

The Impact of Education on Women Property Inheritance and Peaceful Coexistence among Families: A Case of Women in Nyamira North Sub-County in Nyamira County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the relationship between women property inheritance and peaceful coexistence among families in Nyamira North Sub-County. A descriptive research design was used for this study. The study's target population was 40,446 households in Nyamira North Sub-County. A sample size of 396 respondents was used. To select the respondents, this study employed simple random sampling for households and purposive sampling to select key informants. Questionnaires were distributed to households while Interviews were conducted with chiefs and village elders. The results showed a significant positive relationship (Pearson's $r = 0.929$, $p = 0.000 < 0.01$) between education level and property inheritance. Education was a vital element in influencing peaceful coexistence and there was need to strengthen mechanisms to enhance education levels of women that can help them gain a deeper understanding of legal frameworks governing property rights. Also increasing legal education, and strengthening community dialogue on gender equality to enhance fair inheritance practices and peaceful coexistence among families.

Keywords: Education level, Property inheritance, Peaceful coexistence

INTRODUCTION

In many societies, the practice of property inheritance is deeply interwoven with complex social and cultural dynamics. It often serves as a potent source of both unity and discord within communities. The ability of women to inherit property is a critical factor in achieving such harmonious coexistence. Equitable property distribution among women can empower them economically, enhance their participation in decision-making processes, and contribute to a more stable and gender-equitable social fabric. This, in turn, has the potential to reduce tensions and conflicts related to property disputes and promote a sense of unity and cohesion within the community (Ezeilo, 2021).

Property inheritance practices are crucial for empowering women who face challenges including gender bias leading to rising conflicts and hindering progress toward gender equality. In many cases, property inheritance practices perpetuate inequalities and lead to social divisions within the community (Fafchamps and Quisumbing, 2019). In Kenya, grievances about succession and inheritance are the most prevalent among households. A report by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2022) stated that 31 % of households in rural areas experienced grievances related to succession and inheritance compared to 20% in urban areas.

In Nyamira County 47.1 % of households reported grievances on property inheritance more especially land. Women in Nyamira North Sub-County like many other women in Africa's customary tenure systems, generally possess only secondary or usage rights to their husband's land. According to Mbula (2023), women in Nyamira North Sub-County continue to bear the brunt of land conflicts, with some paying a heavy price for fighting for what they believe should rightfully belong to them. The government has taken various measures to address the negative effects of customary inheritance in various ways; amending laws to ensure equal inheritance rights for both genders, embracing Alternative Dispute Resolution, establishing the Environment and Land Court at

Nyamira High Court, and recognizing traditional dispute resolution mechanisms (ICJ, 2022). Despite these efforts there have been rising cases of property inheritance conflicts in Nyamira North Sub- County thus affecting peace and cohesion within that community. Therefore, the study sought to evaluate the The impact of education on women property inheritance and peaceful Coexistence among families in Nyamira North Sub-County.

Objective of the Study

(i) tTo examine how education level can enhance peaceful coexistence among families in Nyamira North Sub-County.

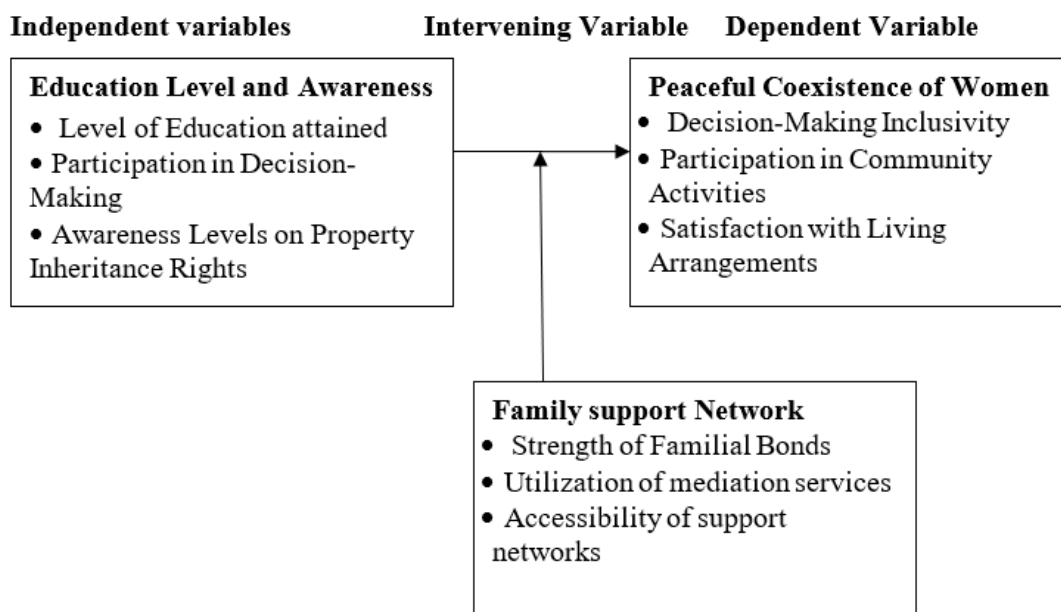
Research Questions

(i) How can education level enhance women property inheritance and peaceful coexistence among families in Nyamira North Sub-County?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework links independent variables to dependent variables. The study aims to examine the independent variables are education level, power dynamics, patriarchy, and proposed strategies and the dependent variable of peaceful coexistence among families. A family support network is the intervening variable.



The conceptual framework postulates that education level and awareness are critical for enhancing peaceful coexistence among families by promoting women participation in decision-making and awareness of their property inheritance rights. Nevertheless, the influence of these factors is strengthened by the family support network, which helps mediate potential conflicts and ensures that women's rights are recognized, leading to a harmonious family environment.

Empirical Review

According to Harari (2018), higher education equips women with the knowledge and confidence to assert their property inheritance rights effectively. Through education, women gain a deeper understanding of legal frameworks governing property rights, empowering them to navigate complex inheritance processes with clarity and assertiveness. A study by Yasu (2018) empirically investigated the influence of education by utilizing a unique dataset compiled by an internationally recognized NGO, Kameran, on representative data of the marginalized women in the eastern city of Diyarbakır in Turkey. The study indicated that a higher level of education is significantly and positively associated with the likelihood of claiming to obtain equal inheritance.

In their longitudinal study conducted in Australia, O'Connor and Brown (2020) employed a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between educational attainment and marital stability among women. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between higher levels of education and lower divorce rates.

In Nigeria, Adekunle, Afolabi and Oloyede. (2020) conducted a cross-sectional survey to investigate the impact of women's educational achievements on household decision-making processes. The findings revealed that educated women wielded more decision-making authority within their households, particularly in areas related to health, finances, and children's education.

Theoretical Review

This study was guided by Social exchange theory. Social exchange theory was founded by George Homans (Homans, 1961) and most comprehensively developed by John W. Thibaut, Harold H Kelly, Peter M. Blau, Richard M. Emerson, and Claude Lévi-Strauss.

Social exchange theory posits that individuals, consciously or unconsciously, make decisions based on evaluating the costs and rewards associated with a relationship or action, aiming to maximize personal benefits (Hsieh, Hughes and Schult,2019). When risks surpass rewards, people exit the connection. The purpose of this deal was to maximize benefits and minimize costs.

Giving and taking is common in relationships, but it doesn't mean equality. Social exchange means assessing the advantages and costs of each connection decides whether we retain it. Education level can promote property inheritance rights and peaceful coexistence among women. Individuals with higher educational levels are more likely to engage in positive social exchanges. Education can enhance one's understanding of rights and contribute to peaceful coexistence by fostering mutual respect and cooperation.

METHODS

Procedure

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Descriptive research is a research method used to try and determine the characteristics of a population or particular phenomenon. Descriptive research design uses both qualitative research and quantitative data to gather information to make accurate predictions about a particular problem or hypothesis(Sirisilla,2023).

Participants

The study targeted 40,446 households in Nyamira North Sub-County (KNBS,2019) The households comprised both men and women. In the study, 70% of the households were women while 30 % were men. Households were chosen as the unit of analysis because households represent the primary social unit where property inheritance dynamics play out, influencing interpersonal relationships, decision-making processes, and resource allocation among family members. A sample size of 396 Respondents was determined by Yamane (1967). Stratified random sampling was used to select households while purposive sampling was used to select key informants.

Apparatus

This study utilized a questionnaire and key informant interview data collection method. The researcher collected both qualitative and Quantitative data. Quantitative data was collected through structured questionnaires administered to households in Nyamira North Sub-County. Qualitative data was collected through key informant interviews, allowing participants to share their experiences and perspectives on property inheritance and peaceful coexistence. The data was then analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive analysis was done using frequencies, percentages means and standard deviations to describe the basic characteristics of the population. Inferential statistics involved the use of Pearson's Product Moment correlation and multiple regression models to determine the nature of the relationship between the variables. Qualitative data from key informant interviews were thematically analysed as per the objectives of the study. The analysed data was presented in tables.

Table 1 :Educational Level

Education Level	Frequency	Per cent
No formal education	19	5
Primary school	51	14
Secondary school	169	47
Tertiary education	81	23
University education	40	11
Total	360	100

Source: (Researcher,2024)

The survey found that 5% of the participants had no formal education, 14% had basic education, 47% had secondary education, 23% had tertiary education, and 11% had university education.

Table 2:Education level and peaceful coexistence among families

Statement	n	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
My level of education has significantly contributed to my understanding of property inheritance rights.	360	44%	33%	0%	17%	6%	3.94	1.270
Higher education level among family members promote peaceful coexistence.	360	42%	44%	0%	9%	6%	4.08	1.122
Educated individuals in my family are more involved in decision-making processes	360	3 %	11%	0%	47%	39%	1.91	1.033
My education has empowered me to actively participate in property-related decisions	360	6%	16%	0%	33%	56%	1.73	1.104
I am aware of my legal rights regarding property inheritance due to my education.	360	33%	53%	0%	8%	6%	3.99	1.087

Source: (Researcher,2024)

RESULTS

Response Rate

The researcher issued all 396 questionnaires to the field out of which 360 were successfully filled and returned for analyses thus giving the study a 91% response rate.

Education level and women's property inheritance and peaceful coexistence among families

The study examined the relationship between education level and peaceful coexistence among families, revealing several key insights. The educational attainment of respondents varied, with 47% having completed secondary school and 23% having pursued tertiary education. Analysis showed that education significantly contributes to understanding property inheritance rights and enhances legal awareness, as 77% of respondents agreed that education improved their knowledge of inheritance rights and 86% believed higher education among family members fosters peaceful coexistence. However, education did not always translate into increased involvement in decision-making or empowerment in property-related matters, with 86% disagreeing that educated individuals were more involved in decisions and 89% feeling their education did not empower them in property decisions. Village elders corroborated these findings, noting that education helps reduce conflict and promotes fairness in inheritance, although current awareness programs are limited and need broader implementation. The Pearson correlation analysis found a strong positive relationship between education level and peaceful coexistence among

families ($r = .929, p < .001$). This suggests that higher education levels are associated with greater family harmony.

The village elders were further asked to indicate how the level of education among community members influences peaceful coexistence. Most stated that education was a vital element in influencing peaceful coexistence.

Elder No 1 stated

“... Education plays a big role in ensuring peaceful coexistence in our community. Those who are educated tend to be more aware of their rights and are more likely to support fair practices, including in property inheritance. They also tend to be more understanding and tolerant, which helps in reducing conflicts”.

This was emphasized by Elder No 11

“ I have noticed that in families where members are more educated, there is less tension and more willingness to share property fairly. They also respect women's rights more.”

This revealed that education plays a crucial role in promoting peaceful coexistence.

According to Chief No 1

“Educated community members are more likely to follow legal procedures in inheritance matters, leading to fairer and more peaceful outcomes”.

Relationship Between Education Level on women's property inheritance and peaceful coexistence among families.

Variable		Peaceful coexistence among families
Education Level	Pearson Correlation	.929**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000
	N	360

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

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between education level and peaceful coexistence among families. The results revealed a strong and statistically significant positive correlation between these variables, $r(360) = .929, p < .001$. This indicates that individuals with higher education levels tend to experience greater peaceful coexistence within their families. These findings are supported by a study by the Institute for Economics & Peace and the Global Partnership for Education (2024) results from analyses that consistently showed countries with higher educational indicators, such as school completion rates, government spending on education, and learning outcomes, tend to have higher levels of peace.

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Model Summary

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.929 ^a	.863	.862	.38171	.863	2247.887	1	358	.000

a. Predictor: (Constant), Education Level

The adjusted R2 indicates the proportion of variability in the dependent variable that is explained by the independent variables, either individually or collectively. Based on the model fit, the results showed that the adjusted coefficient of determination (R2) of 0.863, indicating that approximately 86.3% of the variance can be accounted for by the independent variable under investigation (Education level). The remaining % of the variation is attributed to other factors not addressed in this study.

Table 4:Coefficients

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.970	.068		14.234	.000
	Educational Level	.982	.021	.929	47.412	.000

The results shown above implied that a change of 1 unit in peaceful coexistence was subject to a change of 0.982 units in educational level.

DISCUSSIONS

The study revealed the crucial role of education in understanding property inheritance rights and promoting family harmony. Many respondents reported that their education significantly improved their grasp of inheritance rights and that higher education levels among family members contribute to a more peaceful family environment. While education has raised awareness of legal rights, interviews with village elders and a chief confirmed its essential role in reducing conflicts and encouraging fairer inheritance practices. Nonetheless, it was noted that current programs aimed at raising awareness about inheritance rights need further enhancement.

CONCLUSIONS

Education plays a significant role in enhancing legal awareness and understanding of property inheritance rights, contributing to more peaceful family relationships. Despite this, education alone did not necessarily lead to greater involvement in decision-making or empowerment in property-related matters. Although education improved knowledge and promoted fairness, it did not always translate into practical influence on property decisions or decision-making processes. There is a need for broader implementation of education and awareness programs to better leverage the benefits of education in reducing conflict and promoting equitable inheritance practices within families. Higher education levels were associated with increased family harmony, as indicated by the strong positive correlation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To enhance legal education and awareness regarding property inheritance rights, it is vital to expand and improve outreach campaigns targeting diverse demographic groups, utilizing various media channels for widespread dissemination of information. These campaigns should focus on the significance of legal knowledge by organizing community workshops and seminars led by legal experts, employing visual and interactive materials to simplify complex concepts, and showcasing real-life success stories to inspire individuals. Additionally, integrating property rights education into school curricula is vital, which involves developing age-appropriate content, using interactive learning methods, and training educators to effectively deliver these lessons. Engaging local leaders and community organizations can bolster participation in these initiatives while establishing feedback mechanisms that will ensure continuous improvement. Finally, evaluating the impact of these educational programs through evaluations and long-term tracking of participants' knowledge application will help measure success and identify areas for enhancement, eventually promoting equitable inheritance practices and reducing conflicts within families.

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