

**ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE EXPOSURE CAREER FUNCTION OF
MENTORSHIP ON WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP ADVANCEMENT IN KENYAN
UNIVERSITIES**

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Abstract

Women working in Kenyan universities should be provided with the many benefits of exposure which is a mentorship function. They should for example get support in networking. This however may not be taking place in these universities. Therefore, the researcher did this study for the purpose of determining the influence of exposure on women's leadership advancement in Kenyan universities. A mixed methodology, using a triangulation design-convergence model was applied to realize the objective. The findings were that the women have limited exposure, thus their chances of leadership advancement are hindered. The conclusion was that women working in Kenyan universities should get enough exposure so that their chances of leadership advancement can be enhanced. Data analysis for example demonstrated that in Kenyan universities, mentors rarely give mentees opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and network extensively. Women in universities should be fully exposed so as to meet important people who can help them advance.

Key words: mentorship, exposure, women's leadership advancement.

1. Statement of the problem

Women working in universities should be given responsibilities that require them to meet senior people in the organization. They should not only get chances to show others what they know but should as well get opportunities to network extensively. Opportunities to learn how all departments in the university work should be provided. Moreover, they should get chances to meet people in top level management like chancellors and vice chancellors. Finally they should get information whenever jobs become available as all these would prepare them for positions of greater responsibility. All this is what translates to exposure, a facet of career mentorship.

Unfortunately, this may not be happening in Kenyan universities and women face many hurdles and challenges when trying to advance in leadership. Furthermore the universities too, end up lacking the innovations and creativity that women would provide if only they got chances to advance in leadership. Mentorship which includes the career function of exposure if provided would go a long way in enabling women face challenges and thus climb the career ladder.

2. Objectives of the Study

To determine the influence of exposure on women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya.

3. Research Questions

What is the influence of exposure on women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya?

4. Null Hypotheses and Alternative Hypothesis

1. H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between exposure and women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya.

H₁: There is significant relationship between exposure and women's leadership advancement in Kenyan Universities.

5. Exposure and Women's Leadership Advancement

According to Kram (1985), the exposure (visibility) function of mentorship involves the intentional assignment of responsibilities that would allow the mentee to establish relationships with important figures that could support them in future. As the mentee carries out the responsibilities, the mentee learns about other parts of the organization and organizational life at a higher level, increases personal visibility, and gains knowledge about future opportunities. Visibility is a socializing force. Exposure as a career function of mentoring means that the mentee is given opportunities to demonstrate his/her knowledge, network extensively as the mentor helps the mentee to improve his/her reputation in the organization (Linehan and Scullion 2002). The mentor in this case helps the mentee to effectively network. Women who have not participated in organizational informal networks can thus be more valued and more visible just like their male counterparts.

6. Methodology

The researcher used a mixed methodology, specifically the triangulation design- convergence model. Quantitative and qualitative data on exposure was collected concurrently and analyzed separately. The data was then merged at the interpretive stage. Mixing meant that the researcher drew conclusions that reflected what was learned from the combination of results (Creswell, 2007).

7. Research findings and discussion

Using a five point likert scale, the researcher sought to establish the extent to which respondents agreed with various statements on the influence of exposure on women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya.

Table 18 Exposure and women's leadership advancement

Exposure	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
My mentor often gave me responsibility that required personal contact with other senior managers	182	1.00	5.00	2.8132	1.17912
My mentor often gave me opportunities to demonstrate my knowledge	182	1.00	5.00	3.1758	1.29251
My mentor, to a large extent, gave me opportunities to network extensively	182	1.00	5.00	2.9231	1.12462
My mentor often gave me an opportunity to learn about other parts of the organization	182	1.00	5.00	2.9121	1.30996
My mentor to a large extent gave me an opportunity to learn about organizational life at a higher level	182	1.00	5.00	2.7033	1.30019
My mentor often gave me an opportunity to build relationships with high level people in the organization	182	1.00	5.00	2.8462	1.27815
My mentor always gave me an opportunity to acquire information especially on which jobs are available	182	1.00	5.00	2.6374	1.29185
My mentor often prepared me for a position of greater responsibility	182	1.00	5.00	2.7582	1.38931
Valid N (list wise)	182				

The respondents moderately agreed that: their mentor often gave them opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge, their mentor, to a large extent, gave them opportunities to network extensively, their mentor often gave them opportunities to learn about other parts of the organization, their mentor often gave them opportunities to build relationships with high level people in the organization, their mentor often gave them responsibility that required personal contact with other senior managers, their mentor often prepared them for a position of greater responsibility, their mentor to a large extent gave them opportunities to learn about organizational life at a higher level, their mentor always gave them opportunities to acquire information especially on which jobs are available.

Each one of them had a mean score of 3.1758, 2.9231, 2.9121, 2.8462, 2.8132, 2.7582, 2.7033 and 2.6374 respectively. This implies that women working in universities in Kenya have limited exposure, thus their chances of leadership advancement are hindered. This is in agreement with Ibarra, Carter and Silva, (2010) who postulate that mentoring is not an all or none phenomena, rather a given mentor may provide just some of the functions. It is as well supported by Catalyst, Women in Corporate Leadership, (2003); Giscombe & Mattis, (2002) who report that women cite lack of access to influential colleagues with whom to network as a major barrier to advancement.

The Pearson correlation coefficient test was further used to verify existence or non-existence of linear correlation of mentorship variables namely; exposure, coaching, sponsorship and protection. There was little evidence of multi-collinearity hence they were incorporated into a subsequent regression analysis. The regression analysis equation was: $Y = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + B_4X_4 + e$. Y was the women's leadership advancement in universities in

kenya. B_0 was the constant, X_1 was exposure X_2 was coaching, X_3 was sponsorship, X_4 was protection. B_1 B_2 B_3 B_4 were the coefficients and e was the error term. All the predictor variables (X_1 - X_5) were entered into the estimated procedure of SPSS and the result model was found to be significant. The established multi-linear regression became; $Y = 0.697 + 0.022X_1 + 0.315X_2 + 0.032X_3 + 0.117X_4$. Constant=0.697 showed that if exposure, coaching, sponsorship and protection were all rated at zero, changes in women's leadership advancement would be 0.697. B_1 (exposure) = 0.022 showed that one unit change in exposure resulted in 0.022 units increase in women's leadership advancement.

Hypothesis testing was consequently done to show the relationship between exposure and women's leadership advancement. For X_1 : $H_0: B_1=0$, since $t=0.264$, $p=0.002$ is smaller than 0.5. The null hypothesis was rejected therefore X_1 (exposure) has significant influence on Y (women's leadership advancement). Further to this, a test was done to show the model significance in order to accept or reject the null hypothesis. The model significance had the equation: $Y = 0.697 + 0.022X_1 + 0.315X_2 + 0.032X_3 + 0.117X_4$. Under hypothesis I: H_{01} exposure does influence women's leadership advancement in Universities in Kenya. The hypothesis to test was $H_{01}: B_1=0$ Vs $H_{11}: B_1 \neq 0$. From the table, $t = -.264$, p -value = .002 thus the null hypothesis that exposure does not influence women's leadership advancement in Kenyan universities was rejected.

This is supported by Kram (1988) who reports that the exposure function of mentorship is the socializing force that prepares the mentee for a position of greater responsibility. A mentor highlights the mentee's talents and competences, recommending him or her for career advancement. Kram (1988) further reports that the career function is possible because of the

mentor's experience and organizational influence and serves the career related ends of the mentee by helping him or her learn the ropes of organizational life, gain exposure and obtain promotions. Further, it provides more professional opportunities and collegial networks, access to those in power, growth of professional knowledge and skill development, career advancement and more effective happier performers (Long, 1997; Ragins and Cotton, 1999).

Further research was conducted to answer the question: What is the influence of exposure on women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya? A table showing themes, categories and concepts on exposure and women's leadership advancement is presented in Table 19.

Table 19: Exposure and women's leadership advancement

Theme	Categories	Concepts
Exposure	-Mentor gives mentee opportunities to demonstrate knowledge	Limited, hardly
	-Mentor gives mentee opportunities to network	Hardly, not at all
	Mentor gives mentee opportunities to learn about other parts of the organization	Sometimes, rarely
	Mentor gives mentee opportunities to build relationships with senior management	Hardly, not given

The women working in universities in Kenya were thus asked if their mentors introduced them to colleagues and friends who were helpful to their careers. One of respondents in this category said that she was rarely welcomed into the new occupational and social world and was hardly acquainted with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters. This is in agreement with

Pietman (2008) who, researching on Australian women and men managers and found that women are not only isolated at upper organizational levels of management but they as well experience exclusion.

The respondents indicated that exposure is one of the functions that a mentoring relationship provides. A second category on whether mentors prepared mentees for positions of greater responsibility was established. Most of them reported that they were never prepared. The third category which emerged was on mentees getting opportunities to learn about organizational life at a higher level. Most of the respondents said that these opportunities were hardly availed to them. A fourth category on mentees getting opportunities to acquire information especially on which jobs were available was established. Only a few of the respondents said that this happened.

A few women who got exposure mainly got it during meetings, conferences and meetings of educational societies but not from their mentors. The exposure therefore was of a limited nature as expressed by concepts like, “sometimes did so, only when I asked and rarely” in all the categories. Literature does support these responses since, according to a Catalyst (2004) survey, 46% of women managers said they were excluded from informal networks and this became an obstacle to their progress compared to only 18% of the men who undertook the survey.

One of the women working in universities in Kenya who received some form of exposure expressed how her mentor “encouraged her to learn more. She made me learn and network extensively. As we worked hand in hand she made me meet those in top management and I am quite grateful. She welcomed me in her team, took time to discuss about advertised positions in the university and helped me to meet people who could advise me when issues came up.

This was quite an in depth expression in the category of mentors giving mentees opportunities to learn about other parts of the organization. The participant happened to be exceptional since most of the other mentees did not get such opportunities as demonstrated by some of the concepts like, “hardly did so, did so sometimes as we worked together, mostly left to my own devices.” It dawned on the researcher that character does determine the kind of mentorship one gets since this participant was quite outgoing, social and therefore stood a better chance of not only getting mentors but getting mentored as well. Onsongo (2004) supports this when she argues that personal factors affect the women themselves and points out these major personal factors as the lack of confidence and self esteem. Further, Day et al (2009) argue that failing to receive validation for one’s leadership attempts eliminates self confidence as well as the motivation to seek developmental opportunities, experiment and take on new leadership roles. This leads to the weakening of one’s self identity as a leader (DeRue and Ashford, 2010). Confidence and self esteem do enhance a woman’s prospects of getting mentorship and being mentored.

A few of the women agreed that exposure did take place during mentorship. Jane (not the real name) expressed how her mentor, “encouraged me to take up a lower paying job that had higher opportunities for leadership. He told me that if my immediate boss left, I would end up taking the leadership position in the organization, which actually happened.” Adrienne (not her real name), commented in a similar manner in the category of networking when she reported that her mentor, “proposed and supported me to travel within and outside Africa and thus expanded my social networks, also profiled me in my career.” Another participant reported that her mentor had linked her to opportunities to show her talents. This was by encouraging her to start schools. She

was helped to expand social networks. The exposure was not in the work place but the encouragement she got was for her to start her own ventures. Literature does support these findings since Lopez (2008) reported that networking is a critical aspect to the success of women's ascension into leadership. The mentoring function of exposure must therefore of necessity include this facet of mentorship.

Lucy (not her real name) reported that her mentor linked her to opportunities to show her talents. In this category which emerged and was on how mentees got opportunities to show their talents, Lucy replied that it happened during workshops when she would be given chances to make presentations. Another category which emerged was on mentees being given a chance to expand social networks by mentors. She reported that this did happen. This was by linking her with non governmental organizations thus serving as a liaison officer between them and the organization. Her work was often acknowledged thus she was able to build a positive reputation within the organization

However, most of the respondents had negative comments in many of the other categories. They indicated that their mentors rarely welcomed them into a new occupational and social world and did not acquaint them with its values, customs, resources, and cast of characters. This is supported by concepts like, "not prepared, this did not come to his mind, did not feel it was his duty." The responses in all the categories are consistent with literature in that informal networks can hardly be accessed by women (Palermo, 2004) and emphasize a male environment which excludes women. Women working in universities in Kenya with this experience felt that their mentors made little effort to include them in professional matters.

Some of the women felt that their mentor did not introduce them to colleagues, and others had no recollection of any such introductions. In this category which emerged, one participant said that, “at no time was I made to feel that I was being prepared for positions of greater responsibility. This was no surprise to me since my mentor was my senior, was a woman and possibly feared future competition.” Concepts like “hardly,” “rarely” and at times “never” were common. Literature does support this feeling since Toland, (2007) reports that while networks assist women in building and excelling in careers, the careers of women tend to suffer when inadequate mentoring or lack of a mentor occurs.

The researcher established that women working in universities in Kenya have limited exposure, thus their chances of leadership advancement is hindered. Women to a large extent did not get opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge or to network extensively. Mentors did not often give them opportunities to learn about other parts of the organization and to build relationships with high level people in the organization. Furthermore, women were not often given responsibilities that required personal contact with other senior managers. Most of the times, women were not prepared for positions of greater responsibility or to learn about organizational life. In addition they did not often get information especially on which jobs were available.

This explanation is consistent with literature in that women in academic roles experience a kind of isolation and as such need internal and external sources to obtain necessary opportunities, connections and visibility which will enable them to climb the academic ladder through promotion (de Janasz & Sullivan, (2004). Pietman (2008) in support of these findings found that in Australia, women are not only isolated at upper organizational levels of management but they as well experience exclusion. This is echoed by the Catalyst Survey, (2004) which reports that 46% of women managers were excluded from informal networks and this became an obstacle to

their progress. Palermo (2004) supports this when she reports that women with mentors are more likely to achieve career success, receive more promotions and advance at a faster rate. Mentoring programmes providing access to high level people can assist in getting women into the influential social networks that exist in the work place. Networking in the work place is a crucial aspect to the success of female ascension in leadership (Lopez, 2008). It is therefore important that women in universities in Kenya get exposure in order to advance in leadership.

8. Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

8.1 Summary

On exposure the findings were that women get limited exposure. Women were rarely exposed and mostly not introduced to colleagues and friends. They were hardly given opportunities to acquire information and were mostly not linked to opportunities to show their talents. They were also mostly not helped to set goals. Limited knowledge was passed to them by their mentors.

8.2 Conclusions

The objective of the study was to establish the influence of the exposure, a facet of mentorship, on women's leadership advancement in universities in Kenya. The conclusion was that women working in universities in Kenya should be exposed so that their chance of leadership advancement is not hindered. Data analysis demonstrates that mentors rarely give women opportunities to demonstrate their knowledge and network extensively. Women in universities should be exposed to this extensive network so as to meet important people who can help them advance.

More over women should be given a chance to learn about other parts of the organization and build relationships with high level people in the organization. This prepares them for future life

as they learn how people in top level management in the organization work and conduct themselves. Furthermore women should be given responsibility that requires personal contact with other senior managers. This gives them a chance to meet these managers and to know how to relate with them.

In addition women should be prepared for positions of greater responsibility. Providing visibility and social interaction is part of this preparation. Giving them opportunities to learn about organizational life at a higher level is additional preparation. As they interact with those in authority, they acquire information especially on which jobs are available.

8.3 Recommendations

Universities should provide structures such that mentors expose and introduce women working there to their colleagues and friends in the institution. Secondly they should make sure that the women are given opportunities to acquire information as well as opportunities to show their talents. The women in the universities should be helped by their mentors to set goals and acquire knowledge. All this can be achieved if structures are in place to make sure there are mentors for women.

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