

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

Challenges That Hinder Women from Trade Union Leadership Positions: The Case of Kenya's Electrical Trades and Allied Workers Union

Dr. Mike K. Chepkong'a

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, University of Nairobi, Kenya

Ernest N. Nadome

University of Nairobi, Kenya

Evans T. Okumu

University of Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

Participation of men and women in all spheres of socio-economic and political development is a basic human right that is enshrined in all the international conventions and treaties that the Kenyan government is a signatory to. The present study sought to explore challenges faced by women in ascending to leadership positions in the trade union movement in Kenya, with reference to KETAWU. The study collected both qualitative and quantitative data from 63 female respondents who were identified using a non-probability sampling procedure referred to as snowballing where one participant would refer the research to another based on the experience, they had with leadership position at KETAWU. The research revealed that a significant proportion of respondents observed that patriarchal union structures favour men, but hinder women from accessing leadership positions. Most viewed the trade union leadership role as demanding and burdensome and therefore incompatible with their culturally designated family roles. That institutionalized sexism in the trade union discouraged females from assuming leadership positions, since they are unlikely to penetrate the male dominated informal leadership lobbies and networks in the trade union. While a substantial percentage of respondents opined that skewed employment, contracts tend to favour men but marginalized women in terms of power and ability to use for union leadership positions. The study concludes that KETAWU and by extension the umbrella trade union movement, should adopt and implement affirmative actions that are aimed at maintaining women into union leadership structures.

Keywords: KETAWU, members, trade union, female, male, gender

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Kenya is a signatory to the international treaties and conventions that require unlimited participation in development. Such inclusivity in development is a fundamental human right. The subsections of the conventions include non-discrimination based on gender (CEDAW, 1984); the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA, 2005) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000). Kenya and other nations have committed to adhere to gender equality and indiscriminative empowerment to stimulate participation in decision making, promoting access to power and development in order to achieve gender equality, peace, justice and development (Onyango, 2013). It is mandatory for all the signatories to institute institutions and tribunals to protecting women against discrimination by persons, organizations and/or enterprises (Onyango, 2013).

1.2. Description of KETAWU

The study selected KETAWU three regional offices, namely Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa branches as its data collection sites. Kenya Electrical Trade and Allied Workers Union (KETAWU) draws its members from Kenya Power, Kenya electricity generating company (KenGen), and Kenya Electricity Transmission Company (KETRACO). Through its leadership, KETAWU bargains on behalf of its union members and negotiates labour contracts, employment welfare as well as other collective bargaining issues. The union has a population of 8,184 members. Nairobi branch, which also acts as the union headquarters has 3456 members of which 987 are women and men are 2,469. Mombasa branch has 2,263 members of which 761 are women and 1,502 are men. Kisumu regional office has 2,465 union members, of which 893 are women and 1572 are men. The three KETAWU regional offices coordinate amongst each other through regional and national board committees. Also, regional and national union electoral process to form the union's regional or national leadership.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

Data from Kenya Electrical and Trade Allied Workers Union (2012) suggests a huge gap between presentation of women and that of male union members. The statistics also show that out of 245 seats up for grab in different union office branches countrywide, only 49 presenting 20% of the positions were occupied by female members. Nonetheless, out of the 49 leadership positions, a substantial number (twelve) of the seats were specifically reserved for women, while only 9 top leadership position were being occupied by female union members. The statistics presenting a significant gap of around 9:2 male to female ratio. The statistics is just a replica of other trade union in Kenya such as Kenya National Union of Teachers. Makabila (2011) observes that the only 34 females presenting 8% of the total members held leadership position in KNUT National advisory Council. Regardless of numerous efforts made and enacted in the Kenya Constitution as well as other international labour policies such as affirmative action, presentation of women in trade union leadership is well below the required threshold. The implication of this might suggest presence of diverse social problems that might be hampering women from participating in union leadership such as gender bias. However, there might be more to this than meets the eye. For instance, Onyango (2013) established a possibility of fewer female trade unionist contesting for leadership positions. In this regard, this study presumes that there might be numerous social issues affecting women leadership of trade union, which is noteworthy to be researched. Also, the absence of empirical data supporting the reasons for under-representation of women in trade union leadership in Kenya and other developing nations calls for empirical testing for affirmation of the existing theories. With the study results from KETAWU, it is possible to confirm the most plausible hindrances for climbing of trade union leadership among as an avenue for addressing gender-related work issues accordingly.

1.4. Objectives

The overall objective of this study is to explore challenges faced by women in ascending to leadership positions in the trade union movement in Kenya, with reference to KETAWU.

1.4.1. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the research are:

- To establish social-cultural biases, prejudices, and stereotypes that discourage women from seeking leadership positions in trade unions.
- To investigate the impact of role-conflict between domestic and office work in discouraging women from aspiring to become union leaders.
- To identify union policies, programs, structure and practices that constraint women from accessing leadership positions in KETAWU.
- To identify policies that are used to enhance women leadership in Trade Unions of the study findings may be rather limited. Nonetheless, might still be illuminative.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1. Trade Unionism in Kenya

The TU movement in Kenya predates independence and has its origins in the 1940s. Its emergence may be attributed mainly to the exploitative working relations between the Kenyan workers and the colonial employers; and the rising political consciousness and the awareness of workers' rights during the post WW2 era. Thus, union activity is therefore borne out of a direct confrontation between workers and employers or collusion between the workers and political activists in Kenya during the period before independence (Hannan, 2012). The first formal unions came into being in the 1940s following the enactment of the 1937 Trade Unions' Ordinance by the British Government. This Ordinance stipulated the conditions under which Africans could organize themselves in trade unions (Hannan, 2012). Following the publication of the ordinance, three unions were registered in Kenya by the Registrar of Trade Unions, namely: East African Standard Union, East African Standard Staff Union and the Labor Trade union of East Africa. By the end of the 1940s, the number of registered unions had risen from the initial 3 to 6.

By the time Kenya had gained independence in 1963, Kenya had 52 TUs representing 155,000 workers. With this number of unions, the newly independent Kenya Government found it necessary to form an umbrella body to coordinate union activities in a centralized manner. The Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU (K)) came into being in 1965 following the amalgamation of two umbrella unions, namely the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL) and the African Workers' Congress (AWC). Up to date, COTU remains to be the main national trade union that is allied to the International Trade Unions Confederation (ITUC-Africa) with about 300,000 workers by 2010 (Registrar of Trade Unions 2010). In addition to serving the affiliated unions, COTU is instrumental in the formulation of the national labour policy (Bezbaruah, 2016). Although there is minimal government intervention in the administration of COTU and its affiliated unions, recent amendments in Kenya's Industrial Relations Act, has significantly opened the door for rival umbrella TU namely Trade Union Congress of Kenya (TUC-K) whose affiliates includes: UKCS, UNTESU, UASU and KUSU among others.

2.2. Trade Union Leadership and Gender

Onyango, (2013) describe how the qualitative differences between the normative roles of men and women affect their leadership behavior and outcomes. According to the scholars, the status difference between men and women can be illustrated using socio-demographic factors. The attribute is the most profound status marker influencing social

discernments, observations, and individual appraisals including female capabilities to become organizers and leaders (Aledejana and Aledejana, 2005). The perception is responsible for the differentiated leadership outcomes between men and women. Conventionally, high status and privilege are ascribed to males. Consequently, gender has an upper hand in taking leadership roles due to the congruence of their socio-cultural gender expectations and status (De la Rey 2005). As women occupy a lower status, they enjoy fewer privileges in both the workplace and society (Andibo, (2012).

In view of this, Eagly and Carli (2007) allege that women are linked with feminine qualities such as compassion treatment of others while men are associated with assertiveness and control. Traditional African societies expect women to be increasingly nurturing, pleasant, gentle, compassionate, soft-spoken, warm, yielding, selfless, and dependent. On the other hand, men are socialized to be ambitious, aggressive, dominant, self-reliant, strong, individualistic and independent (Hewlett and Luce, 2005). These female attributes are inconsistent with what is expected of a leader. Other structural barriers to female union and leadership, in general, include hiring and promotion practices inadequate opportunities for mentorship by female role models and upward mobility, the perceived mismatch between the traits of a leader and those of an incompatibility between union workload and domestic chores (Andibo, (2012).

2.3. Socio-cultural Barriers against Women Leadership in Trade Unions

Stereotypes regarding the "appropriate" behavior for women exist. Examples include the assumptions that women are difficult to organize; that they are more concerned with family issues rather than their jobs or unions and that they lack self-confidence and therefore underestimate their ability to be union officers (Andibo, (2012). These stereotypes, therefore, portray women as deficient of qualities of effective leadership, which in turn creates false notion inferiority to men in top-level managerial roles (Osiruemu, 2004). In most workplaces, such demeaning stereotypes are harmful to women since they limit their likelihood to rise in the corporate ladder. That said, there is a perfect alignment between the male's stereotypical traits with the qualities expected of a typical leader or CEO of the company.

On their part, Feminists attribute the roots of gender inequalities to patriarchal norms, capitalist ideology, and unwritten social structures, all of which are supportive of an unequal gendered division of labor in private and public life (Hausmann, 2009). This division determines and limits choices and opportunities for women to participate fully and effectively in leadership (Tomlinson, 2005). This marginalization socializes women to allow men to sit on committees that make policy decisions affecting the women's lives (Robbins, 2003). Thus, being a union official is likely to be perceived as a male "job", hence most women are reluctant to support other women for union leadership roles. The root of the problem can be traced to early industrialization, which produced different experiences for both women and men. Stereotypes emerged where men were seen as breadwinners and women as economically non-productive dependents (Ridgeway, 2001).

2.4. Role conflict and Union Leadership among Women

The other factor that obstructs equal participation of women in TU leadership is role conflict between the traditional roles ascribed to their gender and demands of formal occupations and union activities. In their study, on the incorporation of women in the industrial workforce in South Africa, Jafee and Caine, (2008) found that women's involvement in TU activities had caused conflict with their spouses, who often viewed their participation with suspicion. This is usually worsened by the frequency of traveling that union officials have to create time schedules for their meetings. More often than not, meetings are scheduled after working hours and may run late into the night and are sometimes held in places that are not "conducive" to women such as bars. Thus, given the timings, venues, and obligations of union officials, women are likely to find it difficult to balance work and family responsibilities. This is often made worse by a non-supportive spouse (Nwobodo, 2008).

2.5. Structural Constraints against Women Leadership in Trade Unions

The labour movement is constituted largely by men, thus the culture of the movement and union leadership, in general, is historically masculine. As a result, the institutionalized sexism of the labor market is reflected in the sexual disadvantage of women within TUs. This, therefore, calls into question the TUs' ability to manage diversity among their members (Nwobodo, 2008). It is argued that organizational structures, processes, and practices are linked with hegemonic machismo and the corresponding values, norms and ideologies which effectively bar numerous women from equal participation in management (Kellerman, Rhode and O'Connor, 2007).

A survey conducted by the ILO and ICFTU (2000), established women do not enroll in TUs or aspire for leadership positions because of a male-dominated culture as well as the TU activities and aggressive reaction from male members. Further, lack confidence from women to either join unions or aspire to union leadership. Furthermore, women are often frustrated since they find it difficult to break through the informal networks. There is evidence showing that women feel that men ignore their issues and problems, are sexually harassed physically or through sexist language and/or generally unsupported for leadership positions (Njihia, 2002). It is, therefore, evident that, the "glass ceiling" existing in the corporate world blocks women regardless of qualifications from positions of power, also exists in TUs. This glass ceiling consists of manmade hindrances of attitudinal or organizational bias that thwart the women's advancement into managerial positions in TUs (Kirton and Healy, 2008).

2.6. Theoretical Framework

2.6.1. Theory of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is referred as a form of social structure in which the father is the supreme authority in the family, clan or tribe and descent and inheritance are reckoned in the male line, with children belonging to the father's clan. Other definitions include a social system in which the father is the head of the family and men have authority over women children and family, community or society based on this system or governed by men (Andibo, 2012). It may also be understood as the control by men of a disproportionately large share of power (Summers, 2003).

The perception of patriarchy is usually utilised by extension to denote to the belief that men undertake primary obligation for the welfare of the household as well as the community at large. Patriarchy is a lens that keeps certain things out of focus. It is a system of arbitrary values masquerading as the natural and right order of things. It defines men as the standard of humanity and women as something slightly less than that and therefore robs us all our full humanity (Andibo, 2012). The patriarchal setting of unions is consequently viewed as main constraint impeding effective involvement of women in the TU movement. The situation insinuates that Trade Unions are organized and operationalized based on male dominance (Hannan, 2001). Implying that the lawmaking process, functions, conferences such as meetings as well as other union activities are frequently designed to favour the male members. Further, since most TUs are formed with an assumption that it is males who are supposed to be on the helm of male leadership, most women face numerous challenges of assuming active roles. The roles that women could even perform better.

2.6.2. Gender Role Theory

Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female and the relationship between men and women, girls and boys (Hannan, 2001). The attributes, opportunities, and relationships are socially constructed and are learnt through the socialization process. Hannan (2001) further explains that gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In other words, gender refers to roles, responsibilities, opportunities, privileges, and expectations ascribed to males and female by society. A gender role, therefore, is a set of social and behavioral norms that are generally considered appropriate for either a man or a woman in a social or interpersonal relationship.

2.6.3. Affirmative Action Theory

The approach of affirmative action asserts that allegiance to fair and equal access to opportunity coupled with blocking of cumulative inequalities is a sign of civility (Hellmers, 1998). To the theorists, the basis of affirmative actions are social inequalities that have a significant impact on the societal and self-perception of the affected groups. The stereotypes that exist perpetuate power asymmetries that leave some societal groups at a disadvantage (Eberhardt & Fiske, 1994).

3. Methods

3.1. Population and Sampling

The study target population comprised female union officials, former female officials, and unsuccessful female union aspirants. The study employed the use of a non-probability sampling also referred to as snowball sampling technique. Ideally, the unsuccessful union female aspirants and former union female leaders were difficult to find, identified, and recruited. Therefore, Snowball method provided an opportunity for the respondents to recruit or recommend other participants to the researcher. The study sample size comprised 61 females from KETAWU regional offices, namely; Nairobi (25), Kisumu (17), and Mombasa (19).

3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

The research study employed a case study research design. In terms of data collection, both primary and secondary sources of data. The questionnaire, field data collection through interviews were exerted to obtain primary data. The Branch Organizing Secretary was requested to invite all the 61 participants to fill the questionnaire based on their regional offices.

4. Findings

4.1. Respondents' Socio-economic and Demographic Information

Respondent's socio-economic and demographic information comprised; age bracket, employer, employment cadre, academic qualifications, and duration of union membership.

4.2. Respondents Age Bracket

Table 1 indicates that 22 (36.1%) of the 61 respondents were aged between 45-54 years, 19 (31.2%) were aged 35-44 years, 10 (16.4%) were aged between 25-34 years, while 9 (15.3%) were aged 55 years.

Age Bracket	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
25-34 Years	11	17.4
35-44 Years	19	31.2
45-54 Years	22	36.1
55+ Years	9	15.3
Total	61	100.0

Table 1: Respondents' Age Bracket

The respondents age bracket results imply that the majority of the union's leadership 31 (51.4%) are aged between 45 and 54 years. According to Gerald-Mayer, (2004) employees who are aged between 40 and 55 years, usually take their jobs seriously, and vying for a union leadership position is a way of safeguarding their jobs. Therefore, the age demographic results reveal that the union has a small proportion of members that are aged 55 years, suggesting that they might have tired from the union to pursue post-retirement careers.

4.3. Respondent Employer

Evidently, 96.7% of those who participated in the survey are Kenya Power employees. The remaining 2 (3.3%) are affiliated to Kenya electricity generating company (KenGen).

Employer	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Kenya Power	59	96.7
KenGen	2	3.3
Total	61	100.0

Table 2: Respondent's Employer

The results are consistent with union membership statistics, which established that the union draws the majority of its members from Kenya Power.

4.5. Respondents Employment Cadre

Also, analysis established that only 1(1.6%) of the 61 participants was in a senior position (management cadre), 5(8.2%) were subordinate staff, and 13(21.3%) were in a supervisory level. The largest proportion of 42 (69%) of the interviewees were serving in the clerical cadre, as presented in Table 3.

Employment Cadre	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Management	1	1.6
Supervisory	13	21.3
Clerical	42	68.9
Subordinate	5	8.2
Total	61	100.0

Table 3: Respondents Employment Cadre

Table 3 findings, therefore, suggest that majority union members hold low-class jobs such as secretarial, human resource assistants, security personnel and accounts clerk among others. The findings are therefore consistent with those by found Liszka (2014) which confirmed that most of the union leaders in the US are employed under the Clerical Cadre.

4.6. Respondents Academic Qualification

Table 4, indicates that most respondents 30(49%) are Diploma holders, followed by those with Degrees 21(34%), nevertheless, a small proportion of the respondents 5(8%) indicated secondary education as their highest academic achievement. Another 4 (7%) of them were Postgraduate (Masters) holders with only 1(1.6%) being a certificate holder as aggregated in Table 4.

Academic Qualification	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Diploma	30	49.0
Degree	21	34.0
Masters	4	7.0
Certificate	1	2.0
Secondary	5	8.0
Total	61	100.0

Table 4: Respondents Academic Qualification

It can, therefore, be surmised from the findings that most of the respondents were functionally literate and had a modest grasp of the usually intricate union matters.

4.7. Trade Union Membership Duration

The researcher sought to determine the duration in which the study participants have been in the trade union and the results were as follows.

Membership Duration	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
20+ Years	20	33.3
6-10 years	16	26.7
11-15 years	13	21.7
16-20 years	6	10.3
1-5 Years	5	8.3
Total	60	100.0

Table 5: Trade Union Membership Duration

The findings, therefore, revealed that a significant proportion of the respondents 20 (33.3%) have been in the trade union for over 20 years; 16 (26.7%) for 6-10 years; 13 (21.7%) for a duration of 11-15 years; 6 (10.0%) for 16-20 years and 5 (8.3) for less than five years. On a positive note, the findings may suggest that majority of respondents were knowledgeable and resourceful on labour matters, in view of their long tenure as TU members. However, on the contrary, it may mean that the union was being led by long serving and conservative members, with old school union ideals and approach to labour matters.

4.8. Respondents' Trade Union Status

The largest proportion of respondents 39(63.9%), comprised of ordinary members; 15(24.6%). Were current/former union leaders while 7 (11.5%) consisted of unsuccessful TU Leadership Aspirants. The fact that 75% of the respondents do not occupy union leadership positions presently, is suggestive of the weak bargaining power by women in the labour movement. These results are consistent with a study conducted by Ledwith et al., (2015) which established that absence of women in collective bargaining process influences them negatively towards taking up union leadership positions.

Union Position	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Committee member	5	37.5
National Executive Board member	4	25.0
Branch Treasurer/Assistant Branch Treasurer	3	18.8
Assistant Branch Secretary	1	6.3
National youth leader	1	6.3
Organizing secretary (women wing)	1	6.3
Total	15	100

Table 6: Position held by Former/Current Union Leaders

To ascertain leadership positions that are held by female union members, former/current union leaders comprising of 15(26%) of the study respondents were asked to indicate their leadership titles. Of those responding 5(37.5%) were committee members; 4(25%) were National Executive Board Members; 3(18.8%) were Branch Treasurer/Assistant Branch Treasurer while 1(6.3%) was Assistant Branch Secretary, National youth leader, and Organizing Secretary (women wing) respectively. It is therefore evident from the foregoing results, that most the female respondents were nominal committee members. This is the lowest cadre in the union ranks and it recruits over than 5 members for each of the union's branches. Other positions in the union such as Treasurer and Branch Secretary only provide for one seat. Besides, most of the leaders were National Executive Board Members since the position also provides for multiple seats.

Furthermore, 15(26%) of the former/currents union leaders were asked to rate themselves in regard to their respective level of experience in the union matters. Of those responding, 6(37%) rated themselves as having a high level of experience; 8(53%) rated themselves lowly whereas 2(10%) of the respondents could not rate their levels of experience in union matters. A follow-up tabulation was conducted to establish leaders that rated themselves either highly or lowly. The results showed that the 8(53%) who rated themselves low were committee members, Branch Treasurer, and Assistant Branch Secretary respectively. Conversely, respondents who rated themselves highly comprised of NEB Members, National Youth Leader, and the Organizing Secretary (Women wing).

Regarding the justification for the self-rating, officials who rated themselves high advanced reasons such: involvement in the formulation and amendment of KETAWU laws and policies, e.g. the Union's Gender Policy; empowerment and capacity building in the resolution of union disputes, conflict and reconciliation of union; documentation and presentation of the interest and grievances of youthful union members to NEB in addition to participating in the organization, coordination, record keeping and the general administration of the union's information database. It would, therefore, appear from the study findings that the higher the union position held, the higher the level of responsibilities discharged and the individual's level of experience in TU matters. However, the majority of those who rated their union experience as low stated that they hold low profile union leadership positions, which are more of clerical

than managerial in nature. In fact, a significant proportion of them observed that their responsibilities are limited since their participation in union matters is only limited to the union branch level. Hence their inability to influence the overall union decision-making process. Their admission, therefore, suggests that most female Union leaders hold low cadre positions, which exposes them only limited managerial and decision-making opportunities, hence their admittedly low level of participation and experience in union affairs. This finding is consistent with Elkiss' (1994) finding that women are clustered in union leadership positions of low ranks and little influence and power. Consequently, the situation offers them limited opportunities to attend training workshops and union conferences. They are therefore unable to access platforms that can address their issues or gain the requisite skills and contact to propel them to top union positions.

Reasons	Frequency	Percent (%)
Unfair electoral process	3	43
Division among women	2	29
Inadequate resources to finance campaign	1	14
Hypocrisy among member	1	14
Total	7	100

Table 7: Reasons for the Unsuccessful Leadership attempts

Regarding the 7(11.5%) unsuccessful union leadership aspirants, the research data showed that those who vied for the shop stewardship posts, national youth leader, and branch organizing secretary respectively. Evidently, the majority of them vied for the less competitive union branch committee member and treasurer. However, when asked to explain why their attempt was unsuccessful, they attributed the aborted quest for leadership to the unfair electoral process; division among female union members; inadequate resources to finance their campaign and hypocrisy by the union members. As is evidenced by findings in Table 4, unfair election processes and division among female union members are the two major challenges accounting for the unsuccessful attempts. In addition, lack of financial resources among the female aspirants partly contributed to the failed quest for union leadership. A study by Machyo, (2003) also established division among female trade unionist poses a great challenge to their quest for union leadership positions.

4.9. Personality Traits that Hinder Women from Union Leadership

The primary goal of the study was to determine the respondents' level of agreement with statements that represent personality traits. Table 8 shows the findings.

Hypothesized Factors	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Undecided (%)	Mean
Perception of women as weak, feminine and fit for homemaking de roles	44	54	2	2.5
Non-leadership gender expectation of women	46	50	4	2.3
Women are seen as soft-hearted, weak, compassionate and hence cannot perform the union roles which is characterized by toughness, abrasive and combative posturing	56	38	6	2.6
Female union members have low the confidence to lead	40	55	5	2.5
Female members have poor personal initiative to lead	40	55	5	2.5

Table 8: Extent to which Respondents Agree on Personality Traits that Hinder Women from Union Leadership

The study revealed that on average, 27 (44%) of the respondents agreed with the perception that women are weak, feminine and fit for home-making roles that hinder them from union leadership positions. These finding also resonates with the notion held by the society that women are weak and compassionate and as such cannot perform union roles which require them to be tough, abrasive, combative, strong-willed and courageous. This finding is in tandem with Eagly and Carli's (2007) observation that while women are associated with feminine qualities which involve compassionate treatment of others; men are linked to masculine attributes which are reliable with assertiveness and control. The findings further revealed that 28 (46%) of the respondents agreed that non-leadership gender expectations by the majority union members hinder them from vying for and/or holding union leadership positions. The thinking resonates with the assumption that women are comfortable nurturing and performing household roles and not doubling in dirty TU politics. In addition, the findings concur with Aledejana and Aledejana's (2005) observation that women generally occupy lower status jobs and enjoy fewer privileges in society, especially work-related.

The implication emanating from the foregoing findings are that women are not taken seriously when they vie for TU leadership positions due to the stereotype that union activities are synonymous with radical advocacy and toughness of character which women do not generally exhibit. The present study findings are therefore in agreement with Eagly and Carli's (2007) observation that women are associated with feminine qualities which involve treating others compassionately without tough abrasive posturing associated with TU politics. On average, 24 (40%) of the respondents

agreed that female union members lack the confidence to lead, while 29(48%) of them opined that female members have limited union exposure/education/leadership due the historical marginalization of the fair gender.

The findings, therefore, seem to suggest that women are yet to embrace union leadership roles fully due to their historical marginalization by their respective societies. As a result, they are yet to break the glass ceiling in the arena of labour politics. This predicament, according to Kirton and Healy (2008) compounded by inadequate opportunities for mentorship in union leadership roles by female role models. Lastly, but not least, 24 (40%) of the respondents strongly agreed that female members lack the personal initiative to lead. This implies that having seen how union leadership is dominated by men, women opt to just sit by and let their male counterparts run the show.

4.10. Union Membership Duration vs Personal Initiative to lead

To establish whether there is an association between duration of union membership and personal initiative to lead, a chi-square test of independence was done. The test was utilised to establish if a significant statistical association exists between two variables. The variables were: Female lack of the initiative to lead and Duration for members in the union. These variables were recoded into two groups respectively. The first variable; membership duration was divided into those with; less than 15 years and those with more than 15 years of union membership. The second variable; lack of initiative to lead was categorized into Agree and Disagree components. Table 9 presents the summary of the chi-square test summary in terms of numbers of cases used.

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Union Member-Duration * Poor Personal initiative to lead	57	93.4%	4	6.6%	61	100.0%

Table 9: Chi-square Case Summary

Table 9 indicates 57(93.4%) of the cases were used for the test, only 4(6.6%) were not used. Therefore, the results imply that the test used enough data to provide statistically significant results. Table 10 presents the chi-square cross-tabulation test.

		Personal Initiative to Lead		Total	
		Disagree	Agree		
Member-Duration (recoded)	1.00	Frequency	14	7	21
		% within Membership Duration (Less than 15 years)	66.6	33.4	100.0
		% within Personal Initiative to Lead	39.1	27.3%	36.8
	2.00	Frequency	32	4	36
		% within Membership Duration (More than 15 years)	88.8	11.2	100.0
		% within Personal Initiative to Lead	60.9	72.7	63.2
Total		Total Frequency	46	11	57
		% within Union Membership Duration	80.7	19.3	100.0
		% within Personal Initiative to Lead	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 10: Union Membership Duration vs Personal Initiative to lead
Output: $X^2 = 0.236$ and $P\text{-value} = 0.012$, which is less than 0.05

Table 10 indicates that there is a different opinion between two groups of respondents when asked if they lack the personal initiative to lead in the union. The results established that a significant proportion of respondents 32(88.8%) who have been union members for more than 15 years disagreed with the statement, with only a small proportion 4(11.2%) agreeing with the statement. On the other hand, the majority 14(66.6%) of the respondents who have been members for less than 15 years disagreed. However, what is notable here is that a significant proportion of 7(33.4%) of the under 15 years old union members conceded that women lack the personal initiative to lead. The findings, therefore, appear to suggest that the more the number of years a female member spends in the union, the higher her personal initiative to lead. The results of the cross-tabulation are also supported by the results demonstrated in Table 11.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.236 ^a	1	.012		
Number of Valid Cases	57				

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests Results

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.05

Table 11 indicates a Chi-square(X^2) = 0.236 and P-value $p=0.012$, which is less than 0.05 significance level. The results suggest that there is a statistically significant association between union membership duration and female personal initiative to lead in the union. Furthermore, the results found a small chi-square(X^2) value, which implies that the data for the two variables observed/used fits the expected data extremely well (goodness of fit). Thus, the findings revealed that most of the women who are in the union leadership seem to have been in the union for longer duration as compared to those that are not in leadership or failed to capture the union leadership seats. Figure 4.3 visualizes the frequency distribution between membership duration and the initiative to lead.

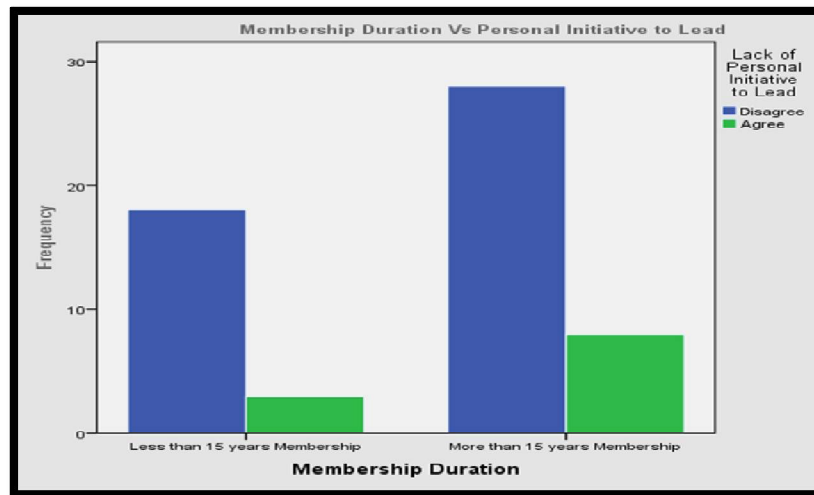


Figure 1: Membership Duration Vs Personal Initiative to Lead

Figure 1 indicates that women with more than 15 years of union membership have higher frequency distribution in terms of disagreement when asked if they lack the personal initiative to lead 28(61%) as compared to women with less than 15 years duration in the union 18(39%). Therefore, the findings imply that duration in the union comes with experience, exposure and personal advantage to lead.

4.11. Socio-Cultural Constraints

The study sought to explore the hypothetical socio-cultural constraints that discourage female KETAWU members from taking up union leadership positions. To determine whether the constraints hinder them, respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with specific socio-cultural hindrances. They were also required to give reasons for their specific ratings on a scale of importance with 1 having the least impact and 4 having the highest impact. For a more profound understanding and interpretation, the ratings are collapsed here into agreed, disagreed and undecided categories.

Hypothesized Statements	Agree %	Undecided %	Disagree %	Mean Rank 1-4
Gender stereotyping of women as homemakers and unfit for leadership roles.	70	4	26	3.13
Patriarchal union structures favour men but hinder women from accessing leadership positions.	64	5	31	3.52
Socially prescribed gender roles exclude women from union leadership positions.	61	11	28	3.44
Fear of suspicion by their spouses discourages females from vying for or/and assuming union leadership positions.	64	10	26	3.41

Table 12: Extent to Which Respondents Agree on Socio-Cultural Constraints That Discourage Women from Seeking Leadership Positions in Trade Unions

Table 12 depicts that a significant portion of the respondents (65% on average) agreed with the study's speculated constraints. When asked if gender stereotyping discourages them from participating in union leadership 42(70%) agreed with the reasoning. Although, a significant proportion of them, 17(25%) disagreed with gender stereotyping as a hindrance. Most respondents 39(64%) agreed that the union's patriarchal structures favour men, but hinder women from accessing leadership positions, while 19(31%) disagreed; (61%) of the respondents agreed with the statement socially prescribed gender roles excludes women from union leadership positions. However, a significant portion of the 17(28%) disagreed with the statement. Lastly, 64% of the respondents were of the view that fear of spouses' suspicion for immoral behavior discourages females from vying for and/or assuming union leadership positions. Though,

16(26%) disagreed with the statement. Those who agreed cited that, because of spouses' suspicion, they would rather opt-out of union leadership quest to save their marriages and relationships since some of the value and prefer their families to union leadership. When asked to identify other sociocultural constraints, 20(33%) of the respondents pointed out fear of sexual harassment by their male counterparts; favouritism and nepotism among union members; religious norms that prohibit female adherence of Islamic faith from taking up union leadership roles.

Table 9 shows that gender stereotyping, socially prescribed gender roles, patriarchal union structures and fear of spouses' suspicion emerged as significant factors that bar female union members from vying for and/or assuming union leadership roles in the KETAWU. The finding concurs with that of Kanjuo-Mrčela et al, (2015) who observed that social/gender stereotypes hinder women from achieving leadership positions in the society despite having all the requisite skills.

4.12. Role Conflict as a TU Leadership Barrier for Women

Data was collected and analyzed in order to establish the extent to which role-conflict between domestic and union work hinders women from seeking KETAWU leadership positions. The findings are presented in Table 13.

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	mean
	%	%	%	
The conflict between domestic and union work discourages women from taking up leadership positions.	56	40	4	2.5
Women view trade union leadership roles as demanding and burdensome.	53	45	2	2.3
Union meetings are normally held after work, at a time when most women would prefer utilizing it for nurturance and home-making.	45	248	7	2.1
Most Trade union leadership meetings are held in places that are not conducive for women (i.e. hotels, bars, clubs, restaurants, etc.).	42	47)	11	2.2

Table 13: Extent to Which Respondents Agree on Role Conflict As A TU Leadership Challenge for Women

As shown in Table 10, 34(56%) of the respondents agreed that conflict between domestic and union work discourages women from taking up leadership positions. Another 33(53%) agreed that women view trade union leadership roles as demanding and burdensome, 27(45%) agreed that union meetings are normally held after work, at a time when most women would prefer utilizing it for nurturance and home-making and 27(42%) agreed that most Trade union leadership meetings are held in places that are not conducive for women such as expensive restaurants.

Findings in Table 10 imply that the role conflict between the domestic roles and union leadership is a major hindrance. Most women prefer to be at home early so as to check on the family and other domestic duties. The fact that some union meetings are held after work hours in socially non-conducive venues discourages women from aspiring to leadership positions in the trade union movement. The finding resonates with Livingstone, (2004) assertion that the greater part of an average African woman's time is spent performing domestic chores like childcare, cooking, cleaning, and shopping. By and large, she is still the family workhorse who shoulders the greatest share of family-related work. These commitments interfere with their upward mobility, access to managerial positions and/or availability for union work.

4.13. Organizational Culture as a hindrance to Female Leadership Aspirants

This section of the study sought to establish whether organizational culture hinders female leadership aspirants from vying for or holding TU leadership positions. This was done by asking respondents to offer their opinion on whether they agreed or disagreed with the study's speculative statements. Figure 4.5 illustrates the results.

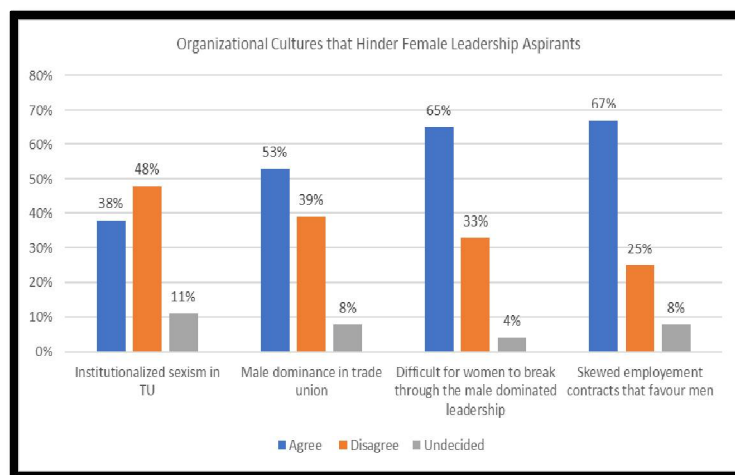


Figure 2: Organizational Cultures that Hinder Female Leadership Aspirants

Figure 2 indicates that 29(48%) of the respondents denied the presence of institutionalized sexism in KETAWU. But, a significant proportion 23(38%) did acknowledge its presence. As to whether there is male dominance in the union hierarchy, most respondents 31(53%) agreed. However, only 24(39%) disagreed. Majority of the respondents, which is 39(65%) were of the view that female union members are often frustrated since it is challenging to break through a male-dominated union leadership. However, a smaller proportion of 20(33%) of them disagreed with the reasoning. When asked whether the organization had skewed employment contracts that favour men but discriminate against women in terms of power and ability to vie for union leadership positions, most respondents 41(67%) agreed. Though, a smaller proportion of the 15(25%) denied the same.

Evidently, unionized women share the view that institutionalized sexism hinders their aspiration to ascend to leadership positions in KETAWU. However, they are convinced that male dominance in the union hierarchy, skewed employment contracts (which favours men but discriminate against women) and the male-dominated informal leadership lobbies and networks are among the cultural practices that impede female union leadership aspirants. In addition to the inadequate dissemination of information to sensitize women on leadership and election procedures and the lack of affirmative programs to groom women for union leadership roles.

4.14. Intervention Policies for Enhancing Female Trade Union Leadership

The study sought to establish intervention policies that KETAWU can implement to facilitate higher female participation in union leadership roles. Table 14 displays the respondents' level of agreement with the proposed intervention strategies.

Statement	Agree		Not sure		Disagree		Mean Rank 1-6
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Unions should reserve some leadership seats for women.	47	77	4	7	10	16	5.31
Unions should articulate gender mainstreaming in their organizational leadership framework.	52	86	2	3	7	11	5.58
Women ought to cultivate personal initiative for leadership roles.	53	90	2	3	4	7	5.53
Unions should institutionalize female-oriented TU sensitization programs.	55	94	2	3	2	3	5.54
Unions should adopt policies which meet the needs of male and female members.	56	93	1	2	3	5	5.75
Unions should initiate mentorship programmes for nurturing female members for leadership positions	54	88	3	4	6	8	5.29

Table 14: Policies That Are Used to Enhance Women Obtain Leadership Positions

From Table 14, 47(77%) of the respondents agreed that unions should reserve some leadership seats for women, only a small proportion of 10(16%) disagreed. When asked if the union should articulate gender mainstreaming in its organizational leadership, an overwhelming proportion of 52(86%) agreed, and only 7(11%) disagreed. In fact, 53(90%) of them opined that in order to improve female involvement in TU leadership, women ought to cultivate personal initiative to lead. However, only 4(7%) of the respondents differed with the opinion.

When asked if KETAWU should institutionalise female-oriented TU sensitization and education, an overwhelming proportion of respondents 55(94%) replied in the affirmative. only 2(3%) differed with the suggestion. Regarding the suggestion that unions should make policies which meets the needs of both male and female members, an overwhelming majority of the respondents 56(93%) agreed but only 2(3%) disagreed with the suggestion. Lastly, as to whether KETAWU should initiate mentorship programmes to nurture female members for leadership roles, 54(88%) agreed. Only, 6(8%) disagreed. It is also instructive that the mean ranking offered by respondents for each suggestion correlates with the respondents' opinions. In fact, all the mean rankings are 5.2 / 6.0 implying that the level of importance for the statements is high.

4.15. Other Proposed Intervention Policies to Enhance Women Leadership in Trade Union

Respondents also proposed other intervention policies that should be used by the union to embrace women participation in the union leadership as demonstrated in Figure 5.6.

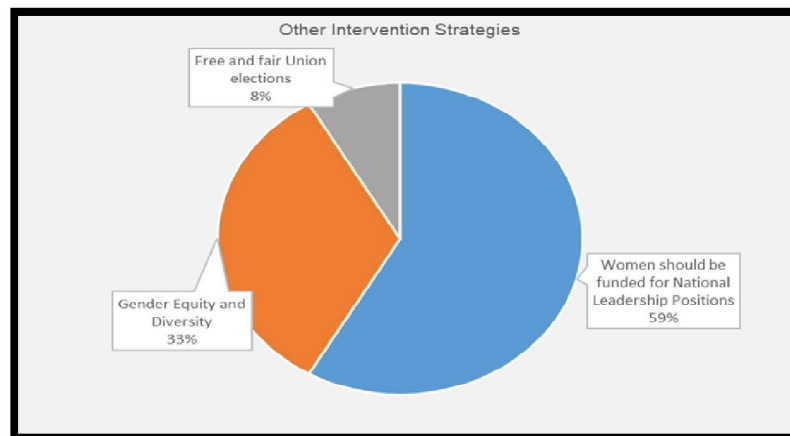


Figure 3: Other Intervention Policies Used to Enhance Women Leadership in Trade Unions

Figure 3 shows that 59% of the respondents proposed that women should be funded and equipped with resources to equally contest for national trade union leadership positions. 33% thought that the unions should embrace broader gender diversity. 8% proposed a free and fair union election. The results in Table 14 and Figure 4.6, therefore, implies that most women 59% in KETAWU are in favour of changes in union laws and policies through the implementation of new intervention policies that will facilitate increased female trade union leadership. This advocacy is consistent with UNDP's 1999 advocacy for organizations, labour unions included, to boost the threshold of women leadership initially to thirty percent and ultimately raise it to fifty percent.

5. Conclusion

Personality traits, social-cultural constraints, role conflict, trade union organizational culture hinder women from union leadership positions. It was established that Perception of women as weak, feminine and fit for homemaking roles, Non-leadership gender expectation of women, Women are seen as soft-hearted, weak, compassionate and hence cannot perform the union roles which is characterized by toughness, abrasive and combative posturing, Female union members lack the confidence to lead, Female members have limited union exposure/education/leadership due to prolonged marginalization and Female members lack the personal initiative to lead. Further, gender stereotyping of women as homemakers and unfit for leadership roles, patriarchal union structures that favour men but hinder women from accessing leadership positions, socially prescribed gender roles that exclude women from leadership positions and fear of suspicion by their spouses discourages female union members from vying and/or assuming leadership positions. Also, the study established that conflict between domestic and union work discourages women from taking up leadership positions, women view trade union leadership roles as demanding and burdensome.

It is established that institutionalized sexism in TU discourages female members from taking up leadership positions, Male dominance in the trade union hierarchy make it impossible for women to penetrate, Women are often frustrated since they find it difficult to break through the male-dominated informal leadership lobbies and networks and skewed employment contracts that favour men but marginalize women in terms of power and ability to vie for leadership position. Lastly, the study determined that Unions should reserve some leadership seats for women, Unions should articulate gender mainstreaming in its organizational leadership framework, Women ought to also cultivate personal initiative for leadership role, unions should institutionalize female-oriented TU sensitization and education, Unions should make policies which meet the needs of both genders and unions should initiate mentorship programmes for nurturing female members for leadership positions.

6. References

- i. Aledejana, F. & Aledejana, I. (2005). Leadership in education: The place of Nigerian women. *International Studies in Administration*, 33(2), 69-75.
- ii. Andibo, A. E. (2012). Obstacles Women Face in Participating Effectively in Trade Union Membership and Leadership. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(3), 317-322.
- iii. Andibo, A. E. (2012). Obstacle women face in participating effectively in trade union membership and leadership. *Journal of Emerging Trends in Educational Research and Policy Studies*, 3(3), 317-322.
- iv. Baker, J. G. (2003). Glass ceilings or sticky floors? A model of high-income law graduates. *Journal of Labor Research*, 24(4), 695-711.
- v. Bardhan, K., & Klasen, S. (2000). *On UNDP's Revisions to the Gender-Related Development Index*. London: UNDP.
- vi. Ben-Dov, Y., & Shilony, Y. (1982). Power and Importance in a Theory of Lobbying. *Behavioral Science*, 27(1), 69-76.
- vii. Bezbaruah, S. (2016). Gender Equality and Women's Employment in the Banking Sector in India. *Women Workers in Urban India*, 15(2), 291-327.
- viii. Blessing, N. I. (2011). Gender Issues and Leadership Effectiveness in Nigeria Labour Union Activities: An appraisal. *Acedido a*, 18(1), 1-30.
- ix. Broughton, A., & Miller, L. (2009). *Encouraging Women into Senior Management Positions: How Coaching Can Help: An international Comparative Review and Research*. London: Institute for Employment Studies.
- x. Cox, R. (2002). *Political Economy of a Plural World: Globalization and Civilization*. London: Mansell.
- xi. Dattalo, P. (2008). *Determining Sample Size: Balancing Power, Precision, and Practicality*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- xii. Eagly A.H. & Karau, S.J. (2002). Role congruity theory of Prejudice Toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598.
- xiii. Eagly, A. H., Eagly, L. L. C. A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the Labyrinth: The Truth About How Women Become Leaders*. Harvard: Harvard Business Press.
- xiv. Eagly, A. H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C., & Van Engen, M. L. (2003). Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-faire Leadership Styles: A Meta-analysis Comparing Women and Men. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(4), 569-591.
- xv. Eberhardt, J. L., & Fiske, S. T. (1994). Affirmative Action in Theory and Practice: Issues of Power, Ambiguity, and Gender Versus Race. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 15(1-2), 201-220
- xvi. Elkis S. (2007). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 573-598.
- xvii. Elkiss, H. (1994). Training women for union office: Breaking the glass ceiling. *Labrador Studies Journal*, 19(3), 25-57.
- xviii. Fisk, S. (2007), Ambivalent Sexism in Mark P. Zanna, ed, *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, (33, Pg.115-118). Thousand Oaks: California: Academic Press,
- xix. Franzway, S. 1997. *Sexual Politics in Trade Unions. Strife: Sex and Politics in Labour Unions*. B. Pocock. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- xx. Gilpin, R. (2010). *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the 21st Century*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- xxi. Hannan, C. (2012). *Gender mainstreaming: Strategy for Promoting Gender Equality*. New York: United Nations.
- xxii. Hellmers, K. (1998). *Affirmative Action: A Contradiction of Theory and Practice*. Michigan: Western Michigan University
- xxiii. Hewlett, S. A. (2005). Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success. *Human Resource Management International Digest*, 16(2), 67-92.
- xxiv. Kapstein, E. B. (1999). *Sharing the Wealth: Workers and the World Economy*. New York: WW Norton & Company Incorporated.
- xxv. Kirton, G., & Healy, G. (2008). *Women and Trade Union Leadership: Key Theoretical Concepts from UK-Based Literature*. Paper posted at the Women and Trade Union Leadership Development in Comparative Context Project. <http://hosted.busman.qmul.ac.uk/wtul/Files/17173.pdf> (accessed August 1, 2011).
- xxvi. Kombo, K. & Tromp, L. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications.
- xxvii. Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodology: Methods & Techniques*. New Delhi: New Age International (P) Limited Publishers.
- xxviii. Ledwith, S., & Munakamwe, J. (2015). Gender, union leadership and collective bargaining: Brazil and South Africa. *The Economic and Labour Relations Review*, 26(3), 411-429.
- xxix. Machyo, C. N. (2003).: *An Analysis of Women's Participation in Trade Union leadership in Kenya*. Master of Arts Project. Nairobi: University of Nairobi.
- xxx. Mayer, G. (2004). *Union Membership Trends in the United States*. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service.
- xxxi. Mugenda, O & Mugenda, A. (2003). *Research Methods: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.
- xxxii. Njihia, D.W. (2002). *A survey of Women' participation in Trade Unions in Kenya*. Unpublished MBA project, University of Nairobi.
- xxxiii. Ogden, J., George, C. L., & De La Rey, C. (1992). Fat chance! How Women Become Leaders. *Agenda*, 8(15), 87-90.
- xxxiv. Onyango, A. A. (2013). *Participation of Women in Trade Union Leadership in the Kenya National Union of Teachers, Kisumu County*. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Nairobi.
- xxxv. Osiruemu, E. (2004). Women in the Trade Union Movement in Nigeria: The constraints. *JENDA: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*, 31(6), 637-655.

- xxxvi. Paavo, A. (2006). Union workload: A Barrier to Women Surviving Labour-movement Leadership. *Just Labour*, 23(8), 341-597.
- xxxvii. Patton, M (1990). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications,
- xxxviii. Rhode, D. L. (2002). Balanced lives: Changing the culture of legal workplaces. *Journal of Social Issues*, 32(1), 132-451
- xxxix. Rhode, D. L., Kellerman, B., Kellerman, B., & Rhode, D. L. (2007). *Women and Leadership: The State of Play and Strategies for Change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass
- xl. Ridgeway, L. (2001). Gender, status, and leadership. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 513-712.
- xli. Robbins, S. P. (2003). *Organizational Behavior. International Edition*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- xlii. Rogers, S. (2004). Work and Family: Still the Most Difficult Revolution? – A Review of the Women and Unions Conference, 2003. *Just Labour*, 4(Summer), 102-105.
- xliii. Tomlinson, J. (2005). Women's Attitudes towards Trade Unions in the UK: A consideration of the Distinction between full-and part-time Workers. *Industrial Relations Journal*, 36(5), 402-418.