



Female Scholars' Access to Research Grants in Higher Education as a Promotional Facet to Social Transformation in Kenya

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2.1 Introduction

The academic communities have a key function that entails research, generation of knowledge, and innovation, more so in the twenty-first century as Kenya strives to transform into a middle-income country in line with its vision 2030. This makes gender equity with regard to participation and access to resources in higher education even more crucial for social transformation. Women in all sectors of life are essential players and social agents with capacity to foster change and transformation in the society. This chapter presents the debate on participation of women in research and publication. It comprises the theoretical framework and review of empirical literature on female scholars' access to research grants.

2.2 Model of Social Transformation Theory

Social transformation denotes change in the society or gradual modification of society over a period of time (Habibul & Ulrike, 2014). According to Pierli and Selvam (2017), social transformation leads to large-scale change in the society and is brought about by people within their environment with an aim of enhancing quality of life. The theory underpins the importance of higher education as a vehicle for advancement of the quality of life for both gender as far as participation and access to research grants is concerned.

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The authors of this chapter adopt the model of systemic transformations through symbiotic metamorphosis that involves four interlinked components, a theory of the contradictions, and gaps that point toward prospects of real change in the society; the second is the theory of societal reproduction that gives an account of the bottlenecks to transformation; unintended social change points toward future prospects of both bottlenecks and the outlined prospects, and finally, transformative strategies addresses the question of “what is to be done,” in relation to the identified bottlenecks, prospects, and future trajectories.

2.3 Sources of Funding Available for Research in Kenya

Reviewed literature indicates that major sources of research funding globally include research councils and research institutions including universities, development agencies that offer national aid to institutions involved in research, and development agencies that offer international aid, including United States Agency for International Development (USAID), UK Department for International Development (DFID), and Charitable foundations and philanthropic organizations (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). Research funding in Kenya is mainly through capitulation by the government and the National Research Fund (NRF). These funds are competitively bided before any university can be funded and some receive little or no funds. A study by Civil Peace Service (CPS) (2018) showed that most of the funding for universities in Kenya is from both county and national government and other related sources compared to the percentage from donors, industries, and NGOs that is slightly lower at 35% funding. The survey demonstrated that funding of research in the universities that compete for them has an effect on the visibility and performance of the institutions in terms of citations, publications, and referrals in refereed journals for each university.

The same study (ibid, 2018) showed that in 2014/2015, the Government of Kenya allocated Kenya shillings, fifty-three billion toward research, publication, and development focusing on science and innovation in technology. A good number of public universities and colleges received huge funding in the same financial year, while National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation (NACOSTI) and Research Endowment Fund received a good amount of funding too. According to the Commission for University Education (CUE) report, some local universities had partnered with corporate bodies and global universities to boost their research projects. Muinde (2009) asserts that collaborating with faith-based institutions, social organizations, financial institutions, and other private firms that promote sustainable growth is now important for universities.

2.4 Female Scholars' Access to Research Grants and Productivity in Publication Trends

Although gender parity is yet to be fully achieved globally, gains have been made in women's participation and access to research grants and publication in higher education. The European Union (EU) report indicates that female researcher pool is growing and makes up 33% overall in the EU. This finding was later supported by the American Council of Education (2016) who found out that women are advancing in their professional qualifications and being prepared for leadership positions at a faster rate than men. In addition, women's applications for research grants have increased due to measures put in place by some governments to encourage female application, including affirmative action measures.

The UNESCO report indicates that several Southeast European countries have achieved gender parity in research, and at the same time, other countries in other continents have made gains with regard to gender parity in research funding. It is indicated that Malaysia, Asia, Thailand, and the Philippines have all achieved gender parity and in Africa, South Africa, and Namibia and are on the verge of achieving it. Countries with the highest proportion of female researchers are Venezuela (56%) and Bolivia (63%). Lesotho that originally had high numbers of female researchers dropped from 76% to 31% between 2002 and 2011.

Ranga, Gupta, Etzkowitz, Reinhardt, and Reichwein (2012), citing the European Commission (2009), observed that though in some disciplines men had higher chances of accessing research funding than women, a closer comparison on the success rate of male and female researchers in the research grant/funding programs found no definite patterns and no clear correlation between the proportion of men or women in a field and their chances of success in obtaining research funding.

Gender equity and equality have been reported to be increasing in academia (Goastellec & Pekari, 2013). Research has shown that women are catching up in accessing and participating in academic activity. However, women are still fewer in academia because they continue to encounter challenges in leadership, salary, and funding (van der Lee & Ellemers, 2015). The authors (van der Lee & Ellemers, 2015) emphasize that it is important to close the funding gap as this may retain women in academia and lead to the closing of other gaps.

However, despite the gains made so far, the literature indicates that marginalization still prevails with regard to women's participation, publication, and access to research grants in higher education (Ranga et al., 2012; Weale & Barr, 2018). Some high-income countries such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands have a low proportion of female researchers. In these countries, just one in four researchers is a woman. Lower representation of female researchers is also found in the Republic of Korea (18%) and Japan (15%) with Japan recording the lowest proportion than any other member of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

A research by the United States of America National Research Council established that research grant success rate for women was at 41% while for men was at 45%. In addition, Weale and Barr (2018) found out in a survey that 90% of

engineering and physical sciences' funding in the United Kingdom (UK) was allocated to male-led researches, and in 2016/17, fewer than 7% of all grants went to women. "*Even when women do apply successfully, they are awarded less money than their male colleagues*" (ibid, 2018). This is further supported by a study conducted by Somers (2019) and Plantenga et al. (2009) that even after accounting for quantity and quality of male and female applicants, there was still disparity in outcomes that favor men over women with regard to research funding and publication. However, fewer cases where women had significantly higher success rates than men were observed in Finland and Belgium.

In Africa, a lack of equal access to funding and interaction with regional and international collaborators has been portrayed as leading to a decreased likelihood of female researchers being published in prestigious journals (Champion & Shrum, 2004). UNESCO found out that the publication rate for women was much lower than men and that 25% of all the published articles were attributed to women's researchers in South Africa. The reasons given for these disparities were that females were less represented in senior faculty, a level at which researchers publish most (Ceci & Williams, 2011). These disparities are more visible at the upper levels of the academic career, further supporting the conclusion from various studies that there is a strong correlation between academic positions and funding success (Waisbren et al., 2008; Ranga et al., 2012).

A study by Downing et al. (2019) on the gender of researchers whose publications featured in the database on African Education Research established that out of a total of 1711 researchers, just 29% were female. Botswana had the highest proportion of female researchers at 48% followed by Zimbabwe at 40%. Ethiopia and Ghana have a low percentage of female representation in researcher at 24% and 16%, respectively (UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2019). At the same time, only less than one third of researchers in Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya were female.

2.5 Methodology

Qualitative research approach was used to explore the perspectives of university female scholars' experiences with regard to access to research grants and its impact on personal and societal transformation. Using in-depth interviews technique, the authors explored personal narratives of 25 female scholars from public and private universities with regard to accessing research grants. The research was guided by the following questions:

- (i) How does access to research grants impact the female scholars' participation in higher education?
- (ii) What structures hinder female scholars' representation in research?
- (iii) How does female scholar access to research grants promote social transformation?

2.6 Discussion

2.6.1 Female Scholar's Participation in Research

Data drawn from the interviews indicated that universities have embraced structural changes geared toward supporting research activities. The strategies therefore have increased female scholars' participation in research. One respondent reported that:

My university has some intricate strategies that have encouraged us to conduct research. The strategies range from policies that guide research activities to training. It used to be very difficult to get access to internal research funding but it is much easier today. The structures put in place have really helped and encouraged us to conduct research.

The female scholars expressed that their universities had put in place policies that made it easier for them to participate in research. The policies covered issues of research ethics, administration and procurement of research resources, collaborations and partnerships, and intellectual property rights. The scholars agreed that they had received research-related training. The skills that they gained included proposal writing, budgeting, and networking. The participants indicated that communication in their universities was efficient and information on "call for papers" was readily shared. The monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems assisted them with accountability. The universities had established awarding systems to award researchers with trophies, letters of recognition, and promotions for their participation in research, this being an incentive to research.

From the interviews, the participants indicated that there were more opportunities for research grants and that there were a number of research organizations that targeted and funded female researchers only. With accessibility to these grants, the participants felt that they were able to compete and attract more research funding.

Although women are much more represented in the academic world than they used to be (Goastellec & Pekari, 2013), research activities are still gendered. This is true in Africa and more so in Kenya. Even with these efforts by universities and funding organizations, female scholars still struggle to access and attract funding compared to their male counterparts. Ranga et al. (2012) argue that key gender differences have continuously been reported in application for research grants. They further report that fewer women tend to apply for grants or request for smaller amounts.

Moreover, the academic community working in research organizations and higher education institutions tend to take up distinct roles that include conducting research, teaching, and managing staff and resources (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). There is clearly an imbalance in the representation of women in these roles. Statistics indicate that more men participate in academia by taking up roles than their female counterparts. While progress is being made in reducing gender disparities in higher education and more so in research, this change may be experienced at a much lower rate in South and West Asia and in sub-Saharan Africa.

2.6.2 Structures that Promote Female Scholar Representation in Research

In as much as gender differences have slightly declined over time, female scientists' research potency continues to be lower than that of men (Ranga et al., 2012). Van der Lee and Ellemers (2015) report compelling evidence of gender bias in personal grant applications. Few women tend to apply for grants and even fewer are able to attract funding. According to Ranga et al. (2012), a variety of reasons have been suggested as explanatory factors.

The participants indicated that they had challenging experiences with regard to research funding. Many articulated that they were disheartened from the many attempts that they made toward accessing funding and were unsuccessful. One participant reminisced:

I remember submitting more than fifteen proposals without success. It was disheartening. I was ecstatic the first time I was successful. It was a small grant but it meant so much to me. It became easier after the first successful grant.

The female researchers agreed that the journey toward a career in research is not an easy one as it has challenges and frustrations. From the interviews, the factors that promote female access to research funding can be summarized as stigma of caregiving, challenging application process, lack of mentors and networks, challenges in accessing grant information, and stringent grant requirements.

2.6.3 Stigma of Caregiving

Inequality between men and women is very evident in academia. Günçavdı et al. (2017) point out that even in the current times, there are disparities between men and women in educational organizations, especially in higher education institutions. They attribute this inequality to gender roles dictated by the society. For women, one of the important roles is caregiving. Women have historically been tasked with caring for children and keeping homes (Boateng, 2018). Women are also expected to care for aging parents and other members of the extended family such as younger siblings. These roles, at times, affect academic progression of women. This section records accounts of female researchers on their experiences with motherhood and career development.

For scholars, teaching and conducting research play a big role in career growth. A good part that has suffered is the female scholars' access to research funding. They indicated that responding to calls and managing projects demand a lot of time and attention. Having young children also demands a lot of attention, and therefore, it is challenging to juggle the two, but some of them said it is much easier for them to juggle motherhood and teaching, not research. One of the participants retorted that:

It is very challenging to be a mother and a researcher. The long hours put in both activities will not allow one to do both comfortably. One will have to suffer. There are some of us who

have sacrificed career and others families. One will have to have very good support from the spouse, extended family and employer to succeed in both areas. This is the reality of being a woman in academia.

According to Boateng (2018), female scholars face great challenges in combining their domestic and professional responsibilities. This has often discouraged many women from actively pursuing careers that compete with their domestic responsibilities. Similarly, Gewin (2020), in a study on women's access to funding during COVID-19 pandemic, established that women had majorly been affected with regard to access to research funding and subsequently their participation in the same. This was because they had been forced to take up roles of tutoring their children and running their households. Data on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on scientific publishing output suggested that female researchers, particularly those at early-career levels, are the most affected. Submissions to preprint servers, such as arXiv, rose for male authors than for female authors as nations adopted social isolation protocols. Female authors have accounted for only one-third of all authors on published COVID-19 papers since January 2020 (Gewin, 2020). For Deryugina et al. (2021), both men and women have reported substantial increases in childcare and housework burdens, but women have experienced significantly larger increases than men. These household burdens are playing a role in increasing the gender gap in access to research funding.

However, in the contemporary research discourse, women have been continuously empowered by policies and laws that tend to address their rights and well-being (Muberekwa & Nkomo, 2016). Indeed, most of the Institutions of Higher Education in Kenya have policies that support women in their career progression. These policies are meant to foster gender equity in areas that have historically been considered as culturally, biologically, and professionally disadvantaging to female scholars. But interestingly, Samble (2008) contends that most women are reluctant to take advantage of policies such as affirmative action for female scholars who are professional mothers or spouses. This is, arguably, because women feel that they are already marginalized by gender stereotypes that make their advancement more difficult than that of men.

2.6.4 Mentor and Networking Challenges

Misra et al. (2017) define collaboration as people working together to solve problems and argue that collaboration is essential to the twenty-first-century academic careers. On the one hand, the need for collaboration in academia through mentoring cannot be overemphasized (Chitsamatanga et al., 2018). Young academicians require mentoring to grow in their careers. Misra et al. (2017) agree that mentors tend to provide an indispensable and nurturing relationship necessary for every young scholar. This relationship enables the scholar to learn the craft, the unwritten rules, and give entrée into social networks crucial to professional growth. Mentoring relationships are vital for female scholars too.

The participants reported that they yearned for a mentoring relationship during their early years in research. They felt that with guidance from an experienced researcher, their journey would have been easier. In this case, the mentor would have guided the mentee on writing a winning proposal for funding. Unfortunately, the participants reported that they did not get a chance of engaging in any meaningful mentoring relationships. They indicated that it is difficult to find seasoned researchers who were willing to guide a young scholar.

Networking, on the other hand, involves working with other experts in the same area of specialization. It allows one to connect with others and build a body of contacts (Huggins, 2019). Camedda et al. (2017) indicate that networking has been quickly recognized as an essential component of a successful career in higher education. In the era of internationalization, universities now recognize the value of networking as a way of fostering research collaboration, mobility exchange, and curriculum improvement from a global perspective. In the twenty-first century, networking is becoming an increasingly important skill for conducting research. Most funding agencies encourage researchers to collaborate at different levels. This requires that any scholar interested in funding should have a sound network of like-minded research team. Forming such a research team can be a challenge to most female researchers. The participants reported that it was challenging to reach other researchers and maintain a database of contacts.

Networking is hailed as a means of improving research output. Shanahan (2017) defines academic networking as the practice of managing multiple collaborative contacts and connections for social and professional benefits. These networks are commonly constructed slowly over time and are critical in establishing and sustaining a successful academic career in an ever-changing, increasingly more collaborative and competitive research environment. It might be viewed as an exercise where one builds a network by accruing a list of contacts. As voiced by the participants, it was challenging for them to identify an individual who fits within their interests and scope and to also manage the networks. One participant stated:

It is a challenge to identify a network of individuals who fit within my interests. In fact, many may be reluctant to support new scholars owing to their inexperience in research and writing of winning proposals.

2.6.5 Research Grant Application Process and Requirements

The challenge the participants faced in attracting research funding was the application process itself. They agreed that some funders put in place very stringent requirements that usually discourage female researchers from making an attempt. They argued that some of the requirements locked them out and therefore contributed to the stigma they encounter because of taking time to care for their families. The responses from participants that illustrate such sentiments included the following:

It is unfair that a number of funding organizations target early career scholars. These are scholars who their earned doctorate is less than ten years old. What of those female

researchers who took time to take up household responsibilities? They put their career development on hold and when they are ready to pick up and conduct research they are considered to be senior or experienced researchers. It is extremely difficult for such to compete with others who have had an undisrupted research path.

The female researchers indicated that funders tended to investigate the lead applicants' research background. It was clear that one attracts more points if they have attracted huge funding and have participated in research projects before. This also locks out researchers who are trying to develop and make a name in the discipline. The participants expressed that they were continuously forced to "*ride on the wings of established researchers.*" Their sentiments were that even with an innovative idea, it is very difficult to access research funds unless you are in a "*winning team.*" The winning team has a scholar who is well known for his or her research prowess. This established researcher will most often take up the lead role, and this makes it difficult for a young researcher to make through.

Participants also felt that some grant application procedures were too long and too demanding. They argued that some funders demand so much paperwork and it takes long to complete the grant application forms. Some participants also indicated that funders limit recipient flexibility in terms of applying for and managing research funds. With the stringent requirements, institutions researchers are affiliated to end up with a lot of authority over project activities. According to Conlan (2005), recipient flexibility is closely tied to issues of accountability and performance. Furthermore, recipients are usually expected to possess detailed and uniquely textured local knowledge and administrative experience; these qualities are critical to the effective accomplishment of the task being supported by the funding. Overly restrictive rules and funding conditions can therefore be counterproductive to successful implementation of research activities. Stringent processes can also obstruct innovation and experimentation. One participant stated:

Grant applications are usually long and tiring. One can make so many applications without success due to the strict rules and funding conditions.

2.6.6 Availability of Research Grant Information

Over time, most researchers have faced the difficulty of accessing grant information. Accessing appropriate research grant information at the right time gives a researcher a chance of applying for a competitive grant. Female researchers interviewed felt that availability of grant information was challenging in their institutions. They felt that there was inadequate publicity or advertisement, especially for local grants. Some stated that there was lack of knowledge about funding agencies. Funding information is usually advertised online. However, Internet access and connectivity are still a challenge for most persons in Africa. Science News (2020) reports that, in developing nations, technological limitations are stumbling blocks to efficient communication. Fast and reliable Internet access is key for research and development activity. Without reliable Internet, female researchers are unable to

access research grant information and in the long run are incapable of responding to funding in time.

In response to accessibility of information on research grants, one participant said:

We sometimes get to know of a call for a proposal when it is too late. Sometimes days or weeks to the closing date. There is nothing much one can do in terms of preparing a good proposal. It will be too late to accomplish all the requirements.

Another one said,

Most funding information is online. If we are not informed of a certain call for proposals, then there is high likelihood that we will not get to see it and respond to it. Sometimes it is a challenge knowing where to hunt for this information. It would mean being online for long periods of time, blindly going through all funding sites you know. This can be very costly.

For the female scholars interviewed, the concern was how the research grant information trickles down to them. They were convinced that they would apply for funding if they had access to the necessary information in good time. They felt that other female scholars did not engage in research activities because they were ignorant of research and funding information.

In regard to this, a participant said:

We have colleagues who are lucky enough to have access to funding notices but for some reasons they do not share this information. We sometimes get funding information through various institution offices for instance the research section or even the vice chancellor's office. The problem is that the information reaches us too late. I think it is because of the top-down communication challenge.

2.6.7 Female Scholars Access to Research Grants and Social Transformation

There has been growing recognition that research acts as a powerful engine for a country's economic progress and innovative dynamism and that universities in particular fulfill a crucial role in building or maintaining a country's research base. It is asserted that the researchers trained and employed by these universities are a vital asset to modern societies (LERU, 2012).

World Bank Report (2012) identifies women's voice, agency, and participation as key dimensions of gender equity and social transformation. Interest on women's empowerment and their contribution toward social transformation has been on the increase. This is reported by the numerous researches on women and social transformation and justified on the basis that social transformation requires a change in collective the consciousness of society (Murugan & Manimekalai, 2016).

Social transformation presupposes a change with a positive value, always implying a forward-thrusting movement toward the enhancement and development of

quality of life (Pierli & Selvam, 2017). Gass (2016) argues that transformation is a profound, fundamental change, altering the very nature of something. Women's empowerment is crucial for improved quality of life, which is a crucial outcome of social transformation. The unique perspectives and contributions of women to scientific research have been recognized globally. Transformative researchers tend to contribute both to personal and societal transformation (Mertens, 2017).

Female academic researchers have made significant contributions in positively transforming the different facets of society. Their being able to access substantial funding has enabled them to play an essential role in institutional, community, and their personal transformation. The participants shared how they have contributed to the growth of these facets.

At institutional level, one respondent stated that:

I have been mentoring girls in high school, encouraging them to rise and work to compete for opportunities available in higher education.

At community level, another participant responded:

Having access to funding has enabled me to conduct research in my community that has enabled/influenced policy changes. This makes me happy that I am making a change in my community.

At personal level, another participant stated:

I am a changed person, more confident in my success in access to research funds. I am happy that my university provides equal opportunity to all of us.

2.6.8 Access to Research Grants and Personal Transformation

Mertens (2017) argues that personal transformation is a necessary component of research and emphasizes that transformation at an individual level is appropriate and necessary. Most scholars engage in research with the sole interest of driving personal transformation. This first leads to personal transformation and then to the wider institutional and societal transformation. Research is considered an integral part of individual development, especially career or academic development. It is a widely accepted analogy that without actively engaging in research, then there is the danger of perishing in academia.

The participants acknowledged that they have attracted a number of research grants and this has led to their personal growth. They agreed that their academic or career trajectory has been positive with every funding won. For them, being able to attract funds and manage research projects has led to consistent career development. In most universities in Kenya, attracting research funds is a requirement for promotion within academia. By engaging in research, the female scholars are also able to publish widely and consistently. This also earns points that are considered during promotion interviews.

Access to funding and the ability to publish are a promotional facet for the researchers to enjoy visibility online. They enjoy an active presence within author identifier services and academic social networks such as ORCID, Research Gate, Researcher ID, Scopus, Academia.edu, Publons, and Google Scholar. They are also consistently cited by other researchers/writers. This enables them to acquire networks and linkages with other organizations. The participants boasted of having very strong contact lists, interacting with researchers and organizations from all over the world. The precise identification of researchers and their scientific production are critical for all parties involved in research that is publishers, funders, universities, research evaluators, and libraries. This is because many actions depend on the precision of this step, and they include promotions, funding, publishing, or reviewing articles (Boudry & Durand-Barthez, 2020).

According to the participants, engaging in research has enabled them to gain skills and perfect those that they already had. They said that they have gained skills in sourcing for funds, sourcing for research partners, and writing quality proposals. They have also acquired skills in budgeting and management of research funds.

2.6.9 Access to Research Grants and Institutional Transformation

Institutional transformation is the intense change within an institution, which consequently also positively affects the institution's surrounding environment (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2016). Female scholars have contributed to the development of their affiliate universities in a number of ways. Research is a key mandate of universities and is a promotional facet for institutional social transformation. The participants felt that by attracting research funds, they are able to increase the visibility of the universities. They are able to improve the ranking of their university. According to Aguillo et al. (2008), universities play a very important role as they communicate scientific and cultural achievements. Academic institutions are today devoting more resources with the goal of improving their presence on the Web-based sites. One of the ways of doing this is communicating on research output. In this regard, a participant said that "*I am very proud when I see the university's webometric ranking since I have played a role in the ranking.*"

In addition, the research fund attracted acts as a promotional facet for the development and social transformation of the university. Universities gain a percentage of the funds as administrative fees. The funds are usually used in purchasing resources and equipment and also setting up infrastructure. These resources enable the universities to conduct other research activities and enhance teaching and learning. This attracts students to undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The funding also supports postgraduate students' tuition and research work. By supporting students, female researchers play a role in the university postgraduate enrolment.

2.6.10 Access to Research Grants and Community Transformation

Active engagement by scholars in research is in itself a promotional facet for community transformation. Research is a vital foundation for programs that focus on engaging communities in change and in the development of more sustainable societies (McLoughlin & Young, 2015). The participants indicated that they were engaged in research with the target of solving community problems. They guide the community in the identification and the finding of possible solutions to their problems and hold dissemination workshops within the community. This, according to the participants, leads to social transformation.

The participants felt that they also contribute to community transformation by encouraging stakeholder participation. Access to research grants was also viewed as an avenue for creation of income for community members. A good example is engaging research assistants from the community who, in the process, gain experience and make monetary earnings. The female scholars usually engage their students as research assistants. These students are able to gain research experience by interacting with the female researchers. Apart from imparting research skills, the participants also reported that some of the grant funds attract students who are able to complete their studies on time. With the availability of funding, the students are able to meet the cost of pursuing the degree. Strict project timelines ensure that the student completes on time. The students are thus able to participate in solving community problems.

The participants reported that they encourage community participation and problem-solving through community sensitization, skill training, advocacy, and empowerment. The female scholars conduct outreach programs where communities are sensitized and trained. The participants indicated that they tend to target women in their training and empowerment programs. They argued that by doing so, communities tended to grow and be more resilient. The participants felt that by offering tangible solutions and working, especially with women, they are able to play a role in developing sustainable communities.

2.7 Conclusion and Recommendations

Research shows that there are gains made in women's participation and access to research grants in higher education in the world, though gender parity is yet to be achieved. While it is clear that progress is being made in reducing gender inequality in research, this change may be experienced at a much slower rate in sub-Saharan Africa. Female scholars in Kenya are accessing fewer research grants compared to their male counterparts. There are a number of strategies that have been put in place by universities in Kenya with the goal of encouraging more female researchers to access funds. These include gender-sensitive policies, continuous training on proposal writing and grant management, and incentives for those attracting research funds.

From the narratives, it can be concluded that research grants are more available to female scholars now than before. Female researchers are enjoying more support; however, they are still facing challenges that curtail their efforts to access funds. The challenges include the dilemma between caring for households and choosing career growth; limited availability of grant information; challenging grant application processes; and lack of mentors to guide them in the early-career period. It can also be concluded that female researchers feel that their accessing research grants have enabled them to participate in societal transformation. Research grants have made positive impact on their personal lives and the institutions and communities in which they live and work.

Therefore, female researchers in Kenya require more strategies to be put in place to enable them to access funding. It is commendable that institutions and funding organizations have made efforts toward gender parity in research. Universities and funding organizations should be cognizant of the challenges that female researchers face when they take time to care for their families. In as much as universities have policies that guide research, more needs to be done so as to accommodate female scholars' needs. More friendly application procedures should be put in place to accommodate these scholars. Universities need gender-sensitive policy frameworks for coaching and mentoring female scholars in an effort to realize gender parity with regard to representation and access to research funding.

Universities should put in place elaborate mentorship and networking programs. These programs can help link mentors and mentees and assist in collaborations. This study recommends the need for universities to establish departments tasked with the responsibility of networking, reviewing various websites, identifying "call for papers," and notifying female scholars. These can continuously provide grant information to researchers. Female researchers who have done commendable work within their disciplines should also be awarded. Structures can be put within institutions of higher education to identify and award efforts made by female scholars. These structures can in the long run motivate female scholars.

Dedication This chapter is dedicated to all female researchers who are transforming the society.

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