

Gender Representation in Leadership Positions and Diplomatic Services in Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, Nairobi Kenya

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ABSTRACT: The study examined Gender representation in leadership positions on diplomatic services of ministry of foreign and diaspora affairs in Nairobi Kenya. The study employed descriptive correlational research design. Descriptive correlational research allowed the researcher to explore and describe the relationships and patterns without making causal claims. It was well-suited for investigating the complex interactions and associations between these variables. The researcher randomly targeted a population of 310 respondents. This group comprised a diverse range of participants, including; Ministry officials such as senior officials and policymakers, Human Resources Department officials, Gender Equality Officers, Diplomatic Staff and other support staff both male and female diplomatic staff at various levels junior, mid-level, and senior. Using Slovene's formula, a sample size of 175 respondents was determined. The findings of the study indicated a significant positive correlation between gender representation in leadership roles and the effectiveness of diplomatic services, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.966. This suggests that an increase in gender representation in leadership positions is associated with improved effectiveness in diplomatic services. The significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) confirms that this correlation is statistically meaningful, indicating that the relationship observed is unlikely to be due to chance. The study concluded that gender representation in leadership positions has a significant effect on the effectiveness of diplomatic services. The findings suggest that when women occupy leadership roles, the quality of diplomatic engagement improves. This enhancement is likely due to the diverse perspectives that women bring to decision-making processes, which can lead to more innovative and comprehensive approaches to international relations. The study recommended an implementation of comprehensive strategies to enhance gender representation in leadership positions. It is essential to establish clear targets for female representation at various leadership levels and to actively promote women's candidacies for these roles.

KEYWORDS; *Gender Representation, Leadership Positions, Diplomatic Services*

I. INTRODUCTION

In an ideal diplomatic service, gender equality would be the cornerstone of recruitment, promotion and representation in both domestic and international diplomatic roles. Governments, in alignment with international conventions such as the Beijing Declaration (1995) and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), would ensure equal opportunities for men and women to occupy leadership positions in foreign affairs ministries and represent their countries at international forums (UN Women, 2022).

Globally, gender disparity in diplomatic services has been an issue since the inception of modern diplomacy. For centuries, diplomatic roles were predominantly occupied by men, reflecting broader societal norms that excluded women from leadership positions. Even after the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations (1961) formalized modern diplomatic practices, women were largely absent from high-ranking diplomatic posts (McCarthy, 2021). It was not until the late 20th century that countries like Sweden and Canada took active measures to promote gender parity in foreign services. Sweden, for instance, launched its feminist foreign policy in 2014, becoming a global advocate for gender equality in diplomacy (Thompson & Clement, 2019). Despite these efforts, by 2022, women still held only about 25% of ambassadorial posts worldwide, indicating that gender disparity remains a significant challenge (UN Women, 2022). Countries such as Canada, which established policies to achieve gender parity in senior diplomatic roles, have seen an increase in women's representation, but many nations lag behind (Wright, 2023).

On the African continent, diplomatic services have also historically been dominated by men, reflecting the patriarchal structures prevalent in most African societies. In recent decades, the African Union (AU) has promoted gender equality as part of its development agenda, notably through the African Union Strategy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (2020–2030), which aims to increase women's representation in leadership positions, including in diplomacy (AU, 2020). Rwanda has been a regional leader in gender equality, achieving remarkable success in both government and diplomacy, with women holding over 60% of parliamentary seats and a growing presence in ambassadorial roles (Rwanda Governance Board, 2021). However, in many other African nations, such as Nigeria and South Africa, women remain underrepresented in high-ranking diplomatic posts despite international and regional commitments to gender parity (Ogbogbo, 2022). For example, Nigeria, the continent's most populous country, has seen less than 30% of ambassadorial positions held by women as of 2023 (Akinola, 2023), highlighting persistent gender disparities in African diplomacy.

In Kenya, gender disparity in diplomatic services is a reflection of broader gender inequalities in public service. Since independence in 1963, Kenya's diplomatic roles were predominantly occupied by men, with women only starting to break into the sector in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Kamau, 2020). Kenya, being a signatory to many international agreements, is expected to have implemented policies that provide for equal representation of both genders in its diplomatic services. The promulgation of Kenya's 2010 Constitution marked a turning point by embedding gender equality in the public sector through the Two-Thirds Gender Rule, which mandates that no more than two-thirds of positions in public institutions be held by one gender (Constitution of Kenya, 2010). Civil society organizations have continued to push for more inclusive policies, citing the need for a more balanced gender representation in diplomatic decision-making (Wanjiru, 2023). The Kenya National Gender Equality Commission noted that women are often relegated to support roles within the ministry and their career progression is slower compared to their male counterparts (Huqa, 2020). However, as of 2023, men still dominate ambassadorial appointments, with women making up less than one-third of Kenya's ambassadors stationed abroad (Omondi, 2022; Nyabokey, 2023). For instance, of the 52 Kenyan ambassadors and high commissioners stationed across the world, only 11 are women, reflecting a stark gender imbalance (Ngugi, 2021). Evidences reveal that females are often restricted to junior positions, limiting women's influence in the formulation and execution of Kenya's foreign policy (Ngugi, 2021). Despite the above and several other initiatives, progress has been slow (Odhiambo, 2022). The failure to achieve gender parity contradicts Kenya's international obligations under conventions like CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women), potentially harming its reputation in the international community (Thompson, 2023). In addition, gender disparity in Kenya's diplomatic services has significant consequences on both the country's foreign relations and its commitment to international gender equality standards, results in a lack of diverse perspectives in decision-making processes, which can weaken the quality of Kenya's diplomatic negotiations and international engagements. Investigating the effect of gender representation in leadership positions on Diplomatic Services of Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya, can enhance efforts to address the challenges and exploring the opportunities.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

The research was grounded in Joan Acker's Theory of Gendered Organizations, established in 1990. This Theory argues that organizations like diplomatic services, were intrinsically gendered, indicating that the structures, processes and practices within these organizations are influenced by gendered assumptions and power relations. Acker maintains that gender inequality in organizations is not merely the outcome of individual prejudices or discrimination but is ingrained in the foundational architecture of these institutions (Acker, 1990). This theoretical perspective illuminates why, despite existence of various policies aimed at promoting gender equality, numerous organizations, including Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, persist in demonstrating gender disparities in leadership positions.

The Gendered Organizations Theory is particularly pertinent in investigating gender disparities in diplomatic services, as it emphasizes the role of organizational structures in contributing to the underrepresentation of women in senior diplomatic roles. Within the context of Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs, the theory suggests that entrenched gendered beliefs about leadership, decision-making and public service responsibilities may have led to a continuous imbalance in gender representation. The theory is used to analyze how the Ministry's internal practices, recruitment methods, promotion policies and the prevailing cultural norms within diplomatic services perpetuate gender inequalities, despite ongoing efforts to achieve gender parity (Acker, 2006). Through this theoretical framework, we explore how gendered practices within the Ministry pose obstacles to women's advancement and consider how these practices can be transformed to encourage more equitable representation.

The Theory of Gendered Organizations rests on several fundamental assumptions; i) it posits that organizations are not neutral entities but are instead influenced by societal norms and values that typically favor masculinity. This implies that characteristics commonly associated with men, such as assertiveness, decisiveness and competitiveness, are often more highly esteemed than those associated with women, such as empathy and collaboration (Marshall & Marshall, 2011). The theory contends that gender inequality encompasses not only issues of representation but also the structure and valuation of work itself. For instance, roles deemed “feminine,” such as caregiving or administrative tasks, are frequently undervalued in comparison to “masculine” roles involving decision-making and policy development. These principles inform the study's examination of how diplomatic positions within Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs are organized and how this structure contributes to gender inequality.

2.2 Gender Representation in Leadership Positions on Diplomatic Services of Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya

The effect of gender representation in leadership positions on diplomatic services has been a subject of considerable examination in various countries, highlighting both positive impacts and ongoing challenges. In Sweden, the government has made significant strides in promoting gender equality within its foreign service. Sweden's foreign ministry has actively pursued gender parity, resulting in a more inclusive approach to diplomacy. As of 2020, women held 50% of the senior positions within the ministry, which has been credited with fostering a more collaborative and participatory diplomatic process. The Swedish model demonstrates that increased female representation at leadership levels can lead to enhanced diplomatic engagement, particularly in areas like peace building and conflict resolution, where women's perspectives contribute significantly to more comprehensive strategies (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2020).

Similarly, in Rwanda, the integration of women into leadership roles has had a profound impact on the country's diplomatic effectiveness. Following the genocide in 1994, Rwanda adopted policies aimed at gender equity, resulting in women holding 61% of parliamentary seats as of 2021, the highest percentage in the world (World Economic Forum, 2021). This representation extends to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where women have taken on key leadership roles. Research indicates that Rwanda's diplomatic missions have benefitted from these diverse perspectives, particularly in advocating for gender issues on international platforms. The country's commitment to gender inclusivity in its diplomatic efforts has not only improved its image globally but has also allowed it to play a pivotal role in discussions on women's rights and development within international organizations (Senent, V. T., 2023).

In contrast, Japan presents a different narrative where gender disparity remains a significant concern in leadership positions within its diplomatic services. Despite Japan's reputation as a leading economic power, women are markedly underrepresented in decision-making roles within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As of 2020, only 6% of Japan's ambassadors were women, a statistic that reflects broader societal norms regarding gender roles. Yamaguchi (2019) this underrepresentation has been linked to a more conservative diplomatic approach that often overlooks the importance of gender perspectives in foreign policy. The lack of diverse leadership has hampered Japan's ability to engage effectively in international dialogue on gender-related issues, suggesting that increased female representation could enhance Japan's diplomatic effectiveness and contribute to more progressive foreign policies.

Furthermore, in Canada, gender representation in leadership has been linked to more effective diplomatic initiatives, particularly in areas such as international development and peacekeeping. The Canadian government has prioritized gender equality as a central theme of its foreign policy, resulting in women occupying approximately 50% of senior diplomatic roles. This gender-balanced approach has positively influenced Canada's ability to promote women's rights globally and engage in comprehensive discussions about gender equality. For instance, Canada's feminist foreign policy has allowed the country to lead initiatives that address gender-based violence and advocate for women's participation in peace negotiations. Studies indicate that Canada's diplomatic engagements are more effective when gender diversity is prioritized, leading to more sustainable outcomes in international relations (Tiessen & Swan, 2018).

In South Africa, the impact of gender representation in leadership positions on diplomatic services is evident through its active promotion of gender equality as a core principle of its foreign policy. The South African government has implemented various policies aimed at increasing women's representation in diplomatic roles. As of 2021, women held 43% of the senior positions within the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO). The increased presence of women in leadership has facilitated the incorporation of gender perspectives into South Africa's diplomatic initiatives, particularly in discussions surrounding human rights and gender-based violence. This commitment to gender representation has also enhanced the country's ability to engage with international organizations on issues that affect women, demonstrating the potential for gender-inclusive leadership to drive meaningful diplomatic engagement.

In the United Kingdom, the impact of gender representation on diplomatic services has been a focus of recent discussions, particularly in light of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) efforts to improve gender equality. The UK government set a target in 2020 to ensure that at least 40% of leadership roles within the FCDO are occupied by women by 2025 (Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, 2020). Research has shown that organizations with gender-diverse leadership are more effective in addressing global challenges such as climate change, conflict resolution, and humanitarian crises. The FCDO's commitment to increasing women's representation at all levels of leadership is expected to yield more innovative solutions and enhance the UK's diplomatic reach, particularly in addressing gender-related issues on the international stage.

In Australia, the representation of women in leadership positions within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has also shown significant effects on diplomatic services. The Australian government has initiated various programs aimed at fostering gender equality within its foreign service. As of 2021, women occupied over 50% of the senior roles in DFAT. This has translated into more comprehensive diplomatic strategies that incorporate gender perspectives, particularly in Australia's aid programs and international development initiatives. Studies have indicated that female diplomats bring unique insights into negotiations and policy formulation, resulting in more nuanced approaches to global issues. As such, Australia's commitment to gender equality in diplomatic leadership serves as a model for other countries seeking to enhance their diplomatic effectiveness through inclusivity.

2.3 Research gap

While numerous studies highlight the positive effects of gender representation in leadership positions within diplomatic services, significant gaps remain in understanding the full scope of this phenomenon across various contexts. For instance, while countries like Sweden and Rwanda showcase successful gender inclusivity, limited research examines the long-term sustainability of these practices and how they adapt over time as highlighted by Beaulier (2019) and Tseruashvili (2024). This Lack of longitudinal studies means that the evolution of gender dynamics within these diplomatic frameworks remains underexplored, potentially masking setbacks or challenges that may arise in the future. Additionally, while countries such as Canada and South Africa actively promote gender equality in their foreign policies, there is a need for more comparative analyses to understand the specific factors that lead to successful implementation in different political and cultural contexts. This comparative perspective could uncover best practices and highlight systemic barriers that hinder progress in other nations, particularly those with entrenched patriarchal structures.

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive correlational design, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. Data was collected from a sample of 175 respondents, purposively and randomly selected from a population of 310 officials in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi Kenya, who included senior officials, policymakers, Human Resources officials, Gender Equality Officers, Diplomatic Staff and other support staff at junior, middle and senior levels. Table 1 summarizes the study population, sample size and sampling techniques used.

Table 1: Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Category	Target population	Sample size	Sampling techniques
Ministry's Senior officials and policymakers	16	12	Purposive sampling
Ministry's Human Resources Department officials	10	9	Purposive sampling
Ministry's Gender Equality Officers	8	6	Purposive sampling
Ministry's Diplomatic Staff	19	15	Purposive sampling
Other support staff of the Ministry	257	133	Random sampling
Total	310	175	

Source: Primary Data (2024)

Data type, sources and Instruments

Both primary and secondary data sources were used to collect both qualitative and quantitative data, using researcher made questionnaires and an interview protocol, which enabled the researcher to interact with respondents physically and gaining in-depth insights to address the research questions. Secondary data from various documents, publications and electronic platforms was also used for in-depth analysis. The data collection instruments were tested for validity and reliability, with five university experts, whose feedback was crucial for identifying deficiencies and refining the research instruments. The results of validity test using the Content Validity Index (CVI = 0.9302) and Cronbach Alpha Coefficient ($\alpha = 0.889$) were all above the minimum indices of 0.75 suggesting that the instruments and the data collected were of adequate quality.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data was analyzed at both a descriptive and inferential level, employing frequency counts, percentage distributions for profile variables, means and standard deviations to assess the opinions of respondents on the extent of gender representation in leadership positions in Diplomatic Services within the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi Kenya. At the inferential level, the Pearson's Linear Correlation Coefficient (PLCC) assessed whether gender representation in leadership positions is important in improving Diplomatic Services delivery outputs within the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi Kenya. Content analysis was applied for qualitative data, distilling it into more concise and meaningful points of view. The analysis focused on identifiable patterns and common themes, which ultimately led to the identification of overarching themes related to the study variables. These findings were then utilized to support the insights obtained from the questionnaires, aiding in the development of conclusions and recommendations.

IV. RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Respondents Demographic Features

Table 1: Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage	Age group	Frequency	Percentage
Male	58	53.7	<18 years	20	18.5
Female	50	46.3	19-25	18	16.7
Total	108	100	26-30	9	8.3
Education Level	Frequency	Percentage	31-35	36	33.3
Bachelor's Degree	5	4.6	36+	25	23.1
Diploma	15	13.9	Total	108	100
Certificate	69	63.9			
Others	19	17.6			
Total	108	100			

Source: Primary data, (2024)

As per results in Table 2 male staff (53.7%) are slightly more than female staff (46.3%), suggesting a relative male dominance in diplomatic services.

Table 4.3 presents the age distribution of participants, showing 20 (18.5%) are below 18 years, 18 (16.7%) are in the 19-25 years category, 9 (8.3%) fall within the 26-30 age range, 36 (33.3%) are aged 31-35, and 25 (23.1%) are 36 years and older. The majority, comprising 36 (33.3%), belong to the 31–35 years age group, whose perspectives and experiences may heavily influence the study's insights regarding gender disparity and diplomatic services. Therefore, researchers should consider this age distribution, as the findings may predominantly reflect the views of them, potentially overlooking the unique challenges and insights of younger or older participants.

Table 4.4 illustrates the educational levels of participants, revealing that 5 (4.6%) hold a Bachelor's Degree, 15 (13.9%) possess a Diploma, 69 (63.9%) have a Certificate, and 19 (17.6%) fall into the others. A representation of 69 (63.9%), attained a certificate. This predominant educational background indicates that the insights gathered may be largely influenced by this education level, suggesting that the perspectives on gender disparity and diplomatic services might reflect the specific experiences and challenges faced by individuals at this educational level.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis of Gender Representation in Leadership Positions on Diplomatic Services of Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya

The responses from the participants regarding these questions are detailed in Table 4.5.

Table 4.2: Gender Representation in Leadership Positions on Diplomatic Services of Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya

Items	Mean	SD	Rank
Women hold a minority of leadership positions within the Ministry.	4.80	0.80	1
Gender diversity in leadership roles is essential for inclusive decision-making.	4.70	0.87	2
Policies to promote women's leadership are currently underdeveloped.	4.69	0.80	3
Female representation in top management has shown gradual improvement.	4.64	0.82	4
Leadership training programs are available for aspiring female leaders.	4.58	1.08	5
Mentorship initiatives exist to support women's advancement in leadership.	4.59	1.13	6
Gender representation targets are not consistently met in appointments.	4.57	1.23	7
Cultural biases influence the perception of women's capabilities in leadership.	4.59	1.29	8
Increased female leadership correlates with enhanced diplomatic effectiveness.	4.30	1.18	9
Stakeholder engagement is necessary to promote gender balance in leadership.	4.24	1.11	10
Average SD & Mean	4.57	1.03	

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

Table 4.6: Legend

Mean Range	Response	Interpretation
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree	Very Satisfactory
2.51 - 3.25	Agree	Satisfactory
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree	Unsatisfactory
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree	Very Unsatisfactory

Table 4.5 presents the findings on the Gender Representation in Leadership Positions on Diplomatic Services of Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya. The Table 4.5 provides mean scores, standard deviations (SD), and ranks for each item, offering insights into the participants' perceptions of various aspects related to peacekeeping operations. The discussion points out only the first five item ranking from 1 to 5 and these are presented in the paragraph below.

The mean score of 4.80 for the statement "Women hold a minority of leadership positions within the Ministry" indicates a strong consensus among participants that women are underrepresented in leadership roles within the Ministry. This item received the highest ranking, reflecting significant concern about gender disparity at the leadership level. The low standard deviation of 0.80 suggests that there is a general agreement on this issue, highlighting a critical area that requires attention and action to promote gender equity. With a mean score of 4.70, the statement "Gender diversity in leadership roles is essential for inclusive decision-making" reflects a robust agreement among participants regarding the importance of gender diversity for effective decision-making. The slightly higher standard deviation of 0.87 indicates some variability in responses, suggesting that while many recognize the benefits of diverse leadership, there may be differing opinions on how to achieve it. Nevertheless, the strong consensus on its importance underscores the need for policies that promote gender diversity in leadership.

The mean score of 4.69 for the statement "Policies to promote women's leadership are currently underdeveloped" indicates that participants largely agree that existing policies aimed at promoting women's leadership are insufficient. This concern is supported by a standard deviation of 0.80, which shows a consensus on the inadequacy of current efforts. This highlights the necessity for the Ministry to develop and implement more effective policies to support women's advancement in leadership roles.

With a mean score of 4.64, the statement "Female representation in top management has shown gradual improvement" suggests a general belief that there has been some progress in female representation at the top management level. However, the standard deviation of 0.82 indicates a moderate level of variability in responses. While many see positive change, others may feel that this improvement is too slow and insufficient, pointing to the need for continued efforts to accelerate gender equity in leadership.

The mean score of 4.58 for the statement "Leadership training programs are available for aspiring female leaders" indicates a positive perception of the availability of leadership training for women. However, the higher standard

deviation of 1.08 suggests that opinions on the effectiveness or accessibility of these programs may vary. This variability calls for further assessment of the current training initiatives to ensure they are adequately meeting the needs of aspiring female leaders. The proceeding section presents the Pearson's correlation of the study variables.

4.2 Relationship between the Gender Representation in Leadership Positions and Diplomatic Services

Table 4.7 shows a correlation between Gender Representation in Leadership Positions and Diplomatic Services

Correlations			
		Gender Representation in Leadership Positions	Diplomatic Services
Gender Representation in Leadership Positions	Pearson Correlation	1	.966**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	108	108
Diplomatic Services	Pearson Correlation	.966**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	108	108

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Primary Data (2024)

The correlation analysis presented in Table 4.7 reveals a strong positive relationship between gender representation in leadership positions and diplomatic services within the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.966. This indicates that as gender representation in leadership roles increases, there is a corresponding enhancement in the effectiveness of diplomatic services. The significance level of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$) demonstrates that this correlation is statistically significant, suggesting that the relationship observed is unlikely to have occurred by chance. The sample size is adequate to support the reliability of these findings, indicating robust evidence of the link between the two variables. The implication of this strong correlation is profound. It suggests that improving gender representation in leadership positions could lead to more effective diplomatic services. This outcome could stem from the diverse perspectives and decision-making styles that women bring to leadership roles, which can enhance problem-solving and innovation within the Ministry. Consequently, the Ministry may benefit from implementing policies and practices aimed at increasing female representation in leadership, thereby potentially improving overall diplomatic effectiveness. The next section discusses the interview proceedings between the researcher and the interviewee.

4.3 Interview Responses

The interview proceedings included in this write up is a sample of the responses from the respondents who responded to the interview guide.

Response 1; *The interviewee responded noting "The current state of gender representation in leadership positions within the Ministry is still unbalanced, with women holding a minority of these roles. While there have been some improvements, they recognize the need for more substantial progress." [KII, 2024]*

Response 2; *The interviewee revealed that "We have implemented various strategies, including targeted leadership training programs for women and mentorship initiatives. Additionally, we have integrated gender diversity goals into our hiring practices to ensure more equitable representation." [KII, 2024]*

Response 3; *The interviewee said "In my opinion, gender representation directly impacts the effectiveness of diplomatic services. Diverse leadership brings a range of perspectives that can enhance decision-making and foster more effective negotiations." [KII, 2024]*

Response 4; *The interviewee pronounced that "The retention rates of female staff compared to their male counterparts reveal a concerning trend. While many women start their careers here, fewer remain in senior positions over time, indicating a retention gap." [KII, 2024]*

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is a significant positive correlation between gender representation in leadership roles and the effectiveness of diplomatic services within the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya, as evidenced by a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.966. This suggests that an increase in gender representation in leadership positions is associated with improved effectiveness in diplomatic services. The significance level of 0.000 ($p <$

0.01) confirms that this correlation is statistically meaningful, indicating that the relationship observed is unlikely to be due to chance. The implications of this robust correlation are significant. It implies that enhancing gender representation in leadership roles could lead to more effective diplomatic services, likely due to the diverse perspectives and decision-making approaches women bring to leadership, which can improve problem-solving and innovation within the Ministry. Therefore, the Ministry may gain from adopting policies and practices that promote increased female representation in leadership roles, potentially enhancing overall diplomatic effectiveness. This is in line with World Economic Forum, 2021 who noted that similarly, in Rwanda, the integration of women into leadership roles has had a profound impact on the country's diplomatic effectiveness. Following the genocide in 1994, Rwanda adopted policies aimed at gender equity, resulting in women holding 61% of parliamentary seats as of 2021, the highest percentage in the world. This representation extends to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where women have taken on key leadership roles. Research indicates that Rwanda's diplomatic missions have benefitted from these diverse perspectives, particularly in advocating for gender issues on international platforms.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that gender representation in leadership positions has a significant effect on the effectiveness of diplomatic services within the Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs in Nairobi, Kenya. The study asserts that when women occupy leadership roles, the quality of diplomatic engagement improves. This enhancement is likely due to the diverse perspectives that women bring to decision-making processes, which can lead to more innovative and comprehensive approaches to international relations. Therefore, increasing the number of women in leadership positions is not merely a matter of equity; it is a strategic imperative that can enhance the overall effectiveness of the Ministry's diplomatic efforts. To realize these benefits, it is essential for the Ministry to implement targeted strategies that promote gender diversity in leadership roles.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that implementing comprehensive strategies enhances gender representation in leadership positions. It is essential to establish clear targets for female representation at various leadership levels and to actively promote women's candidacies for these roles. Furthermore, there is a need for mentorship programs that pair aspiring female leaders with experienced mentors to provide guidance and support. Training initiatives should also focus on leadership skills for women, equipping them with the tools necessary to excel in diplomatic positions. By fostering an inclusive culture that values diverse leadership styles, the Ministry can significantly enhance the effectiveness of its diplomatic services.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

This study makes significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge regarding gender dynamics within the diplomatic services of Kenya's Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs. It provides empirical evidence linking gender representation in leadership positions to the effectiveness of diplomatic services. This relationship underscores the importance of diverse leadership and highlights how gender-inclusive decision-making can enhance policy formulation and implementation.

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