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Empowering Women in Leadership and Management Positions to Maintain Gender Equality: A Case Study on Sidama Region

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Abstract

This study examines the importance of empowering women in leadership and management positions to maintain gender equality in the Sidama region. Questionnaires were distributed to 262 respondents, with 160 properly filled and returned. Regression analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between various factors and maintaining gender equality. The findings reveal that the lack of access to education and training, as well as gender bias and stereotypes, has a negative statistically significant relationship with maintaining gender equality. However, empowering women in leadership and management positions has a positive relationship with maintaining gender equality. The results suggest that providing opportunities for women to hold leadership and management positions is crucial in promoting and ensuring gender equality. By empowering women in these roles, gender biases and stereotypes can be challenged and overcome. Additionally, education and training opportunities for women are essential in addressing the gender gap and facilitating equal opportunities. This study emphasizes the need for interventions and policies that focus on empowering women in leadership and management positions. Efforts should be made to create an inclusive and equal society that recognizes the potential and abilities of women in decision-making roles. By addressing the

underlying factors that hinder gender equality, such as lack of education and bias, sustainable progress towards gender equality can be achieved.

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1. Introduction

Gender equality is a fundamental goal for society, and empowering women in leadership and management positions is crucial to achieving this objective. However, several research gaps persist in our understanding of the factors that contribute to maintaining gender equality in these domains. One key research gap revolves around the lack of access to education and training faced by women. Current literature has extensively explored the effects of education and training on women's employment opportunities and career success, but little research has examined its role in maintaining gender equality in leadership and management positions. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the relationship between the lack of access to education and training and maintaining gender equality in these fields (Taneja, Pryor, & Oyler, 2012).

Another vital aspect contributing to gender inequality in leadership and management positions is gender bias and stereotypes. Despite advancements in gender equality, women still face discrimination based on preconceived notions and biases. Research has explored the impact of such biases on women's career opportunities and advancement prospects, but there remains a research gap regarding the influence of gender bias and stereotypes on maintaining gender equality in leadership and management roles. Hence, this study aims to investigate the relationship between gender bias and stereotypes and gender equality maintenance (Waters-Bayer, & Letty, 2010).

The inclusion of women in leadership and management positions has often been proposed as a strategy to maintain gender equality across organizations. However, there is still a research gap regarding the extent to which empowering women in these roles contributes to gender equality maintenance. While previous studies have explored the benefits of female leadership in terms of performance and organizational outcomes, limited research has focused specifically on its impact on maintaining gender equality (Baqtayan, 2020).

The combination of lack of access to education and training, high levels of gender bias and stereotypes, and lack of

empowering women in leadership and management positions negatively impacts gender equality maintenance (Sebola, 2015). The study of gender equality and its maintenance in leadership and management positions has received substantial attention in recent years. Nevertheless, there is a research gap regarding the interplay between the three independent variables of lack of access to education and training, gender bias and stereotypes, and empowering women in leadership and management positions. Specifically, limited research has examined how these variables collectively influence the maintenance of gender equality. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the combined effects of these three variables on maintaining gender equality in leadership and management positions.

The empowerment of women in leadership and management is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality and promoting inclusive development (Koburtay et al., 2020). This case study explores the efforts made to empower women in the Sidama region, focusing on their representation and participation in leadership roles in various sectors. The study aims to identify the challenges faced by women in leadership positions, ascertain the benefits of their empowerment, and propose recommendations for fostering gender equality in leadership and management.

1.1. Research objectives

General Research Objective:

The main objective of this study is to explore the combined effects of lack of access to education and training, gender bias and stereotypes, and empowering women in leadership and management positions on gender equality maintenance.

Specific Research Objective:

- a. The primary objective of this study is to examine the impact of a lack of access to education and training on maintaining gender equality in leadership and management positions.
- b. The primary objective of this study is to examine the relationship between empowering women in leadership and management positions and gender equality maintenance.
- c. The main objective of this study is to analyze the influence of gender bias and stereotypes on maintaining gender equality in leadership and management positions.

1.2. Research Hypotheses

- H1: Women who experience limited access to education and training are less likely to maintain gender equality in leadership and management positions.
- H2: Women who experience high levels of gender bias and stereotypes are less likely to maintain gender equality in leadership and management positions.
- H3: Actively empowered women in leadership and management positions are more likely to maintain gender equality.

2. Review of Literature

This section provides an overview of existing literature related to women's empowerment in leadership and management. It will explore topics such as women's participation in decision-making processes, gender biases in leadership roles, the impact of women's empowerment on organizational performance, and strategies for promoting gender equality. The review of literature will support the study's exploration of the Sidama region's context and contribute to the identification of best practices.

2.1. Concept of Gender Equality

Gender equality refers to the equal rights, opportunities, and treatment of individuals of all genders, without any discrimination based on their gender identity or expression. It suggests that everyone, regardless of their gender, should have access to the same resources, opportunities, and decision-making power.

2.2. Empowering Women in Leadership and Management

Empowering women in leadership and management involves promoting and supporting women to attain positions of leadership and management within organizations. This includes providing opportunities for skill development, creating inclusive and supportive work environments, and combating gender biases and stereotypes that hinder their progress.

2.3. Empirical Review

Here are 5 empirical studies that focus on empowering women in leadership and management to maintain gender equality:

Gatrell (2003) studied the challenges and experiences of women managers in the hospitality industry. The study revealed that women who received empowering opportunities, such as mentoring and leadership training programs, reported higher levels of job satisfaction, career advancement, and felt more empowered in their roles. This empowerment ultimately contributed to maintaining gender equality within the hospitality industry.

Ryan & Haslam (2005) *The Glass Cliff: When and Why Women Are Selected as Leaders in Crisis Contexts*. The study found that empowering women in leadership positions during organizational crises increased the likelihood of these women being retained in subsequent non-crisis leadership roles. By actively empowering women during challenging situations, organizations maintained gender equality in top management positions. "Gender Equality and Performance: How Leaning In and Collaboration Influence Team Dynamics" was studied by Huang & Fung (2009), which showed that empowering women in leadership through leaning in behaviors (self-advocacy) and collaboration positively predicted team performance. Empowered female leaders were more likely to support team members and promote gender equality, leading to improved performance outcomes and maintained gender equality within the team context.

Mishra & Narasimhan (2016) studied "Empowerment and Its Impact on Career Advancement: Evidence from the IT Industry" and found that empowering women in leadership roles within the IT industry positively impacted their career advancement and contributed to maintaining gender equality. Empowered women leaders reported higher levels of job

satisfaction, better performance evaluations, and increased opportunities for growth and development.

Hong & Liao (2017), "Diversity and Innovation: The Role of Diversity and Gender Equality in Innovation Outcomes," found that empowering women in leadership positions enhanced diversity, which, in turn, positively influenced innovation outcomes within organizations. By actively promoting diversity and gender equality, organizations created an inclusive climate that supported innovation, ultimately maintaining gender equality.

2.4. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for studying the topic of empowering women in leadership and management to maintain gender equality in the Sidama region can be built around the three independent variables mentioned: lack of access to education or training, gender bias and stereotypes, and empowering women in leadership and management positions.

1. Lack of access to education or training: This variable refers to the limited opportunities for women in the Sidama region to acquire education or receive skill-based training. It can be hypothesized that limited access to education or training hinders women's progression and reduces their chances of landing leadership and management positions. Policies and initiatives aimed at improving educational opportunities for women can play a crucial role in empowering them for leadership roles.
2. Gender bias and stereotypes: This variable encompasses societal attitudes and beliefs that undermine women's capabilities and potential, leading to discriminatory practices. Exploring the impact of gender bias and stereotypes on women's access to leadership and management positions can be a significant aspect of the conceptual framework. Addressing and challenging these biases in society can help create equal opportunities for women and encourage them to pursue leadership roles.
3. Empowering women in leadership and management positions: This variable focuses on promoting and supporting women to take up leadership and management roles, ensuring equal representation. Factors that influence women's empowerment, such as mentorship programs, access to networks, and supportive policies, can form part of this variable. Examining the effectiveness of such initiatives can help identify gaps and potential areas for improvement.

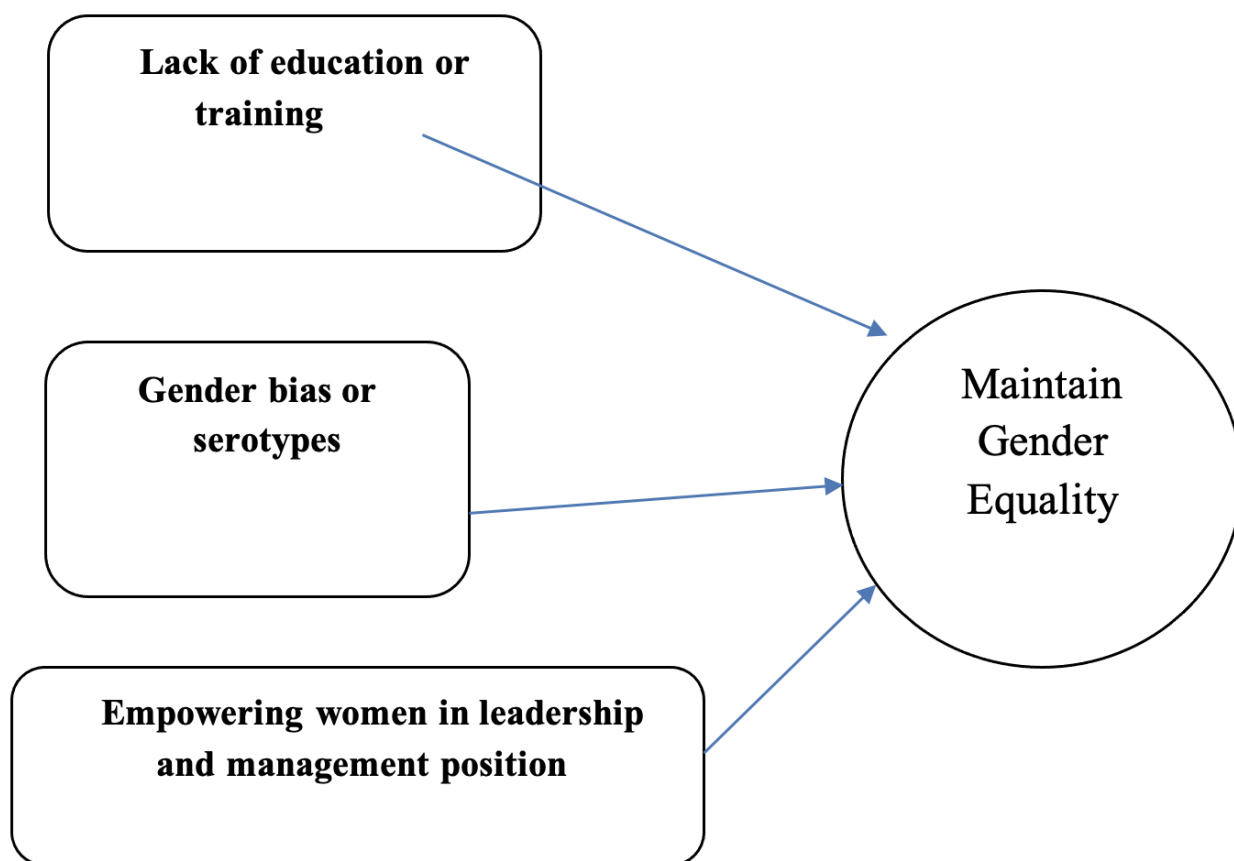


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.5. Literature Gaps in the Sidama Region

1. Limited research on women's leadership: One potential literature gap in the Sidama region could be the scarcity of specific studies exploring the experiences, challenges, and successes of women in leadership and management positions. Understanding the current situation and context is crucial for formulating effective interventions and policies.
2. Lack of focus on the intersectionality of gender with other identities: Another literature gap could be the limited exploration of how gender intersects with other identities, such as ethnicity, socio-economic status, and age. Examining how different social dimensions intersect and influence a woman's ability to access leadership and management positions can provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by diverse women.
3. Insufficient understanding of community perceptions and cultural barriers: The literature may lack in-depth research on how community perceptions and cultural barriers impact women's ability to attain leadership and management positions. Investigating community attitudes, norms, and cultural practices that hinder women from participating in leadership can shed light on potential strategies to overcome those barriers.
4. Limited documentation of successful initiatives: It may be challenging to find extensive literature on successful initiatives implemented in the region to empower women in leadership and management. Identifying and documenting best practices and success stories can provide valuable guidance for future interventions and policies.

Addressing these literature gaps can help create a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and potential

solutions for empowering women in leadership and management to maintain gender equality in the Sidama region.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Study Area Description

The Sidama Region in Ethiopia is a picturesque and serene study area that provides an ideal environment for academic pursuits. Nestled amidst lush green landscapes and rolling hills, the region offers a tranquil atmosphere, away from the chaos of urban life. The study areas in Sidama provide students with a peaceful and conducive environment for learning. With its moderate climate and moderate temperatures throughout the year, students can comfortably focus on their studies without any distractions. The region is also home to numerous libraries, research centers, and educational institutions, offering students access to extensive resources and study materials. Additionally, the warm and friendly nature of the local community adds to the appeal of studying in the Sidama Region, providing students with a supportive network and a culturally enriching experience. Overall, the Sidama Region is an ideal destination for students seeking a serene and inspiring study area.

3.2. Research Philosophical Assumptions

This section discusses the different philosophical assumptions (positivism, social constructivism, pragmatism) that support the research. The study was based on positivist research philosophical assumptions, which state that knowledge is objective because the researchers tested the hypotheses that were derived from prior research works.

3.3. Research Approaches

This section discusses the different research approaches that may be used in the study. In this study, the researchers employed the quantitative research approach because the questionnaires were coded and all variables were measured numerically.

3.4. Research Design

The researchers employed a correlational research design. Correlational research design is a type of non-experimental study that aims to investigate the relationship between two or more variables. This design allows researchers to determine whether there is a statistical association between variables, but it does not establish causation. By measuring and analyzing the data, researchers can assess the degree and direction of the relationship between variables, which can provide valuable insights into predicting and understanding behavior or phenomena. Correlational research design is often used in fields such as psychology, sociology, and education to explore the relationships between variables that may be difficult or unethical to manipulate experimentally.

3.5. Data Sources & Collection Methods

This study used employees from private higher education institutions in Ethiopia as primary data sources. Structured questionnaires are valuable primary data sources that the researchers utilized for this research. These questionnaires were carefully designed with a set format and predefined response options to ensure consistency and reliability in data collection. By employing this method, researchers were able to gather specific and standardized information from the participants, resulting in a dataset that could be easily quantified and analyzed. The structured questionnaires allowed for efficient data collection as they guided the respondents through a series of relevant questions, ensuring that all necessary information was captured. This approach also enabled researchers to easily compare and contrast responses across participants, facilitating the identification of patterns and trends in the data.

3.6. Sampling Design

The study population for the research on empowering women in leadership and management in the Sidama Region comprises women from diverse professional backgrounds who hold leadership or managerial positions in various organizations and institutions. This includes women working in government offices, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, private enterprises, and community-based organizations. The study aims to capture the experiences, challenges, and strategies employed by these women to not only succeed in their respective roles but also foster gender equality and empower other women in leadership positions. By examining the perspectives and narratives of this study population, insights can be gained into the progress made, barriers faced, and potential solutions towards achieving gender parity and empowering women in leadership and management roles in the Sidama Region. The researcher focused on four sector bureaus such as the Education bureau, Health bureau, Agricultural bureau, and Finance bureau where women served in leadership and management positions. Through this formula of Israel (1992), each sector is fairly represented as follows.

1. Sample size for the Education bureau: $370 \times 262 / 760 = 127$
2. Sample size for the Health bureau: $123 \times 262 / 760 = 42$
3. Sample size for the Agricultural bureau: $204 \times 262 / 760 = 70$
4. Sample size for the Finance bureau: $63 \times 262 / 760 = 21$

Among the total population of 760, the researcher took 262 respondents, as calculated by the above formula.

Table 1. Summary of Sampling Design

Target Population	Sampling Techniques	Sample size using formula	Sample size
The target population is 760 female employees who worked in four public sectors	Simple random a Sampling technique	Formula of (Yamane, 1967) $262 = \frac{760}{(1 + (0.05)^2 * 760)}$	262 female workers from four public sectors

Source: Sidama Region Human Resource Development Bureaus (2023)

Hence, the representative sample size for this study is 262 women who worked in management and leadership positions in four purposively selected education bureau, health bureau, agricultural bureau, and finance bureaus.

3.7. Data Analysis Methods

In this study, quantitative data analysis methods were used. When it comes to model specification, employees' performance will be measured through a Likert scale questionnaire. The multiple linear regression models will be employed by the researcher to measure employees' performance. The dependent variable (gender b) is a linear function of the use of guided meditation for stress management, the practice of deep breathing, maintaining physical exercise and good nutrition, managing social media time, and connecting with others as the independent variables, and the error term U; the model is given by the following Equation:

Gender equality = $\beta_0 + (\beta_1 * \text{lack of access to education and training}) + (\beta_2 * \text{Gender bias and stereotypes}) + (\beta_3 * \text{empowering women in leadership and management positions}) + U$

Whereas:

- β_0 = Constant term
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$, refer to coefficients
- \bar{U} = Error term

3.9. Reliability Test

This section discusses the methods that were used to ensure the reliability of the research findings. To measure the consistency of the questionnaire, particularly the Likert-type scale, reliability analysis is essential in reflecting the overall reliability of the constructs that it is measuring. The test of reliability is another important test of sound measurement.

Table 2. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.921	20

Source: Survey results, 2023

In this study, Cronbach's (1951) Alpha value is 0.921. This indicates that all the variables under consideration account for values above the scientifically accepted threshold; therefore, the study is reliable under these circumstances. Compared with the minimum value of alpha, 0.70, the responses generated for all of the variables used in this research were reliable enough for data analysis. This implies that the data incorporated in SPSS is reliable.

3.10. Ethical Considerations

During the data collection process for this research study, ethical considerations would be highly prioritized. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were ensured by assigning unique identification codes to each participant instead of using their actual names. Participants were informed about the purpose and objectives of the study, and their voluntary participation was explicitly emphasized. Informed consent forms were obtained from each participant prior to their involvement in the study, and they were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without facing any consequences. Additionally, measures were taken to protect sensitive information obtained during data collection. All data were stored securely and accessed only by the researchers involved in the study, ensuring that any personal identifying information was removed to guarantee participant privacy and confidentiality.

4. Results

4.1. Response Rate

The questionnaire was distributed to 262 targeted respondents, out of which 160 properly filled and returned questionnaires were received. Hence, the response rate is 60%, which implies that more than 50% of the respondents participated in the process of data collection.

4.2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Summary of descriptive statistics in research refers to the collection, organization, analysis, and presentation of numerical data in order to summarize and understand the characteristics of a particular sample or population. Descriptive statistics help researchers interpret the data, identify patterns, and draw initial conclusions, enabling them to make informed decisions and draw appropriate inferences from the data.

Table 2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Maintain gender equality	160	1.00	5.00	2.6415	1.19389
lack of access to education and training	160	1.00	5.00	2.5943	1.12514
Gender bias and serotypes	160	1.00	5.00	3.0660	1.34389
Empowering women in leadership and management position	212	1.00	5.00	3.3046	.96625

Source: Survey results, 2023

Maintain gender equality was the dependent variable of this study, which has an overall mean of the variable of 2.6415, a maximum of 5, and a minimum of 1 on the Likert scale. The standard deviation value is 1.0845, which indicates there was variation in the actual responses from the mean. With regard to other variables, the lack of access to education and training has a mean of 2.594 with an SD of 1.12514, Gender bias and serotypes has a mean of 3.066 (SD of 1.34389), and empowering women in leadership and management positions has a mean of 3.3046 with an SD of 0.96625. In summary, all variables incorporated in the model have a moderate contribution to the response variable, Maintain gender equality.

4.4. Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to measure the strength and direction of the relationship between two or more variables in research. It aims to determine whether there is a linear association between the variables and to what extent one variable changes when the other variable(s) changes. In correlation analysis, a correlation coefficient is calculated, which quantifies the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. The correlation coefficient ranges between -1 and +1, where a positive value indicates a positive relationship (both variables increase and decrease together), a negative value indicates a negative relationship (one variable increases while the other decreases), and a value of zero indicates no relationship between the variables. Correlation analysis helps researchers understand the degree of association between variables and provides insight into potential patterns, trends, or dependencies in the data. However, it is important to note that correlation does not imply causation, meaning that even if two variables are highly correlated, it does not necessarily mean that one variable causes the other to change. The correlation matrix for this study was computed as follows:

Table 3. Correlation analysis

Variables	1	2	3	4
Maintain gender equality	1	.		
lack of access to education and training	-0.343**	1		
Gender bias and serotypes	-0.151*	.312**	1	
Empowering women in leadership and management position	0.242**	.149*	.054	1

Source: Survey result, 2023

Table 4 shows the relationship between the dependent variable, which is Maintain gender equality, and the independent variables, with a coefficient of correlation of 1 indicating that each variable is perfectly correlated with the others. The result shows that two independent variables, such as lack of access to education and training and gender bias and serotypes, have a negative statistically significant relationship with maintaining gender equality, since the p-value is more than the 1% level of significance, or less than 0.01. But the last independent variable, empowering women in leadership and management positions, has a positive relationship with employees' performance, since the p-value is more than the 1% level of significance, or less than 0.01.

4.5. Regression Analysis

Table 4. Regression Result

Particulars		Estimate	Std. Error	Wald	df	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
Constant		3.906	.648	36.349	1	.000***	2.636	5.175
Model	lack of access to education and training	-0.121	.167	44.957	1	.000***	.794	1.449
	Gender bias and serotypes	-0.851	.150	32.357	1	.000***	.558	1.144
	Empowering women in leadership and management position	0.376	.122	9.467	1	.002***	.137	.616

Dependent variable: Maintaining gender equality ***= regression result is significant at 1%, **= regression result is significant at 5%

R= .762, R² .565 Adjusted R² .552

Source: Survey result, 2023

In the above Table 4, R-squared indicates the proportion of the variance in turnover intention which is accounted for by the model. In essence, this is a measure of how good a prediction of maintaining gender equality we can make by knowing the variables. Accordingly, the R-squared value for this model is 0.565. This means that 56.5% of the variation in the dependent variable (maintaining gender equality) can be explained by the independent variables (lack of access to education and training, gender bias and serotypes, empowering women in leadership and management position), and the

rest of the variance in maintaining gender equality can be attributed to other factors which are held constant or not included in the model.

5. Discussion of Results

In summary, lack of access to education or training maintains gender inequality by reinforcing economic disparities, limiting women's participation in leadership roles, undermining their health and well-being, and perpetuating traditional gender roles. Conversely, ensuring equal access to quality education and training opportunities for all individuals, regardless of gender, is crucial to promoting and maintaining gender equality. The result of this study shows that being female has a regression coefficient of ($\beta = -0.121$), which has a negative and statistically significant effect on maintaining gender equality at a 1% level of significance since the p-value (sig) of $0.000 < 0.01$. Hence, hypothesis H1 is accepted. The regression result is consistent with the empirical findings of Grown et al. (2005), and Batra & Reio (2016) suggested that lack of education is the reason for gender inequality.

The relationship between bias or serotypes and maintaining gender equality is complex and multifaceted. While bias and serotypes can play a role in perpetuating gender inequality, they are not the sole determinants. Gender bias refers to the socially constructed beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes that create and maintain inequalities between genders. Serotypes, on the other hand, are classifications of microorganisms based on certain surface structures. The result of this study shows that being female has a regression coefficient of ($\beta = -0.851$), which has a negative and statistically significant effect on maintaining gender equality at a 1% level of significance since the p-value (sig) of $0.000 < 0.01$. Hence, hypothesis H1 is accepted. The regression result is consistent with the empirical findings of Amos et al. (2023) and Moorthy et al. (2022) and suggests that gender bias or serotypes are the reasons for gender inequality. Addressing bias and serotypes is crucial for maintaining gender equality. Efforts should include promoting gender-neutral and inclusive policies, challenging stereotypes, educating society about gender equality, enhancing awareness and understanding of diverse gender identities, and promoting equal opportunities in all spheres of life.

Overall, empowering women in leadership and management is essential to maintaining gender equality as it promotes equal opportunities, challenges existing biases and discrimination, fosters inclusive work environments, and enhances decision-making capabilities within organizations. The result of this study shows that being female has a regression coefficient of ($\beta = 0.376$), which has a positive and statistically significant effect on maintaining gender equality at a 1% level of significance since the p-value (sig) of $0.000 < 0.01$. Hence, hypothesis H1 is accepted. The regression result is consistent with the empirical findings of Ventura et al. (2021) and Ioannidou et al. (2019), Dashper (2020), and suggests that gender bias or serotypes are the reasons for gender inequality. Empowering women in leadership and management plays a crucial role in maintaining gender equality in various ways: Representation: When women are empowered to take on leadership and management positions, they become visible role models for other women. This representation helps challenge and break existing gender stereotypes and norms, encouraging more women to aspire to leadership roles. Decision-making: Empowering women in leadership ensures that different perspectives, experiences, and ideas are considered in decision-making processes. Research has shown that diverse teams, including gender diversity, are more

likely to make better decisions, leading to improved outcomes for organizations. Creating inclusive work environments: Empowering women in leadership and management helps create more inclusive work environments. Women in leadership positions often prioritize the development and advancement of other women, contributing to the creation of equal opportunities for growth and progression. Addressing biases and discrimination: By promoting more women into leadership roles, organizations are forced to confront and address biases and discriminatory practices that might be hindering women's progress. Empowering women ensures that their skills and abilities are recognized and valued equally, leading to a more equitable and fair workplace. Economic benefits: There is evidence to suggest that gender diversity in leadership and management positions positively impacts an organization's financial performance. Diverse leadership teams have been found to be more innovative, adaptive, and better at attracting and retaining top talent, leading to improved business outcomes.

5. Conclusion

Based on the regression results, it can be concluded that a lack of access to education and training, as well as gender bias and stereotypes, has a negative statistically significant relationship with maintaining gender equality. This suggests that when individuals lack adequate education and training opportunities and face gender bias and stereotypes, it becomes more challenging to achieve and sustain gender equality within an organization or society. On the other hand, the variable empowering women in leadership and management positions has a positive relationship with maintaining gender equality. This implies that when women are given opportunities to hold leadership and management positions, it contributes to promoting and ensuring gender equality.

6. Recommendation

This study highlights the importance of addressing the barriers of lack of access to education and training, as well as gender bias and stereotypes, to promote gender equality. Organizations and policymakers should focus on providing equal educational opportunities to all individuals, regardless of gender, and implement measures to eliminate gender bias and stereotypes in workplace environments. This could include training programs, awareness campaigns, and policies that promote gender equality and diversity. Additionally, organizations should actively work towards empowering women in leadership and management positions. This can be achieved by implementing initiatives such as mentoring programs, leadership development training, and inclusive policies that promote gender-balanced representation in decision-making roles. By taking these steps, organizations can foster a culture of gender equality and inclusivity, which can result in improved overall performance. It is recommended that further research should be conducted to explore other variables that may affect gender equality and to identify effective strategies for overcoming barriers and promoting gender parity in various contexts. Based on the findings from the case study, it can be concluded that several barriers continue to impede women's empowerment in leadership and management roles in the Sidama region. These include limited access to education and training, gender biases and stereotypes, and cultural norms that restrict women's roles. However, the study

also highlights the positive impact that women in leadership can have on organizational performance and socio-economic development. To foster women's empowerment in leadership and management roles in the Sidama region, several recommendations are proposed. These include implementing gender-sensitive education and training programs, addressing gender biases and stereotypes through awareness campaigns, encouraging the adoption of gender quotas in leadership positions, and promoting the sharing of best practices among organizations. These recommendations aim to create an enabling environment that supports women's advancement and ensures their equal participation in leadership and management positions.

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