In Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, women's participation in leadership remains significantly low, despite Kenya's constitutional mandate for gender equality (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Despite the two-thirds gender rule on any elective or appointed body, women remain underrepresented in key decision-making positions, particularly in local leadership (Gebremeskel, 2022). Despite the continuous governmental and non-governmental efforts to promote gender equity, the persistent absence of women from leadership positions is largely attributed to different socio-economic determinants.

These factors include; limited access to education, economic instability, and entrenched cultural norms, which have created a structural barrier to women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County. For instance, women with lower educational attainment face reduced opportunities to develop the skills necessary for leadership (Segovia-Pérez, Laguna-Sánchez, & de la Fuente-Cabrero, 2019). Economic instability, often exacerbated by poverty, restricts women's access to financial resources, further impeding their ability to pursue leadership roles (UN Women, 2020). Additionally, cultural norms and societal attitudes toward gender roles perpetuate gender discrimination, discouraging women from engaging in leadership activities (Bako & Syed, 2018). These socio-economic constraints have contributed to the marginalization of women in leadership, limiting both their individual potential and the development of the broader community.

### **Objective of the Study**

The main objective of this study was to assess the Determinants of Public Participation on Women's Leadership in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya.

### **Significance of the Study**

The aim of the study was to examine the determinants of public participation on women's leadership in Nyatike Migori County, Kenya. The researcher believes that significant women participation in the Sub County, will help speed up development activities. It will also be a positive move towards the realization of the dream of the Kenyan Constitution 2010, which calls for gender inclusivity and the 30% representation of women in all sectors of life.

### **Theoretical Review**

Our literature review employs three key theoretical frameworks to analyze the socio-economic determinants of women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. The first theory is the Social Role Theory articulated by Mabokela and Mlambo (2017). It provides insights into how entrenched gender biases in societal norms can impede women's advancement into leadership positions. This theory suggests that prevailing cultural perceptions regarding gender roles significantly limit women's opportunities for professional growth and leadership participation. It underscores the impact of social expectations that define leadership as predominantly a male domain, which restricts women's aspirations and contributions in these roles. The second theory is the Feminist theory, which highlights the necessity for women's inclusion in governance to address historical gender imbalances. This theory asserts that gender equity is essential for effective community development and emphasizes that women's participation in leadership is not only a matter of justice but also crucial for sustainable progress within communities. Various studies have utilized feminist theory to explore the barriers to women's leadership, revealing systemic challenges continue to persist (Makama, 2013). The third theory that guided our study was the Participatory Development Theory. This theory advocates for the involvement of communities in the development process to ensure that initiatives were culturally relevant and responsive to local needs.

### **Research Design**

The study utilized a mixed-methods research approach, specifically employing a convergent parallel research design. This design was deemed appropriate as it allowed for the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data (Creswell, 2014). The research investigated public participation and its impact on women's leadership in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. This design enabled a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The quantitative method provided numerical data on the levels of public participation and women's representation in leadership roles, offering statistical insights into patterns and correlations (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). Meanwhile, the qualitative method captured in-depth perspectives and experiences related to cultural beliefs, challenges faced by women leaders, and the complex dynamics of public engagement (Patton, 2015). By integrating these two approaches within a convergent parallel design, the study aimed to triangulate findings, enhance the validity of the results, and provide a holistic understanding of how public participation influenced women's leadership in Nyatike.

### **Research Method**

This study utilized a mixed-methods research approach with a convergent parallel design to examine the socio-economic determinants of women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. This approach facilitated the simultaneous collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, providing a comprehensive understanding of how socioeconomic factors influenced women's leadership roles (Creswell, 2015). The study targeted 200 respondents, comprising community members and key leaders, to explore various socio-economic aspects, such as education and income levels, affecting women's representation in leadership positions. A combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques was employed to ensure the inclusion of both representative and relevant data.

Quantitative data were collected through structured questionnaires utilizing a modified four-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 4 = strongly disagree. The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, ensuring internal consistency across various socio-economic factors. Qualitative data were gathered through face-to-face interviews to gain deeper insights into the socio-economic challenges that influenced women's leadership participation. Through integrating both quantitative and qualitative data, the study aimed to triangulate findings, enhancing the validity and depth of the conclusions regarding the socio-economic determinants affecting women's leadership engagement in Nyatike Sub County.

The data analysis phase in this study played a crucial role in the evaluation process, as highlighted by Creswell (2013). It involved the systematic organization of data collected from the field, revealing patterns, relationships, and insights that facilitated meaningful conclusions. The data were structured appropriately for interpretation, beginning with the editing of completed questionnaires to ensure completeness and consistency. Descriptive statistics served as the primary analytical tool, employing tables, frequencies, and percentages to summarize and illuminate patterns within the data. This analysis encompassed both the questionnaire responses and insights derived from the interview guide.

Data gathered from focus group discussions were categorized based on emerging themes and sub-themes, utilizing a thematic analysis approach to identify main patterns and distinctive perspectives within the interview data. Qualitative data were analyzed using Nvivo version 14, with the outcomes of the thematic analysis presented in a narrative form. This descriptive format conveyed the identified themes, sub-themes, and narratives summarizing the participants' insights and viewpoints. For quantitative data, version 25 of the

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was employed, applying descriptive statistics to illuminate the distribution, central tendency, and variation within the data.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Ensuring ethical standards is fundamental to protecting participants' rights and maintaining the integrity of the research. Participants were provided with clear and concise information about the study's purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits, allowing them to make informed decisions. They were required to give voluntary informed consent and had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without facing repercussions. The protection of participants' rights was prioritized throughout the research process. Confidentiality was upheld by anonymizing responses through the use of pseudonyms or codes, thereby safeguarding the identity of participants. Relevant approvals were secured from the Tangaza University Ethics Committee and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) before commencing the study. The research placed a strong emphasis on participants' privacy, safety, and dignity, and any potential ethical issues were addressed with sensitivity. Special attention was given to ensuring that all participants, including those with limited literacy, fully understood the scope of the study and their involvement.

### **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation during this study was the issue of time and distances. The researchers were able to send data gatherers in different corners of the Sub-County to cut down on time. Another challenge was the culture of silence among women participants. The study was carried out among the Luo who are rigidly patriarchal. The researchers ensured that women's views were carefully sought-after during discussions to enable them have confidence in themselves to express their views openly.

## **II. Results And Discussion**

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study, which focused on the role of public participation in enhancing women's leadership in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County. The data was collected using questionnaires and interviews, and the results are structured around the key themes of demographic characteristics, socio-economic factors, and public participation mechanisms influencing women's decision-making roles. Quantitative data from the 160 returned questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS version 25, while qualitative data from 20 interviews with women leaders were analyzed using thematic analysis in NVivo version 14.

### **Response Rate**

A total of 180 questionnaires were distributed to women in Nyatike Sub County. Out of these, 160 were fully completed and returned, giving a response rate of 89%. Additionally, all 20 planned interviews were successfully conducted, resulting in a 100% response rate for the interviews. The overall response rate of 89% exceeded the recommended minimum threshold of 60%, which is generally accepted for sufficient data analysis and generalizability (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2019). This high response rate reflects effective engagement with the target population, ensuring that the findings are representative and reliable for the study's objectives.

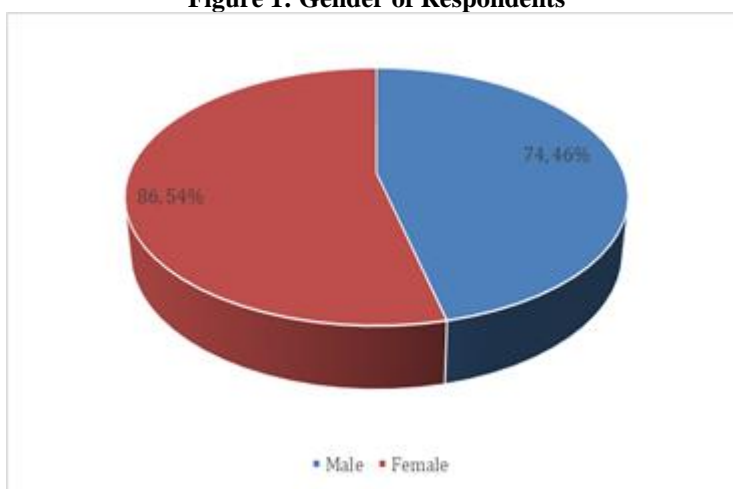
### **Reliability Test Results**

To assess the reliability of the data collection instruments, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for various variables. The overall reliability score was 0.77, indicating acceptable internal consistency according to Mugenda and Mugenda's (2012) guidelines. The analysis of individual variables showed that socio-cultural norms had a reliability coefficient of 0.75, while lack of awareness or information scored 0.77, reflecting strong internal consistency. Economic constraints and institutional biases both achieved a reliability score of 0.78, demonstrating good coherence within these constructs. Bureaucratic inefficiencies scored 0.76, further reinforcing the trustworthiness of the questionnaire items. These reliability measures confirm that the data gathered is consistent and dependable for addressing the research questions.

### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The demographic characteristics of the study participants are crucial for providing context and enriching the understanding of the sample's diversity about the contribution of public participation to women's leadership in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya. This section provides detailed information about important aspects of the participants in the study, which include gender, age distribution, greatest educational achievement, marital status, occupation, and monthly income. Through analyzing these attributes, the study can gain valuable insights into the backgrounds of the respondents, which may impact their perspectives and experiences related to the study's focus.

**Figure 1: Gender of Respondents**



The data regarding gender in Figure indicates a total of 160 respondents, with 74 males (46.3%) and 86 females (53.8%), reflecting a slight majority of female participants compared to their male counterparts. This distribution highlights a more balanced representation of genders in the study, suggesting that female participation is slightly higher, which may indicate a greater willingness among women to engage in discussions related to public participation and leadership in Nyatike Sub County. The predominance of female respondents suggests a significant opportunity for women's voices and perspectives to influence decision-making processes in the area. This gender distribution implies that initiatives aimed at enhancing public participation and leadership opportunities for women are vital and may receive positive support from the community, guiding policymakers and community leaders to implement strategies that empower women and foster gender equity in leadership roles.

**Table 1:**

**Age Distribution of the Respondents**

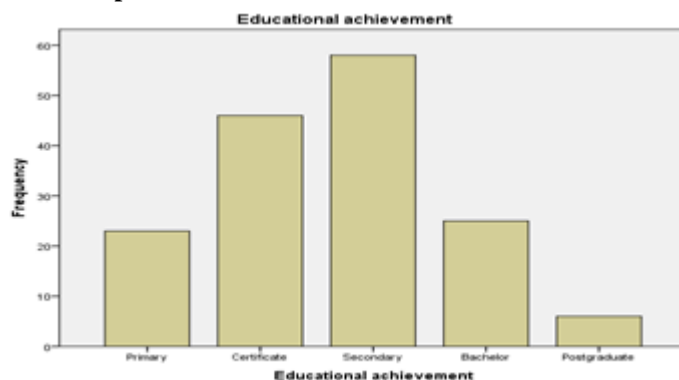
Age Distribution of Respondents		
	N	%
18-28	45	28.1%
29-38	55	34.4%
39-48	40	25.0%
49 years and above	20	12.5%

The age distribution of respondents in the study indicates that the majority fall within the 29-38 age group, accounting for 34.4% of the participants. This is followed by the 18-28 age group, which represents 28.1% of respondents. Those aged 39-48 make up 25.0% of the sample, while individuals 49 years and older constitute the smallest group at 12.5%. These findings suggest that the study captures a wide range of adult age groups, with a particular focus on middle-aged participants. This distribution provides insights into the age-related dynamics of public participation and leadership engagement within Nyatike Sub County. According to Creswell (2013), understanding demographic characteristics like age is essential in evaluating participation patterns and decision-making behaviors in diverse communities.

The age distribution suggests that public participation and leadership engagement in Nyatike Sub County are likely influenced by middle-aged individuals (29–38), who form the largest portion of respondents. This could imply that the study's findings will heavily reflect the perspectives and participation patterns of this age group. Given that younger (18-28) and older (49) individuals are underrepresented, their specific experiences and challenges in public participation may be less visible. Therefore, future interventions and policies aimed at enhancing public participation and leadership should consider tailored approaches to engage younger and older populations more effectively, ensuring balanced representation across all age groups.

Figure 2:

**Educational Achievement of Respondents**



The analysis of educational achievement among respondents reveals varied levels of education completed. Of the total 160 respondents, 36.3% (n = 58) attained secondary education, making it the most common level of educational achievement in this sample. Following this, 28.8% (n = 46) obtained a certificate, while 14.4% (n = 23) had completed primary education. Notably, 15.6% (n = 25) of respondents earned a bachelor’s degree, and 3.8% (n = 6) had achieved postgraduate qualifications.

The cumulative percentages indicate that 80.4% of respondents have at least secondary education or higher, suggesting a relatively educated sample. However, the lower percentages of postgraduate and bachelor’s degree holders highlight a potential gap in higher educational attainment within this population. These findings imply that while a significant portion of respondents have completed secondary education, there may be barriers preventing further educational advancement, particularly in pursuing bachelor’s and postgraduate degrees. This information is critical for understanding the socio-economic context in Nyatike Sub County, as higher education levels are often associated with increased participation in decision-making and leadership roles.

**Table 2:  
Marital Status of Respondents**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Married	70	43.8	43.8
Single	50	31.3	75.0
Divorced	20	12.5	87.5
Widowed	15	9.4	96.9
Separated	5	3.1	100.0
Total	160	100.0	

The marital status distribution of respondents shows that the majority, 43.8%, are married, indicating that most participants are in stable family units. Single individuals account for 31.3%, forming a significant portion of the respondents. Divorced participants make up 12.5%, while widowed respondents represent 9.4%. The smallest group, separated individuals, constitutes 3.1% of the sample. These findings suggest that marital status may influence women's participation in leadership and public decision-making processes, as family responsibilities often affect their ability to engage. Married women may experience greater societal expectations regarding caregiving, potentially limiting their time and capacity for leadership roles. On the other hand, single or divorced women may face different social dynamics that affect their participation. Understanding the marital status distribution helps to contextualize social roles and challenges faced by different groups of women within Nyatike Sub County (Kabeer, 2018).

**Occupation of Respondents**

The occupation variable was tested to understand the primary economic activities of respondents in Nyatike Sub County and how these occupations influence public participation and leadership dynamics. Analyzing occupation distribution provides insight into the socio-economic context and individuals' varying roles within their communities.

Table 3:

**Occupation of Respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gold Mining	50	31.3	31.3
Fishing	41	25.6	56.9

	Agriculture	27	16.9	73.8
	Boda Boda Transport	22	13.8	87.5
	Trade and Small Business	20	12.5	100.0
	Total	160	100.0	

The analysis of respondents' occupations in Nyatike Sub County reveals a diverse economic landscape. The predominant occupation is gold mining, with 31.3% of respondents engaged in this activity, highlighting its critical role in the local economy. Closely behind, with 25.6% of the respondents citing fishing, this shows how dependent the community is on aquatic resources for both food security and a living. Agriculture is reported by 16.9% of respondents, suggesting it remains a significant, though less dominant, source of income. The boda boda transport sector employs 13.8% of respondents, underscoring the importance of informal transportation in facilitating mobility within the community. Finally, trade and small businesses encompass 12.5% of respondents, showcasing entrepreneurial efforts to sustain livelihoods.

The implications of this occupational distribution are significant for local economic development initiatives. The prominence of gold mining and fishing suggests that targeted programs aimed at supporting these sectors could enhance community resilience and prosperity. Recognizing the contributions of informal transportation and agriculture also opens up new possibilities for enhancing livelihoods overall and diversifying the economy. Policymakers and development agencies can leverage these insights to create tailored interventions that address the specific needs of each occupational group, ultimately fostering sustainable growth and empowerment within Nyatike Sub County.

### Socio-Economic Determinants of Women’s Participation in Leadership

Women's leadership and their active role in public participation are profoundly shaped by socio-economic factors. In Nyatike Sub County, inequalities in education, economic standing, and access to resources pose significant barriers that prevent women from assuming leadership positions. Qualitative findings from focus group discussion interviews provided in-depth information regarding Socio-Economic Determinants of Women’s Participation in Leadership.

Education was highlighted as a crucial factor in enhancing women’s leadership roles. One participant noted, *“The more educated we are, the more confident we feel to take on leadership positions.”* (Participant 8). Another added; *“Stable employment also plays a big role. When women are financially secure, they are more likely to engage in leadership”* (Participant 10). It is clear that lack of access to quality education is a significant barrier to women’s leadership. Women also pointed out that the prevailing high levels of poverty in Nyatike was a significant challenge. One respondent stressed; *“Poverty makes it hard for us to focus on leadership; we struggle to meet our basic needs every day.”* (Participant 7). This indicates that financial instability often limits women's ability to pursue leadership opportunities.

Another identified determinant of women’s access to leadership was economic independence. *“When you rely on someone else for your livelihood, it’s difficult to step up and lead. Economic independence is crucial.”* (Participant 5). Then there is gender-based violence as another determinant. Many participants shared experiences of intimidation that discouraged them from engaging in leadership. *“I have faced harassment for speaking up, and it makes me think twice before I take on a leadership role,”* noted one participant (Participant 9). Other determinants mentioned included; insufficient networking opportunities, lack of support systems, which complicate women’s journey into leadership positions, negative cultural beliefs and norms. One participant lamented; *“Our society often thinks that leadership is for men. Changing this perception is essential for our growth”* (Participant 8).

### Perceived Importance of Public Participation in Promoting Women's Leadership

The analysis of the perceived importance of public participation in promoting women's leadership underscores its vital role in enhancing women's representation in decision-making. This variable is relevant to the study as it highlights how community engagement initiatives can empower women and address barriers to their leadership, informing policies aimed at fostering gender equality.

Table 4:

#### Perceived importance

	Perceived importance	Frequency	Percent
	Not important	12	7.5
	Slightly important	14	8.8
	Moderately important	15	9.4
	Very important	69	43.1
	Extremely important	50	31.3
	Total	160	100.0

The data on the perceived importance of public participation in promoting women's leadership highlights a strong recognition of its significance. Among the 160 respondents, 7.5% rated public participation as not important, while 8.8% considered it slightly important. 9.4% viewed it as moderately important. A substantial proportion of respondents, 43.1%, rated it as very important, and 31.3% deemed it extremely important. Collectively, 74.4% of respondents consider public participation as either very or extremely important for advancing women's leadership. This suggests a widely held belief in the essential role of public participation in promoting gender equity and empowering women in leadership roles.

**Key Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Women's Participation in Leadership**

The analysis of key socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in leadership identifies barriers that impede their advancement. This variable is relevant to the current study as it highlights specific challenges, such as income level and social network access, which affect women's engagement in leadership roles and inform strategies to promote gender equality in governance.

**Table 5:  
Key Socio-Economic Factors**

	Frequency	Percent
Level of education	25	15.6
Income level	78	48.8
Ownership of property	21	13.1
Access to social networks or community groups	36	22.5
Total	160	100.0

The data on key socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in leadership reveals notable trends among the 160 respondents. 48.8% identified income level as a significant factor, representing the largest proportion, while 22.5% indicated that access to social networks or community groups plays an important role. 15.6% of respondents highlighted the level of education as a key factor, and 13.1% cited ownership of property as influential. These findings suggest that income level and access to social networks are particularly crucial in facilitating women's participation in leadership positions, emphasizing the importance of economic and social resources in empowering women within leadership contexts.

**Frequency of Women's Participation in Socio- Socioeconomic Activities**

The analysis of women's participation in socio-economic activities examines their involvement in initiatives that foster empowerment and leadership development. This variable is relevant to the current study as it highlights how engagement in activities like voting, savings cooperatives, and mentorship programs can enhance women's socio-economic status and improve their representation in leadership roles.

**Table 6:  
Descriptive Statistics on Women's Participation in Socio-Socioeconomic Activities**

Descriptive Statistics				
	N	Range	Mean	Std. Deviation
Voting in local elections	160	4.00	3.9563	1.11788
Participation in savings and credit cooperatives	160	4.00	4.3000	.90977
Participation in income-generating projects	160	4.00	3.7000	1.28758
Engagement in skills development or training programs	160	43.00	4.0250	3.31368
Participation in mentorship or leadership development programs	160	4.00	4.6188	.68103
Valid N (listwise)	160			

The descriptive statistics regarding women's participation in socio-economic activities that impact leadership roles indicate varying levels of engagement among the 160 respondents. Voting in local elections had a mean score of 3.96 (SD = 1.12), suggesting relatively high participation but with notable variability. Participation in savings and credit cooperatives recorded the highest mean score of 4.30 (SD = 0.91), indicating strong engagement in these activities. Involvement in income-generating projects had a mean of 3.70 (SD = 1.29), reflecting moderate participation with greater variability. Women's engagement in skills development or training programs had a mean of 4.03 (SD = 3.31), showing a broad range of participation levels. Lastly, participation in mentorship or leadership development programs yielded a mean score of 4.62 (SD = 0.68), indicating the highest level of consistent involvement among the activities assessed. These findings demonstrate that women are particularly active in mentorship and leadership development programs, which may significantly enhance their leadership roles.



**Correlation between Gender, Monthly Income and institutional bias**

In this analysis, the bivariate Pearson correlation coefficient has been employed to investigate the relationships among gender distribution, monthly income, and institutional biases within the sample of 160 respondents. According to the guidelines provided by values, Amha et al,(2020), Pearson correlation coefficients range from -1 to +1, where 0 signifies no relationship, -1.00 indicates a perfect negative relationship, and +1.00 indicates a perfect positive relationship. For intermediate values, Amha and Brhane (2020). suggest that a coefficient less than 0.1 indicates a weak correlation, a value from 0.1 to 0.29 reflects a small correlation, a range of 0.3 to 0.49 represents a medium or moderate correlation, and coefficients from 0.50 to 1.00 indicate a large correlation.

Correlations				
		Gender Distribution of respondents	Monthly income (Ksh.)	Institutional biases
Gender Distribution of respondents	Pearson Correlation	1	.036	-.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.651	.302
	N	160	160	160
Monthly income (Ksh.)	Pearson Correlation	.036	1	-.017
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.651		.831
	N	160	160	160
Institutional biases	Pearson Correlation	-.082	-.017	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.302	.831	
	N	160	160	160

The analysis reveals that the correlation between gender distribution and monthly income is 0.036, suggesting a very weak positive correlation that is not statistically significant (p = 0.651). Similarly, the relationship between gender distribution and institutional biases is -0.082, indicating an extremely weak negative correlation, also not statistically significant (p = 0.302). Lastly, the correlation between monthly income and institutional biases is -0.017, highlighting a negligible negative correlation with a significance level of 0.831, further confirming no meaningful relationship among these variables. Based on the field analysis, the results indicate that gender distribution, monthly income, and institutional biases do not have significant associations within this dataset.

**Model summary**

The model summary presents the results of a linear regression analysis examining the relationship between monthly income (in Ksh) and educational achievement. The correlation coefficient (R) is 0.138, indicating a weak positive correlation between the two variables. This suggests that as monthly income increases, there is a slight tendency for educational achievement to also increase, though the relationship is not strong.

Model Summary <sup>b</sup>				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.138 <sup>a</sup>	.019	.013	1.037
a. Predictors: (Constant), Monthly income (Ksh.)				
b. Dependent Variable: Educational achievement				

The R Square value is 0.019, which indicates that approximately 1.9% of the variance in educational achievement can be explained by monthly income. This low percentage implies that monthly income is not a significant predictor of educational achievement, and other factors may play a more substantial role in influencing educational outcomes. Moreover, the adjusted R square value is 0.013, which adjusts the R square value based on the number of predictors in the model and the sample size. This similarly low value reinforces the conclusion that monthly income alone does not account for much of the variance in educational achievement. The Standard Error of the Estimate, at 1.037, indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, with a smaller value suggesting a better fit for the model. The findings indicate a weak relationship between monthly income and educational achievement, with a minimal proportion of the variance in educational achievement explained by monthly income. This highlights the need to explore other variables that may significantly influence educational outcomes.

**Discussion**

The second objective sought to establish the socio-economic factors influencing women’s participation in leadership. The findings reveal that education and income levels are significant determinants of leadership participation. The quantitative analysis showed that the correlation between gender and monthly income was

weakly positive ( $r = 0.036$ ), though not statistically significant ( $p = 0.651$ ), suggesting that gender does not strongly influence income disparities in this context. However, qualitative data provided evidence that women with higher income levels and better educational backgrounds were more likely to participate in leadership roles.

In particular, 61% ( $n = 98$ ) of women engaged in income-generating activities reported being more confident and willing to take up leadership positions.

One respondent noted,

*"When you are financially independent, you can engage in leadership without worrying about basic survival needs."* Participant 9.

This aligns with Kabeer's (2017) assertion that economic empowerment is crucial for women's leadership. Similarly, respondents with higher educational qualifications were more likely to hold leadership positions, reinforcing Nussbaum's (2003) argument that education equips women with the skills and confidence needed to participate in governance and decision-making processes. However, despite these positive associations, there are challenges. Some respondents indicated that balancing leadership roles with domestic responsibilities was a significant barrier. This finding supports Makama's (2013) observation that socio-cultural expectations, such as women's roles as primary caregivers, limit their ability to fully engage in public leadership.

### **III. Conclusion**

The study examines the socio-economic determinants of women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya, concluding that public participation is crucial for enhancing women's leadership roles. The findings indicate that while there has been an increase in women's involvement in leadership due to public participation mechanisms, significant barriers such as sociocultural norms, institutional biases, and economic constraints still hinder their full representation in leadership positions. Education and financial independence emerge as key factors influencing women's participation in leadership roles, with better-educated and economically empowered women being more likely to engage in such positions. Therefore, there is an urgent need to enhance public participation mechanisms to ensure they are more inclusive and responsive to the challenges faced by women. Addressing these socio-economic determinants is essential for fostering a more equitable environment for women's leadership in Nyatike Sub County.

### **IV. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study examining the socio-economic determinants of women's leadership participation in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya, the researchers present the following following recommendations:

First, there is need to revise and strengthen public participation mechanisms to ensure they are more inclusive and responsive to the specific challenges faced by women. This includes creating structured pathways for women to engage in decision-making processes and ensuring their voices are heard at all levels of governance. Implementing feedback loops can help gauge the effectiveness of these frameworks.

Second, government should develop targeted educational initiatives that improve women's leadership skills, focusing on both formal education and vocational training. Additionally, establish economic empowerment strategies, such as access to microloans and entrepreneurship support, to enhance women's financial independence and reduce economic barriers to their participation in leadership roles. Regular assessments of these programs should be conducted to evaluate their impact and make necessary adjustments.

Third, Community awareness campaigns aimed at challenging socio-cultural norms and biases against women in leadership need to be conducted. Collaboration with all local organizations and stakeholders need to be fostered. This would create supportive environment that promotes gender equity and encourages women to take on leadership positions. Monitoring the cultural shifts through surveys and focus groups can help measure the success of these initiatives over time.

Fourth, the County of Migori needs to develop a robust monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to assess the effectiveness of public participation, education, and empowerment programs. This framework should include specific indicators related to women's leadership participation and satisfaction with public engagement processes. Regular reporting and feedback mechanisms can ensure accountability and continuous improvement in strategies aimed at enhancing women's leadership roles.

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