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Sociodemographic Characteristics and Political Attitudes as Correlates of Women Voters' Electoral Participation in Counties in Kenya: The Case of 2013 Polls

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Abstract

This article examines sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicting women voters' participation in the 2013 general election in Kakamega County, Kenya. Survey data from 372 women voters were collected from this county, the second most populous among the 47 counties in Kenya. Using these data, a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression was conducted with 13 predictors and electoral participation as the dependent variable. In stage one, sociodemographic characteristics accounted for 27 % of the variation in women voters' electoral participation. In stage two, sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes contributed to 47 % of the variance in women voters' participation in the 2013 polls in Kakamega County. Significant predictors of women voters' electoral participation were: age, education, income, political knowledge, political interest, and sense of civic duty. The article makes recommendations for enhancing women's electoral participation through legal reforms as well as civic and voter education.

Keywords

Electoral Participation; Kakamega County; Kenya; Political Attitudes; Political Efficacy; Political Knowledge; Political Interest; Sociodemographic Characteristics; Women Voters

Introduction

Women's electoral participation is key to promoting gender equality in politics as envisioned in Social Development Goals, Kenya's Vision 2030 and the 2010 Constitution which all advocate for gender equality in political participation. Women's political participation helps to strengthen democracy, advance their agenda and promote their human development (Bouka et al., 2019). According to Jung (2010), the study of political participation entails three approaches. First, the sociological approach which focuses on sociodemographic and cultural factors of political participation. Second, the psychological approach studies political attitudes. Lastly, the communication approach focuses on the effect of news media use and interpersonal communication on political participation.

Most studies apply the sociological approach, yet political attitudes also play a critical role in political participation (Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Jung, 2010; Shaikh, 2014; Smith-Lovin, 1979; Verba et al., 1995). This methodological pitfall underpins the knowledge gap that this article seeks to fill. Verba et al. (1995) note that the influence of socioeconomic resources on political participation is moderated by political knowledge, interest, efficacy, information and trust, self-esteem, and party identification. Karuru (2001) adds that women's political participation in Kenya is inhibited by socioeconomic, cultural, and political factors. This shows the multi-faceted nature of electoral participation that underscores the need to examine it using multiple approaches.

Using a socio-psychological approach, this research aims to answer the following research questions: (1) What was the contribution of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes to women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County? (2) What sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes significantly predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan election?

In order for one to vote in general elections in Kenya he or she must be a registered voter. Although voter registration and voting in elections in Kenya is not compulsory, voter registration and turnout is high. For instance, more than 14 million (79.9%) out of 18 million registered voters in the 2013 Kenyan general election, women constituted 49.1 % (Independent and Electoral Boundaries Commission [IEBC], 2013). The national voter turnout in the election was 86 % (IEBC, 2014). By the end of 2013, there were 65 (18.6%) and 18 (26.5%) women legislators in the National Assembly and Senate respectively (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2013).

Women's voter turnout in elections in Kenya is higher than men's (Okello, 2010). However, their involvement in other forms of electoral participation in the country is low (Carter Centre, 2013; Kasomo, 2012; Mbeke, 2010; Okello, 2010). Furthermore, Kasomo (2012) notes that there is a dearth of research on women's political participation in Kenya. This article therefore

contributes to knowledge on women's grassroots electoral participation in Kenya. As Smith-Lovin (1979) notes, there is a rising academic interest in discovering determinants of political participation among individual citizens. This is because policy makers intend to discover mechanisms through which to promote citizens' political participation.

The first contribution of this article is to use a socio-psychological approach to study political participation. Through this approach, this article contributes to the understanding of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes inhibiting women's use of their large voting bloc to enhance their political participation and representation in Kakamega County. Therefore, the findings discussed in this article can be used by policymakers, civic and voter educators, and political strategists to implement measures to address sociodemographic characteristics and psychological barriers to women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County.

Departing from past studies confined to voting, this research considers both voting and election campaign activities. The gap between voting among males and females has narrowed with there being a higher voter turnout among women than men in elections in Kenya (Okello, 2010). By incorporating election campaign activities, this article expands research on electoral participation in Kenya. Thus, the findings contained in this article might be helpful for scholars who wish to gain a holistic understanding of women voters' grassroots electoral participation in Kenya. Most studies on electoral participation emanate from the developed democracies whose socioeconomic and political landscape differ from that in developing countries. This article therefore complements existing literature on electoral participation from the western world and the limited research in Kenya.

Women's electoral participation remains low despite improvements in their levels of education, employment opportunities and income (Shvedova, 2005). Besides voting, women's involvement in other forms of electoral participation in Kenya remains low (Carter Centre, 2013; Kasomo, 2012; Mbeke, 2010; Okello, 2010). This shows that besides sociodemographic characteristics such as education, employment and income, there are other predictors (for example, political attitudes) for women's electoral participation. This justifies the inclusion of various sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictors of women voters' electoral participation in Kenya's 2013 polls.

As Mbeke (2010) notes, inclusion of political attitudes strengthens regression modelling in electoral participation. Thus, the results presented in this article contribute to an understanding of how sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes concomitantly affect women voters' electoral participation in Kenya. This is important in assessing the reasons underpinning the failure

of affirmative actions towards women's electoral participation and representation in counties in Kenya.

This research focuses on the general election held on 4 March 2013. This was the first election under Kenya's 2010 Constitution and the tenth since the country's independence in 1963. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides for affirmative actions toward women's political representation, citizens' political and electoral rights. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) introduced a devolved government structure of 47 counties¹ divided into 290 constituencies and 1,450 County Assembly Wards (CAWs). Thus, women's political participation in Kenya must be understood within this devolved political structure (Bouka et al., 2019).

Kakamega County, the scope of this article, is located in Western Kenya. The county divided into northern, central and southern regions has 12 constituencies and 60 CAWs (County Government of Kakamega, 2013). It is the second most populous in Kenya after Nairobi County (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2010). Kakamega County is dominated by the Luhya tribe (KNBS 2010) whose voting bloc is not homogenous as it has 17 sub-tribes with diverse political formations. During the 2013 polls, women constituted 287, 325 (50.6%) of the 567, 460 voters in Kakamega County (IEBC, 2013). Kakamega County registered a voter turnout of 84% in this election (IEBC, 2014).

Literature review

Empirical evidence shows the influence of sociodemographic characteristics such as age, marital status, education, employment status, income, and residential location on women's electoral participation (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2011; Rai, 2011; Shojaei et al., 2010). Similar results have been reported in studies on Kenya (Kamau, 2013; Mbeke, 2010; Wafula, 2014; Wainaina, 2013).

In a ten-nation African study, Kuenzi and Lambright (2005) establishes age as a significant positive predictor of voter turnout as older people were more likely to vote than the youth. A research by Mbeke (2010) reveals low young women's participation in the 2007 Kenya polls in Nakuru district due to socioeconomic and patriarchal impediments. Patriarchy is a key cultural impediment to women's political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Karuru, 2001; Okello, 2010). Our article does not focus on patriarchal barriers to electoral participation. However, the impact of patriarchal values on women's marital responsibilities, economic status, political interest and efficacy is considered in this article.

¹ A county is one of the 47 administrative or political units of devolved government into which the Republic of Kenya is divided into, for example, Kakamega County. A county is divided into constituencies which are further sub-divided into county assembly wards, the lowest electoral unit in the country.

Marital status influences women's electoral participation. Drawing on ten case studies in Kenya, Kamau (2010) establishes that the majority of women were of the view that they would join politics only after their children have grown up or after they are widowed. The researcher notes that women participating in politics in Kenya were mainly those that were single/never married, widowed, or divorced. Through patriarchal values in Africa especially rural areas, the majority of women have their roles restricted to household chores. Hence, marital or family responsibilities limit the time available for women to engage in politics (Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Gallagher, 1981; Kamau, 2010; Mbeke, 2010; Norris, 2000; Verba et al., 1995).

Ndirangu (2018) notes that the customs of African communities restrict women's roles as homemakers and thus negate their political leadership roles. According to Coffé and Bolzendahl (2010), women are constrained from working on political campaigns due to their multiple roles in society. These roles affect both married and unmarried women. However, Verba et al. (1997) note that marriage increases interpersonal political discussions that can enhance political knowledge. It is likely that through such discussions, women in Africa's patriarchal societies will be inclined to the political viewpoints of men who are regarded as heads of families.

The level of education also predicts women's electoral participation (Karuru, 2001; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005). Education equips people with knowledge needed to understand politics and internalise political messages and it also affects employment opportunities which in turn affect income. Full-time employment consumes a lot of time (Verba et al., 1995) and when employment is combined with family responsibilities, it greatly impedes women's electoral participation.

Ndirangu (2018) argues that women's poverty caused by among others, their lack of direct control of factors of production such as land and finances limit their electoral participation. Kamau (2013) adds that this poverty constrains women in campaign financing and lowers political volunteerism among the youth (18-35-year-olds) in Kenya. Furthermore, poverty drives youth to engage in certain electoral activities in which they expect monetary rewards. These electoral activities include attending political rallies, distributing and displaying election campaign materials (Kamau, 2013).

Contrary to findings from western democracies, studies from Africa, Asia and Latin America show that the less educated and poor people vote more than those who are highly educated and rich (Isaksson et al., 2013). Such people are easy targets for voter bribery by politicians in developing countries (Stokes, 2005). Generally, the youth, less educated and poor participate less in political activities, albeit with slight differences across different studies (Verba et al., 1995).

Residential location also affects electoral participation. People who reside in politically active urban areas participate more in electoral activities than those in rural areas (Verba and Nie, 1972). Prior research indicates that in developing countries, voter turnout of rural dwellers is higher than that of urban residents. For instance, Rai (2011) shows that during the 2004 general election in India, rural women voted more than those in urban areas. Also, studies conducted by Kuenzi and Lambright in 2005 and 2011 revealed that rural residents vote more than urban residents in Africa. This may be attributed to three factors. First, the majority of rural residents are poor and poverty is a predictor of voter turnout in Africa. Second, most political parties in Africa get their support from rural regions. Third, rural residents are more likely than their urban counterparts to demonstrate partisanship and sense of civic duty.

In addition to sociodemographic characteristics, we consider political attitudes as predictors of women voters' electoral participation. Rai (2011) argues that political attitudes (for example, political knowledge, interest, efficacy, trust and partisanship, and sense of civic duty) affect women's electoral participation. According to Shojaei et al. (2010), women require relatively higher levels of political knowledge before they consider themselves suitable to participate in politics. This indicates the significance of both political knowledge and efficacy on women's electoral participation.

Research shows that women's acquisition of political knowledge shapes their political participation (Delli Carpini, 2000; Norris, 2000; Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011; Shojaei et al., 2010; Rai, 2011; Verba et al., 1995). At higher levels of political knowledge, women are more likely than men to vote, wear a political button or work for a political campaign (Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011). Similarly, Shojaei et al. (2010) say that women's acquisition of political knowledge influences their decision to donate to election campaigns. However, Jung (2010) argues that there is still limited academic research on how political knowledge enhances political participation. Therefore, inclusion of political knowledge in this article helps bridge this research gap.

Rai's (2011) study on the 2004 Indian general election reveals that women with higher political interest reported high voter turnout. Additionally, other scholars have shown that women participate less in election campaigns due to their low political interest (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Rai, 2011; Verba et al., 1995). Low level of women's election campaign participation is attributed to the focus on conventional forms of electoral activities such as voting, voter persuasion, displaying and distributing campaign materials, as well as donating to and working for political campaigns. However, women also engage in non-conventional political participation activities. According to Kaase (1990), unconventional political participation entails demonstrations of all kinds, engagement in new social movements and creative ways of articulating political interests.

Bouka et al. (2019) observe that women in Kenya have been involved in protest politics since the colonial era and the country has vibrant women's movements in East Africa. However, this has failed to translate into gender equality in Kenya's elective politics. Due to the researchers' financial and time constraints, our article confined itself to conventional political participation activities presented in the Appendix.

Related to political interest is the sense of civic duty which greatly drives women's electoral participation (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Carreras, 2018; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Okello, 2010). Women show higher conscientiousness than men and this drives them to dutifully perform tasks and fulfil their obligations such as voting (Carreras, 2018). Voting as a civic duty is often emphasized by the media, political leaders in campaigns and some religious institutions (Carreras, 2018). For instance, during the 2013 Kenyan polls, the media rallied people to register and cast their vote in order to fulfil their civic duty (Carter Centre, 2013).

Based on the 2004 Indian election, Rai (2011) established a positive correlation between political efficacy on the one hand and women's participation in election campaigns and voting on the other. In this article, political efficacy denotes a woman voter's belief in her understanding of politics, participation in political discussions and the responsiveness of politicians to the electorate. Political efficacy is categorized into two: (1) internal political efficacy concerned with an individual's belief that she can influence politics, and (2) external efficacy relating to an individual's belief that politicians actually care about one's opinions (Dalton, 2008).

Overall, women consider themselves less politically efficacious (Carreras, 2018; Shojaei et al. 2010; Wainaina, 2013). In particular, Shvedova (2005: 45) asserts that, "in some countries, women perceive politics as a 'dirty' game. This has shaken their confidence in their ability to participate in political processes". From a feminist standpoint, patriarchy makes women view politics as 'a man's game' (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

External political efficacy is related to political trust which reflects the belief that an individual has in the political system, politicians or political institutions (Dalton, 2008; Wainana, 2013). Studies on the relationship between individuals' political trust yield mixed results. For example, Kuenzi and Lambright's (2011) research shows a positive link between political trust and political participation in Africa. However, Beck (1997) argues that citizens who distrust the government may be motivated to participate more in politics in order to control new uncertainties instead of leaving it to professional political actors.

A study by Rosenstone and Hansen (1993) establishes that high political trust and political self-efficacy enhances electoral participation. One of the political institutions focused in this article is political parties to which citizens may be attached to. Partisanship predicts electoral participation

(Delli Carpini and Keeter, 1996; Finkel and Opp, 1991; Kuenzi and Lambright, 2005). However, as opposed to the developed democracies where political parties are ideologically driven, the Kenyan political party system is largely driven by ethnicity rather than ideology (Kamau, 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg et al., 2015).

Political party affiliation and partisanship in Kenya is largely driven by ethnicity (Kamau, 2013; Schulz-Herzenberg et al., 2015). People therefore get deeply attached to a political party because its leader is from their ethnic community (Commonwealth Observer Group, 2013; Kamau, 2013). Thus, Kuenzi and Lambright (2011: 760) take the view that: “elections and political parties in Africa differ considerably from those in the advanced industrial democracies.”

In spite of the foregoing concerns, Kuenzi and Lambright’s (2011) ten-nation African study found that partisanship predicts voting. Another shortcoming of political parties in Africa is discussed by Ndirangu (2018) who argues that Kenyan politics are associated with masculinity which implies “a men only affair”. This makes men dominate the political parties which are one of the major avenues through which women can enter elective politics.

Partisanship makes people motivated to seek information that supports their political inclinations (Finkel and Opp, 1991). This is what is known as ‘selective exposure’ and it denies the audience a chance to learn from news media’s diverse issues and challenging opinions (Kim, 2013). The information that partisan voters would seek pertain to their political parties, candidates and manifestos. This might deepen their partisanship and raise their voter turnout for parties or candidates they are affiliated with (Finkel and Opp, 1991). Based on the literature review, this article envisages sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictors of women voters’ electoral participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County.

Theoretical framework

This article utilizes civic voluntarism model and feminist theory to identify and explain sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes shaping women’s electoral participation. Civic voluntarism model identifies three key determinants to political participation: socioeconomic resources, psychological resources and “recruitment networks” (Verba et al., 1995). According to Verba et al. (1995), socioeconomic resources such as the level of education and income facilitate political participation

Psychological resources covered in civic voluntarism model and which predict electoral participation are: political knowledge, interest and efficacy. Recruitment networks used to mobilize people politically entail one’s affiliation with voluntary organizations (such as political parties) or workplace communities (Verba et al. 1995). In summary, Verba et al. (1995: 354) notes that, “interest, information, efficacy, and partisan intensity provide the desire, knowledge and self-

assurance that impel people to be engaged by politics. But time, money, and skills provide the wherewithal without which engagement is meaningless.”

Feminist theory recognizes socioeconomic, cultural and political factors as impediments to women’s political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006). These factors are consistent with civic voluntarism which shows socioeconomic factors as deterring women’s electoral participation. In addition, cultural factors impact on women’s political attitudes such as political interest, efficacy and trust which inhibit their electoral participation.

Operationalisation of variables

In this article, the dependent variable is electoral participation which denotes women voters’ engagement in eight non-professional, legal and voluntary political activities (see Appendix) in the 2013 Kenyan polls general election in Kakamega County. A ‘yes’ response to participating in a particular activity was coded as ‘1’ while a ‘no’ response was coded as zero (0). *Electoral participation* is measured through an electoral participation index computed based on a summation of the ‘yes’ responses. This index values range from zero (0) for not participating in any political activity to eight (8) for participation in all the eight activities.

This article considers sociodemographic characteristics as independent variables. Seven sociodemographic characteristics based on the reference date of the election (March 4, 2013) were measured. *Age* is measured based on a respondent’s number of years lived as of 4 March 2013 since date of birth using the categories (see Appendix). *Marital status* is measured by a respondent’s status of her marriage as at 4 March 2013. The Appendix presents categories used in measuring this variable.

Level of education is measured based on the highest level of formal schooling completed by a respondent as at 4 March 2013. For *employment status*, a respondent’s main mode of employment was used. *Income for self* is measured on the basis of the approximate 2013 individual respondent’s monthly income (in Kenya Shillings). For *household wealth status*, the researchers used the approximate 2013 monthly income (in Kenya Shillings) for a respondent and her spouse/partner or parents (if single). The categories used to measure each of these four sociodemographic variables are presented in the Appendix. *Residential location* of a respondent is measured as either rural or urban as considered in Kakamega County Development Profile (2013).

Six political attitudes were considered as predictors in this article. *Political knowledge* is measured based on a woman voter’s scores of correct answers to six open-ended questions pertaining to the 2013 Kenyan polls (see Appendix). Correct answers were coded as “1” while incorrect answers, Don’t Know (DK) and No Response (NR) answers were all coded as “0”.

Correct answers to the six political knowledge questions were summed up to yield a political knowledge index with scores ranging from zero (0) to six (6).

Political interest is measured by a respondent's indication of her level of interest in politics in the three months prior to the 4 March 2013 general election based on a four-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all interested) to 4 (very interested) (see Appendix). *Sense of civic duty* is operationalized as a respondent's agreement or disagreement regarding her decision to participate in politics based on a five-point scale (1=Strongly disagree to 5=Strongly agree) (see Appendix).

Political efficacy is measured base on an additive scale based on a respondent's agreement or disagreement with four political efficacy statements (see Appendix) based on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). *Political trust* is derived from an additive scale of a female voter's indication of her level of trust in eight political institutions (see Appendix) within the last three months to the 4 March 2013 polls using a three-point scale ranging from 1(distrust) to 3 (trust). Lastly, *partisanship* is measured by a respondent's strength of loyalty to a political party she identified with during the 2013 Kenyan polls based on a three-point scale ranging from 1 (not so strong) to 3 (very strong) (see Appendix).

Methodology

The researchers adopted a descriptive survey design as it saves on time and money in data collection from a large population. The sample size for this study was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = desired sample size

N = the finite size of the population

e =maximum acceptable margin error as determined by the researcher

1= a theoretical or statistical constant

The required sample size considering a 5% margin error and given 287, 325 registered women voters was computed as follows:

$$n = \frac{287,325}{1+287,325(0.05)^2} = 400$$

This study therefore sampled 400 women registered as voters for the 2013 general election in Kakamega County. Multi-stage sampling technique was employed to select these women voters from two constituencies drawn from each of the three regions of Kakamega County, namely, the northern, central and southern regions.

Data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire and analysed by means of SPSS Version 21.0. Respondents' profile by sociodemographic characteristics and political

attitudes were examined using univariate data analysis based on descriptive statistics. The study model was developed based on a two-stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis. In stage one, sociodemographic characteristics were added to the model while political attitudes were added in stage two. This method was selected for it allows measurement of the effect of multiple predictors on the dependent variable. The data was presented using tables.

Study model

The prediction equation for the regression results was specified as follows:

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1^{AG} + \beta_2^{MS} + \beta_3^{ED} + \beta_4^{ES} + \beta_5^{IN} + \beta_6^{HW} + \beta_7^{RL} + \beta_8^{PK} + \beta_9^{PIT} + \beta_{10}^{SC} + \beta_{11}^{PE} + \beta_{12}^{PT} + \beta_{13}^{PA} + \varepsilon_1$$

In this equation, EP denotes overall electoral participation, β_0 represents intercept which is the expected mean value of the outcome variable (Y) when all predictors (X) are equal to 0. β_{1-13} which indicates regression coefficients that show a positive or negative correlation between X and Y. The predictors in this equation are: (1) age, (2) marital status, (3) level of education, (4) employment status, (5) monthly income for self, (6) household wealth status, (7) residential location, (8) political knowledge, (9) political interest, (10) sense of civic duty, (11) political efficacy, (12) political trust, and (13) partisanship. ε_1 denotes the margin of error (error term) in the study model.

Results

Out of 400 questionnaires administered in this study, 372 (93 %) were returned and used for data analysis. This shows a high response rate.

Respondents' profile

The minimum age requirement for registering as a voter in Kenya is 18 years. There is no upper limit on who is not eligible to vote in the country. Table 1 shows that 72.1 % of the respondents were aged 18-50 years, 74.8 % were married, divorced, separated and widowed, 62.7 % had primary school and no formal education, and 61.8 % were employed. A total of 41.9 % of participants were earning approximately Kshs. 5,000 and below per month and 65.9 % of the respondents from low wealth status households. A total of 41.7 % and 58.3 % of participants were residing in rural and urban areas respectively.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by sociodemographic characteristics

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Age (years)	18–35	162	43.5
	36–50	106	28.5
	51+	104	28.0
Marital status	Single	92	24.7
	Married	222	59.7
	Separated, divorced and widowed	56	15.1
	NR	2	0.5
Level of education	None	72	19.4
	Primary school	161	43.3
	Secondary school	71	19.1
	Tertiary and university education	66	17.7
	NR	2	0.5
Employment status	Unemployed	142	38.2
	Full-time employment	148	39.8
	Part-time wage employment	82	22.0
Monthly income (Kshs.)	5,000 and below	156	41.9
	5,001–10,000	88	23.7
	10,001 and above	104	28.0
	DK/NR	24	6.4
Household wealth status	Low	103	32.8
	Medium	104	33.2
	High	18	5.7
	DK/NR	89	28.3
Residence	Rural	155	41.7
	Urban	217	58.3

Source: Authors.

Table 2 reveals that the political attitudes that were highly and least rated were sense of civic duty ($M=4.07$, $SD=0.72$) and partisanship ($M=1.73$, $SD=0.81$) respectively. The level of women voters' electoral participation had a mean of 3.53 ($SD=2.34$).

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by political variables

<i>Characteristics</i>	<i>Label</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Political attitudes	Sense of civic duty	372	4.07	0.72
	Political knowledge	372	3.06	1.81
	Political efficacy*	371	2.92	0.62
	Political interest	372	2.38	1.03
	Political trust	372	1.68	0.50
	Partisanship**	268	1.73	0.81
Electoral participation	Electoral participation activities	372	3.53	2.34

*One missing entry.

** Applies to those affiliated to a particular political party.

Source: Authors.

Sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicting women voters' electoral participation

Prior to regression analysis, the researchers examined the correlation between each of the predictors and electoral participation. Table 3 indicates that the p-values for the correlation between each of the sociodemographic characteristics and electoral participation are below the study's chosen significance level ($\alpha = .05$). This confirms that each of the sociodemographic characteristics is correlated to women voters' electoral participation.

Table 3. Chi-square test results for the relationship between sociodemographic characteristics and electoral participation of women voters

<i>Sociodemographic characteristics</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>X²</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Age	372	179.658a	6	.000
Marital status	370	76.044a	6	.000
Level of education	372	75.233a	12	.000
Employment status	372	30.501a	6	.000
Monthly income	372	38.883a	9	.000
Household wealth status	314	36.087	9	.000
Residential location	372	10.963a	3	.012

Source: Authors.

From Table 4, it can be observed that political interest ($r = .66, p < .001$) and political knowledge ($r = .63, p < .001$) each strongly positively correlated with electoral participation. There was a low positive correlation between partisanship ($r = .18, p < .001$), sense of civic duty ($r = .24, p < .001$) and political trust ($r = .29, p < .001$) and electoral participation. Political efficacy and electoral participation were negatively lowly correlated ($r = -0.20, p < .001$).

Table 4: Correlation between political attitudes and electoral participation

No.	Variables	Test results		
			Political knowledge	Electoral participation
1a	Political knowledge	Pearson Correlation	1	0.63**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	372	372
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.63**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political interest	Electoral participation
1b	Political interest	Pearson Correlation	1	0.66**
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
		N	343	372
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.66**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Sense of civic duty	Electoral participation
1c	Sense of civic duty	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	351	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.24**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political efficacy	Electoral participation
1d	Political efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	372	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	-0.20**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
			Political trust	Electoral participation
1e	Political trust	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	372	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.29**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372
1f	Partisanship	Pearson Correlation	1	
		Sig. (2-tailed)		
		N	252	
	Electoral participation	Pearson Correlation	0.18**	1
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
		N	372	372

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

Source: Authors.

Tables 5 and 6 show that in Model 1, sociodemographic characteristics contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(7, 141) = 8.74, p < .001$ and accounted for 27% ($\Delta R^2 = .27$) of the variance in respondents' electoral participation. This implies that sociodemographic characteristics predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County. This is consistent with prior studies that have established that sociodemographic characteristics predict electoral participation in Kenya (Kamau, 2013; Karuru, 2001; Mbeke, 2010; Wafula, 2014; Wainaina, 2013). It is also in harmony with civic voluntarism model and feminist theory. Civic voluntarism model identifies socioeconomic resources as determinants of political participation (Verba et al., 1995). Feminist theory identifies socioeconomic factors as determinants of women's political participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

As shown in Tables 5 and 6, Model 2 with sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes as predictor variables contributed significantly to the regression model, $F(13, 135) = 11.09, p < .001$ and accounted for 47% ($\Delta R^2 = .47$) of the variance in respondents' electoral participation. This demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predicted women voters' participation in the 2013 Kenyan polls in Kakamega County. These results are supported by civic voluntarism model which demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predict electoral participation (Verba et al., 1995). Feminist theory also identifies sociodemographic characteristics and political factors (in this article, political attitudes) as determinants to women's electoral participation (Gallagher, 1981; Ndirangu, 2018; Seiler, 2006).

Table 5. Model summary for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

<i>Model</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R square</i> <i>R²</i>	<i>Adjusted R square</i> ΔR^2	<i>Std. Error of the Estimate</i>
1	0.55 ^a	.30	0.27	0.92
2	0.72 ^b	.52	0.47	0.78

a. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location

b. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location, political knowledge, political interest, sense of civic duty, political efficacy, political trust, partisanship

c. *Dependent variable:* Electoral participation

Source: Authors.

The difference between adjusted R^2 values for Models 1 and 2 in Table 5 revealed a positive change ($\Delta R^2 = .20$). Therefore, after controlling for sociodemographic characteristics, political attitudes accounted for 20% of the variance in women voters' electoral participation. This is consistent with past studies which have found that political attitudes predict women's electoral

participation (Bennet and Bennet, 1989; Coffé and Bolzendahl, 2010; Okello, 2010; Ondercin and Jones-White, 2011; Rai, 2011; Shoajei et al. 2010; Wainaina, 2013).

Table 6. ANOVA results for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

Model		Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.*
1	Regression	51.70	7	7.39	8.74	0.000 ^b
	Residual	119.17	141	0.85		
	Total	170.87	148			
2	Regression	88.25	13	6.79	11.09	0.000 ^c
	Residual	82.62	135	0.61		
	Total	170.872	148			

a. *Dependent variable:* Electoral participation

b. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location

c. *Predictors:* (Constant), Age, marital status, level of education, employment status, income, household wealth status, residential location, political knowledge, political interest, sense of civic duty, political efficacy, political trust, partisanship

*P ≤ .05 shows a significant correlation.

Source: Authors.

Table 7 shows regression coefficients and multicollinearity test values for Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). Newbert (2008) notes that where there is no collinearity, Tolerance value should not be less than 0.10 and VIF should not be more than 10. The values of Tolerance and VIF shown in Table 5 meet this threshold for the models under consideration.

Table 7. Regression coefficients for the prediction of electoral participation from sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.*	Tolerance	VIF
		B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	3.64	0.53		6.86	0.000		
	Age	-1.05	0.18	-0.48	-5.72	0.000	0.733	1.364
	Marital status	0.08	0.18	0.03	0.42	0.677	0.793	1.261
	Level of education	-0.28	0.13	-0.22	-2.18	0.031	0.592	1.690
	Employment status	0.14	0.19	0.06	0.72	0.471	0.965	1.036
	Income	0.62	0.25	0.26	2.53	0.012	0.557	1.796
	Household wealth status	0.14	0.15	0.08	0.94	0.352	0.621	1.611
	Residential location	0.23	0.16	0.11	1.43	0.154	0.920	1.087
2	(Constant)	2.44	1.1		2.22	0.028		
	Age	-0.49	0.19	-0.22	-2.62	0.010	0.536	1.864
	Marital status	0.14	0.15	0.06	0.91	0.363	0.777	1.267
	Level of education	-0.22	0.11	-0.17	-2.01	0.047	0.540	1.852

Employment status	0.10	0.16	0.04	0.58	0.565	0.919	1.088
Income	0.49	0.21	0.20	2.29	0.023	0.536	1.867
Household wealth status	0.07	0.13	0.04	0.53	0.595	0.600	1.667
Residential location	0.16	0.14	0.08	1.19	0.235	0.892	1.121
Political knowledge	0.70	0.16	0.33	4.38	0.000	0.442	2.261
Political interest	0.64	0.18	0.29	3.61	0.000	0.434	2.302
Sense of civic duty	-0.41	0.20	-0.13	-2.01	0.046	0.781	1.281
Political efficacy	-0.25	0.25	-0.06	-0.99	0.323	0.840	1.191
Political trust	-0.24	0.47	-0.03	-0.50	0.617	0.942	1.061
Partisanship	0.20	0.14	0.09	1.46	0.147	0.897	1.114

Dependent variable: Electoral participation

* $P \leq .05$ shows a significant correlation.

Source: Authors.

In Model 1, Table 7 indicates that significant sociodemographic predictors of electoral participation were: age ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < .001$), level of education ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .031$) and income ($\beta = .26$, $p = .012$). Model 2 shows significant predictors of electoral participation were: age ($\beta = -0.22$, $p = .010$), level of education ($\beta = -0.17$, $p = .047$), income ($\beta = .20$, $p = .023$), political knowledge ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$), political interest ($\beta = .29$, $p < .001$), and sense of civic duty ($\beta = -0.13$, $p = .046$). The best fitting regression model for predicting the influence of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes on women voters' electoral participation would be the linear combination of the constant, age, level of education, income, political knowledge and interest, and sense of civic duty. This regression for Model 2 is thus simplified as follows:

$$EP = 2.44 - 0.22AG - 0.17ED + 0.20IN + 0.33PK + 0.29PIT - 0.13SC$$

Limitations of the study

The findings, conclusion and recommendations of this article have to be seen in light of some limitations. First, this article focuses on the 2013 general election which represents the 2007-2013 electoral cycle in Kenya. Second, this article focuses on one county (Kakamega County) in Kenya. Therefore, its findings may not be generalised to other elections and counties in Kenya. Third, the research did not consider the correlation between sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes. Finally, the researchers did not assess causal relationships between political attitudes and electoral participation. Examining more than one election in all counties in Kenya, the correlation between sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes, and causal relationships between political attitudes and electoral participation could have augmented the

research findings. However, given the wide range of variables considered in this article and limited time and financial resources, this could have made the research unmanageable.

The research limitations did not impact on the overall goal of this article of assessing sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes influencing women voters' electoral participation. By focusing on the first general election after the implementation of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya, this article is instrumental in determining the effect of the affirmative actions towards women's electoral participation implemented after this Constitution. Multiple regression analysis adopted in this article helped to statistically manipulate the multiple predictor variables on overall electoral participation of women voters.

Conclusion and recommendations

In conformity with outcomes from past studies, this research demonstrates that sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes predict women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County. Sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes accounted for 47 % of the variation in women voters' electoral participation. Age, level of education, income, political knowledge, political interest and sense of civic duty were the significant predictors of women voters' electoral participation in Kakamega County during the 2013 Kenyan polls.

The significant role of sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes has important implications for political actors in Kakamega County interested in promoting women's electoral participation. In order to adequately promote women's electoral participation, there is need to address sociodemographic characteristics impeding their electoral participation consistent with feminist theory. In turn this and other measures might enhance women's political attitudes and ultimately electoral participation. This article recognises that to improve women's sociodemographic characteristics and change their political attitudes is a long-term endeavour. Thus, the researchers make four recommendations for the short term and long term.

First, the Parliament of Kenya should enact laws that enforce the provision on gender equality in elective politics at Senate and National Assembly levels as articulated in Article 81(b)² of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya. These legal reforms will help bridge the gender gap in elective politics in the short-term. Provisions under Article 177³ of the 2010 Constitution of Kenya has a mechanism for realising this principle of gender equality for County Assemblies.

² Article 81(b) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) states that "not more than two-thirds of the members of elective public bodies shall be of the same gender" (p. 38).

³ Article 177(1)(b) provides for the creation of special seats to ensure the fulfillment of Article 81(b) for the membership of the county assembly. Articles 177(2) and 177(3) note that after the declaration of election results, the electoral body nominates members to these special seats. This nomination is based on political party lists submitted

Second, there is need for giving equal opportunities for both women and men during election campaigns by enacting campaign financing and spending law, providing state funding for election campaigning and access to the state news media.

Third, comprehensive gender-sensitive civic and voter education be incorporated in the educational curricula right from primary schools (basic level of education) to university education. Such education can help in shaping deficiencies in women's political knowledge and attitudes. Lastly, civic and voter education with specific focus on women should be offered throughout Kenya's five-year electoral cycle.

Future research

A research similar to the current one but focusing on all counties in Kenya could be conducted based on future general elections in the country and applying various linear and multivariate statistical analyses. The researchers also recommend further research on the relationship between women's sociodemographic characteristics and political attitudes. Future studies can also focus on the causal relationships between political attitudes and women's electoral participation both as voters and candidates.

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Appendix

Description of study variables

No.	Variable	Description
1	Electoral participation	The study focused on the following eight conventional electoral participation activities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Persuading people to vote for or against candidates and political parties ii. Donating and buying promotional materials to support candidates and political parties iii. Attending political meetings or rallies iv. Distributing election campaign literature v. Displaying election campaign materials vi. Political volunteerism vii. Discursive participation through interpersonal political discussions about election campaign issues viii. Voting
2	Age	Each respondent was asked to select her age as at March 4, 2013 from the following categories: 1=18-25 years; 2=26-30 years; 3=31-35 years; 4=36-40 years; 5=41-45 years; 6=46-50 years; 7=51 years and above.
3	Marital status	Each participant was asked to state her marital status of her marriage as at 4 March 2013 categorized as follows: 1=single; 2=married and 3=separated; 4= Divorced; and 5=Widowed.
4	Level of education	A respondent's indication of her highest level of formal schooling completed as at 4 March 2013 categorised as follows: 1=none; 2=primary school; 3=secondary school; and 4=tertiary and university education. Tertiary and university education encompass post-secondary qualifications at certificate, diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
5	Employment status	A participant's main mode of employment based on the following categories: 1=unemployed; 2=full-time employment (working a minimum of eight hours per day); and 3=part-time employment (working below eight hours per day).

6	Income for self	Each respondent was asked to select her monthly income (after taxes) as at March 4, 2013 based on their 2013 earnings (in Kenya Shillings) under the following options: 1=low (Kshs. 5,000 and below); 2=medium (Kshs. 5,001-10,000); and 3=high (Kshs.10, 001 and above).
7	Household wealth status	Each respondent was asked to select the monthly income (after taxes) for herself and spouse/partner if married or parents if single as at March 4, 2013 based on 2013 earnings (in Kenya Shillings) under the following options: 1=low (Kshs. 20, 000 and below); 2=medium (Kshs. 20,001-50,000); and 3=high (Kshs. 50,001 and above).
8	Residential location	A respondent's place of residence in Kenya categorised as either 1=Rural or 2=Urban during three months preceding the 4 March 2013 general election in Kenya
9	Partisanship	Question asked to measure this variable: At the time the 2013 Kenyan polls were held, how strong was your support for the political party of choice? (Options given were not so strong, strong and very strong).
10	Political efficacy	Question asked to measure this variable: For the 2013 Kenyan polls, please tell me for each statement below if you: strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree (neutral), agree or strongly agree: i. Sometimes politics and government seem so complicated that a person like me can't really understand what is going on. ii. When political issues or problems are being discussed I usually have something to say. iii. Elected political leaders and government officials care a lot about what we think about new laws, policies and projects. iv. In this country, a few people have all the political power and the rest of us have nothing to say.
11	Political interest	Question asked to measure this variable: How interested [not at all interested, not very interested, fairly interested or very interested] in politics and public affairs were you three months prior to the 4 March 2013 Kenyan polls?
12	Political knowledge	Question asked to measure this variable: i. What is the official document that a citizen should present to the electoral clerk when registering as a voter in Kenya? (Correct answer is a valid National ID or Kenyan passport) ii. What percentage of valid votes cast in a general election in Kenya must a presidential candidate get in order to be declared a winner? (Over 50% of the votes cast). iii. How many County Assembly Wards make up Kakamega County? (Correct answer is 60 CAWs). iv. Which political coalition promised free maternity services in its election campaign manifesto in the Kenya's 2013 general election? v. What is the name of the female presidential candidate who participated in the 4 March 2013 Kenya general election? vi. What is the name of the presidential candidate who vied on the Coalition for Reforms and Democracy (CORD) ticket in the 4 March 2013 general election in Kenya?
13	Political	Question asked to measure this variable:

	trust	<p>Please tell me on a scale of 1 to 3 (where 1= Distrust and 3= Trust) how much trust you had in each one of them three months before the March 4, 2013 Kenya general election in Kenya.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Mass media ii. National government iii. Local government iv. National Assembly v. Judiciary vi. IEBC vii. Political parties viii. Civil Society Organizations
14	Sense of civic duty	<p>Question asked to measure this variable: 'It is the duty of every citizen to participate in political attitudes during elections in Kenya so as to fulfil her constitutional rights'. Please tell me if you strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree or strongly agree with the above statement in regard to your own motivation for voting in the March 4, 2013 general election in Kenya.</p>