AN EXPLORATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY PRACTICES IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not been previously submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

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2nd May 2026

Approval

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, partner, and children who assisted and supported me tremendously while I pursued this endeavour. Above all, I dedicate with thanksgiving this dissertation to God almighty

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I want to thank the Almighty God for giving me the strength, wisdom, and direction to complete this dissertation. A big thank you to my colleagues for their encouragement and assistance while writing this dissertation. To all my family and friends who assisted me in any way during my dissertation, your input was valuable. I am grateful.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADNOC	The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company
AWAK	Association of Women Accountants in Kenya
BIT	Business Information Technology
DEI	Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion
ERGs	Employee Resource Groups
FKE	Federation of Kenya Employers
FWAs	Flexible Work Arrangements
GDT	Gender Differences Theory
GTPs	Graduate Training Programmes
HR	Human Resources
IDWGS	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
IWED	International Women in Engineering Day
IT	Information Technology
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
KAPs	Knowledge Attitude and Practices
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MBA	Masters in Business Administration
MGC	Ministerial Gender Committee
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
MoE	Ministry of Energy
MXQDA	MAX Weber Qualitative Data Analysis
NCA	National Construction Agency
NGEC	National Gender and Equality Commission
NNPC	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
SIT	Social Identity Theory
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SNT	Social Network Theory
SU-ISERC	Strathmore University Institutional Ethics Review Committee
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
UK	United Kingdom

UNIDO	The United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UN	United Nations
US	United States
WAGs	Work Affinity Groups
WEF	World Economic Forum
WLB	Work-life Balance

ABSTRACT

The call for gender diversity has taken a turn to advocate for both male and female equity in leadership, work environment and the society at large. Despite current outreach programmes, advocacy, existing literature in academia and conferences on gender diversity, it remains a retrogressive agenda. The force of society in maintaining gendered roles as a norm and practice stands firmly against the progression of gender diversity, especially, at the workplace. The aim of the research was to explore gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya. This aim was fully realized through a set of research questions that focused on exploring gender diversity practices in hiring processes, career advancement practices, mentorship and leadership, and training programmes implementation at the workplace. The research employed exploratory research design under the qualitative research method. The research used semi-structured interviews to collect data, which was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim, and analysed using the MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. The findings were presented in line with the research questions which explored various aspects of gender diversity practices at the workplace. From the analysis, it was revealed that gender diversity is not widely practised in the oil and gas industry in Kenya which further led to identifying a number of barriers limiting its progression: the nature of the work in the oil and gas industry; lack of safety of employees relative to work schedules and location of site (workplace); working environment or conditions; absence of appropriate physical facilities; and family responsibilities all of which do not favour female employees leading to poor diversity. In addition, the results indicate that hiring practices were implemented to some extent through deliberate policies to hire more females, setting targets in the organisations towards gender balance, implementing meritocracy and fairness in dealing with the various genders, and prioritizing women recruitment. Further, the study revealed that both formal and informal mentorships were implemented in the oil and gas industry. However, there are more room for improvement as enhancing mentorship was identified as part of the strategies to improve gender diversity. Also, the study found few practices implemented towards advancement of employee's career such as various gender diversity initiatives, merits-based promotion, and adoption of organizational culture that ensures that gender diversity is inculcated in leadership; and diversity improvement strategies such as leadership commitment and enforcement, ensuring fairness at workplace, transforming organizational cultural through awareness creation, adopting gender-neutral advertisement and balanced representation, and implementing women training programmes. The study concludes that despite organisational efforts to improve inclusivity, employees in the oil and gas sector continue to face significant gender-based challenges, including low female representation in technical and senior roles, discrimination in recruitment and promotion, and limited supportive mechanisms. These persistent inequalities highlight the need for more deliberate and sustained interventions. It is recommended that the Federation of Kenya Employers to guide O&G companies in developing gender diversity charters with clear targets and strategies. National policies should promote flexible work arrangements to support career progression for female employees in the sector. The National Gender and Equality Commission should develop standards for graduate trainee programs that embed gender inclusivity, ensuring long-term sector-wide gender diversity. In practice, O&G companies should integrate gender diversity into core organizational processes, including hiring, promotions, and succession planning, supported by HR and line managers. Structured mentoring, employee resource groups, flexible work arrangements, and gender-aware performance policies should be implemented, alongside ongoing diversity training and regular monitoring to track and improve female representation.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In an era of global economic transformations, industrial development, and the ever-evolving dynamics of the corporate world, gender diversity within the workplace has emerged as an important issue (Sraieb & Labadze, 2022). The concept has different yet similar definitions across different organizations and setting. The United Nations (UN) define it as the equal participation and representation of people of all genders in decision-making processes, employment, and access to opportunities, while ensuring freedom from discrimination and bias (UN, 2017).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) describes gender diversity in the workplace as the fair treatment and inclusion of all genders in employment practices, including recruitment, compensation, promotion, and working conditions, without discrimination (ILO, 2012). In the corporate perspective, the World Economic Forum (WEF) defines gender diversity as the presence of different genders within an organization, combined with inclusive policies and practices that ensure equal opportunities, representation, and advancement for all employees regardless of gender (WEF, 2023).

Based on these definitions, gender diversity involves inclusion, equality, and non-discrimination placing emphasis on the importance of ensuring that individuals of all genders have equal access to opportunities, whether in employment, leadership, or decision-making processes. These definitions highlight the importance on fair treatment in organizational and societal structures highlighting the need to eliminate bias and discrimination in hiring, promotion, and workplace practices. It involves the creation of inclusive environments where individuals can fully participate and contribute.

Gender diversity is the recognition, acceptance, and promotion of equal participation and opportunities for individuals of all gender identities within the workforce (Okafor & Okegbe, 2023). It encourages an inclusive environment that values and respects people's contributions regardless of gender, gender expression, or gender identity.

More companies are realizing the value of having a diverse workforce (Chikwendu & Bature, 2021). Gender diversity has been associated with positive outcomes for organizations in the oil and gas industry and beyond including performance (Chikwendu &

Bature, 2021) and sustainability (Doni et al., 2022) as women place emphasis on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues. Yet, indicate women continue to be outnumbered by men across all industries including manufacturing (24.6%women); agriculture (23.3%); supply chain and transportation (23.0%); oil, gas and mining (18.6%); and 16.1% in infrastructure (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023).

The energy sector has historically been a male-dominated field and its workforce distribution is unrepresentative of the broader population and workforce at large. Despite making up to 39% of the global labour force, women only account for 22% of roles in oil and gas (The United Nations Industrial Development Organization [UNIDO], 2023). Globally, women hold 11% of ministerial positions responsible for energy, natural resource fuels, and mining across 190 countries (UNIDO, 2023). Women hold 32% of the renewable energy jobs and 22% in oil and gas (Lazoroska et al., 2024).

In Australia, women make up 46% of the workforce and more than 50% of university graduates; on average, 13% of workers in its oil and gas industry are women (Power & Kennedy, 2016). In Canada and Norway; women make up 21% and 19% of workers respectively. In Norway, this level is as high as 30% (Murphy et al., 2021; Standal et al., 2020). In Malaysia, the energy sector is recorded as the sector that has a low participation of women engineers and has a gap in gender diversity (Nur et al., 2020). Gender inequality is evident in Pakistan's energy sector, where women hold only 6% of ministerial positions responsible for national energy policies and programs and make up only 10% of the workforce in the energy sector (Satti et al., 2024). Omani women constitute less than 10% of employees in the Oil and Gas sector (AlZadjali et al., 2020).

In Ghana, women represent less than 20% of workforce in the oil and gas being comparatively lower than the percentage in Côte d'Ivoire, where women represent 22.1% of the labour force in the oil and gas industries (Faanu & Graham, 2024). In Nigeria, women employed in oil and gas are 6,513 compared to the employed men of 79,562 indicating women represent 7.6% and men 92.4% of its workforce emphasising the low number of females in the sector compared to the men (Kehinde, 2021). In Libya, 55% of oil and gas employers hire women with female employee citing several barriers for their employment in the oil and gas sector (Jacobsen, 2020).

In terms of the Africa Gender Index (AGI), Kenya scores 0.522 above the 0.484 average but scores poorly on the empowerment and representation dimension (0.203) compared to

the average of 0.224 across the continent (Makungu & Kooijman, 2020). In terms of employment and decision-making in the sector, 35% of the total staff and 15% of the technical leadership positions in the Ministry of Energy's headquarters are filled by women (Makungu & Kooijman, 2020).

Men with engineering backgrounds continue to hold most senior management positions in the energy sector (Lieu et al., 2020). For example, the state-owned distribution company, Kenya Power, women make up only 19% of its workforce, with majority working in technical field operations and customer service (Lieu et al., 2020). This evidence indicates the prevalence of low women representation and participation in the oil and gas industry. Therefore, this study aims to explore the gender diversity practices that these companies in Kenya use or do not use to create a level playing field for both men and women in the sector.

1.1.1 Gender Diversity Practices

Doing a review of the World Bank's four pillars gender strategy in the oil, gas, and mining, Perks and Schulz (2020) highlighted areas where the sector can work on to enhance gender diversity. These includes improving human endowments; removing constraints for more and better jobs; removing barriers to women's ownership and control of assets; and enhancing women's voice and agency. In Sweden, Lazoroska et al. (2024) found that professional mentoring and networking have largely been employed to address diversity gaps left by the energy sector or policy makers. In the United Kingdom, Shortland and Perkins (2020) reported there was a lack of trust in delivery of gender diversity principles to support their expatriate career progression. According to Williams et al. (2014), diversity management programs include targeted recruitment, hiring, and promotions policies; mentoring programs; affinity groups; and diversity training. Few of these programs have proven effective in achieving gender diversity in the corporate world, despite their widespread popularity (Williams et al., 2014).

In the Asian region, gender diversity practices included structured promotion systems and mentoring programs (Lin & Zhou, 2024) while in Indonesia diversity rate programs were used to enhance female career progression (Rabbani, 2024). In Malaysia, mentoring and work-life balance (WLB) were popular in facilitating women's career advancement (Siew et al., 2018). In Saudi Arabia, companies adopted leadership and mentorship programs and

gender-sensitive training to improve women's participation in technical and managerial roles (Banihammad et al., 2023).

In South Africa, Ketchiwou and Naong (2024) Career advancement for women was supported via mentorship, skill development, and work-life balance (WLB) initiatives while Oyiana (2021) highlighted the importance of training practices in O&G companies. In Nigeria, Ogunmusire (2023) challenges on gender diversity in the oil and gas sector was highlighted in recruitment, fewer opportunities in career advancement, poor mentorship, lack of adequate training, and appointment to administrative rather than technical leadership roles. Oyiana (2021) highlighted the importance of training for the realization of gender diversity in the oil and gas companies. This view was supported by Oruebo and David-Alonge (2024) results that provided evidence that diversity training and inclusivity of voices and perspectives, significantly contribute to enhancing team performance.

In the East African crude oil pipeline, gender-focused impact assessments, integrating health, safety, social considerations for women, and mitigation of disproportionate burdens on women were common gender diversity practices (Hill et al., 2021). In Kenya, Odunga et al. (2024) revealed gender diversity practices included flexible work arrangements (FWAs), merit-based promotion, succession planning, and training on gender diversity while Arrumm (2021) found that O&G companies commonly implement formal HR and diversity policies, gender-sensitive recruitment, mentoring and career development programs, as well as work-life balance and support measures.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this research adopted hiring, career advancement, mentoring, training practices as its variables of interest.

1.1.2 The Oil and Gas Industry in Kenya

Kenya's oil and gas industry is relatively new, with the discovery of commercial quantities of oil in the Turkana region. It is an emerging sector with substantial potential for growth and development. The country is estimated to have 2.85 billion barrels of crude oil deposits (Ambani, 2023). However, a big percentage of these deposits is not accessible for commercial exploitation. Major international and local energy companies, such as Tullow Oil, Total, and local government entities, play a significant role in the sector's operations (Ambani, 2023). The Kenyan government has implemented regulatory frameworks and guidelines to govern the sector's operations, including environmental protection, local content requirements, and labour laws.

The 2007 Employment Act prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including gender. It mandates equal treatment for all employees and prohibits gender-based discrimination in hiring, promotion, and terms of employment. It addresses issues like sexual harassment in the workplace, which is essential for creating a safe and inclusive working environment. The Act also establishes provisions for maternity leave, which is significant in promoting gender diversity by supporting female employees during and after pregnancy (Lemunen, Were, & Namusonge, 2020).

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 is crucial in promoting gender diversity in the oil and gas industry as it provides a strong framework for gender equality. Article 27 of the Constitution prohibits discrimination on various grounds, including gender. Article 27(8) explicitly promotes the representation of marginalized groups in all levels of government and in public service, including women (Lemunen et al., 2020). Despite the instigation of such legislations, Kenya has historically experienced gender disparities in employment and leadership roles. The O&G industry is not immune to these challenges. The industry has traditionally been male dominated, with men holding most technical and leadership positions, creating a gender imbalance. According to Höltge et al. (2021), deep-seated cultural norms and societal expectations can influence gender roles and perceptions, potentially limiting the participation of women in certain job roles within the sector.

The O&G sector in Kenya is still emerging, with commercial production concentrated in Turkana, while Nairobi serves as the hub for corporate headquarters and regional offices. Nairobi-based O&G companies oversee functions such as finance, human resources, legal, and strategic management, employing a highly skilled and diverse workforce across technical, managerial, and administrative roles. These firms operate within Kenya's national legislative framework and formal HR and diversity policies, often shaped by multinational corporations that introduce international gender standards adapted to the local context. Nairobi's role as the corporate hub of Kenya's O&G sector, with its skilled workforce, professional networks, and exposure to formal and international gender policies, makes it the critical setting to investigate how gender diversity practices are applied – insights that cannot be captured at production sites like Turkana. Acker (1990; 2006) Gendered Organization Theory (GOT) posits that organizational structures, practices, and cultures are inherently gendered, often reproducing inequalities even in the presence of formal equality policies. The theory suggests that gender norms are embedded in job design, recruitment, promotion, mentoring, and training practices, shaping who is

included in leadership and decision-making (Sealy & Vinnicombe, 2020). Applying GOT to the Kenyan O&G sector provides a lens to examine how recruitment strategies, career advancement policies, mentoring initiatives, and training programs may inadvertently perpetuate gender hierarchies or, conversely, create pathways for greater inclusivity (Ngunjiri & Gitau, 2021). This theoretical perspective grounds the study's focus on organizational practices and helps explain why women remain underrepresented in senior and technical roles despite formal diversity initiatives.

1.2 Problem Statement

Gender diversity is the recognition, acceptance, and elevation of equal participation and opportunities for individuals of all gender identities within the workforce (Okafor & Okegbe, 2023). Yet, gender diversity remains elusive in the O&G industry in Australia (Power & Kennedy, 2016), Oman (AlZadjali et al., 2020), Malaysia (Nur et al., 2020), Côte d'Ivoire (Faanu & Graham, 2024), Nigeria (Kehinde, 2021), and Libya (Jacobsen, 2022). In Kenya, the Ministry of Energy (MoE) headquarters are represented by 15% and 35% of technical leadership positions and total staff respectively (Makungu & Kooijman, 2020). Most senior leadership positions are held by men with an engineering background (Lieu et al., 2020). At Kenya Power, women represent approximately 19% of its workforce, with most in customer services and technical field operations (Lieu et al., 2020). Initiatives and practices to promote gender diversity in the O&G industry include institutionalization of a gender unit, a gender officer and a Ministerial Gender Committee (MGC) in its organizational structure (Makungu & Kooijman, 2020). The MoE allocates funds annually to support gender mainstreaming including policy implementation for activities and for capacity for staff in the ministry and parastatals (Makungu & Kooijman, 2020). However, challenges to gender diversity include inadequate gender-disaggregated data and lack of gender diversity monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The limited evidence of gender-targeted programmes and policies to address the inadequate representation of women in leadership and decision-making positions in O&G companies is another significance barrier.

The interest into the gender diversity of O&G companies is not new in the region, however, some key gaps emerge. Okosu et al. (2025) and Oyejide (2025) show women are underrepresented in technical and senior roles but fail in exploring how hiring practices are designed or implemented. Oyejide (2025) study showed women are blocked from senior

roles but also did not focus on investigating tools for improving women's career progression in O&G. These studies (Okosu et al., 2025; Oyejide, 2025) do not focus on mentoring or networking, even though these are critical for female career progression in male-dominated industries. Baah-Boateng (2022) discusses training in extractive and mining industries but lacks specificity regarding programs aimed at supporting female employees. Therefore, this study filled this gap by exploring the hiring, career advancement, mentoring, and training practices of O&G companies.

Contextually, most studies originate from the United States (Lucas et al., 2021), United Kingdom (Shortland & Perkins, 2020), Canada (Murphy et al., 2021), China (Lin & Zhou, 2024), Ghana (Okosu et al., 2025) and Nigeria (Oyejide, 2025). Kenya-specific research is scarce. Most peer-reviewed studies focus on U.S., U.K., China, and Nigeria. This means that the contextual setting for O&G companies in Kenya and Nairobi in particular remain less understood despite their challenges, including local labour laws, cultural expectations, and the prevalence of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) versus multinational corporations (MNCs). Therefore, this contextual gap was addressed by limiting the study to O&G companies in Nairobi where these firms have their headquarters, regional offices, and support services.

Methodological Gaps include the limited focus on expatriate experience on gender diversity in O&G and these studies (Shortland & Perkins, 2020; Kagher & Stewart, 2020; Lin & Zhou, 2024) ignore input from local employees. Most studies (Chikwendu & Bature, 2021; Ikwor & Chikwe, 2025; AlZadjali et al., 2020) adopt cross-sectional quantitative surveys and this provides a gap contribution for research that follows exploratory designs to provide needed insight into gender diversity practices in O&G companies that is currently missing. The use of exploratory methods means future studies can use descriptive and correlation designs to better understand gender diversity practices in the sector widely. Using management staff as its respondents will provide a longitudinal understanding of gender diversity practices in O&G firms under policy changes.

In regard to theory, most studies apply career development theory, social network theory (SNT), or social identity theory (SIT). Despite their relevance in understanding gender diversity, these theories are limited in including the unique context of Kenya's O&G sector including legislation, organizational culture, and socio-cultural barriers to gender diversity. Therefore, adopting the Gendered Organization Theory (GOT) helped in comprehension

and explaining of how systemic and structural barriers promote the persistence of lack of gender diversity in Nairobi's O&G industry.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of the study was conducting an exploratory study on gender diversity practices in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by these specific objectives;

i. To explore the hiring practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya
ii. To explore the career advancement practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya
iii. To explore mentoring practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya
iv. To understand the training practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya

1.4 Research Questions

The study answered the following research questions:

i. What is the extent of hiring practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya?
ii. What is the extent of career advancement practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya?
iii. What is the extent of mentoring practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya?
iv. What is the extent of training practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya?

1.5 Scope of The Study

The study was limited to the O&G sector in Nairobi County. Those O&G companies engaged in exploration, production, refining, distribution, and related activities were targeted. Therefore, purposive sampling was used to select 10 organizations encompassing both MNCs and local entities that were leading in implementation of gender diversity

practices. The gender diversity practices considered for this research were hiring, career advancement, mentorship, training. Face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with respondents based on their availability and convenience. The study was conducted from December, 2024 to April, 2026.

1.6 Significance of The Study

Various parties and actors in the oil and gas will benefit from the study. The study can provide insights for oil and gas companies on their current state of gender diversity and its impact on firm performance. This information is crucial for improving their diversity initiatives, enhancing workforce performance and innovation. Furthermore, policymakers and regulatory bodies can use the research findings to assess the effectiveness of existing gender diversity regulations and policies within the industry. It may guide the development of more robust and effective regulatory frameworks. The study will benefit employees by advocating for equitable treatment, inclusive workplace cultures, and equal opportunities for all genders within the industry. This fosters a sense of belonging and well-being among employees.

This research can provide critical input for the formulation of national policies aimed at promoting gender diversity, as well as aligning with broader national development agendas. The study also hopes to make significant contributions to the existing body of knowledge on workplace diversity in the workplace from a Kenyan perspective while testing theoretical arguments on gender diversity in the workplace. The study also makes suggestions for further research on gender diversity in the Kenyan workplace.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduced the problem of low participation of women in the oil and gas industry from a global, regional, and local perspective. Gender diversity practices prevalent in the oil and gas sector are also highlighted and those that are used in the study emphasized. The problem statement, research questions and objectives are stated and the scope and significance described.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter highlights the review of literature by presenting the conceptual review and theoretical framework underpinning this research. This is followed by an empirical review of literature based on the research objectives highlighting the research and knowledge gaps that the present study filled.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

There are different theories that have been applied to the examination of gender diversity in organizations. However, the study limited its theoretical underpinning to Acker's (1992) gendered organization theory.

2.2.1 Gendered Organization Theory

Acker (1992) advanced that the gendered organization theory refers to an understanding of organizations and their (re) production of gender dynamics and the gender order. The main tenets associated with gendered organization theory centre around gender as a social category that continues to be the basis for inequality in working life (Rodriguez & Guenther, 2022). Gendered organization theory pays particular attention to how gender interacts with different dimensions of social, political, economic and technological life and how this is mobilised in organizations as well as how organizations foster and tackle new and reformulated gender(ed) inequalities (Rodriguez & Guenther, 2022).

Organizations view gender from a social perspective in that they define specific job descriptions as fitting for men and women (Williams, 2018). Two, oil and gas companies may be perceived to further differences in gender power dynamics as they appoint men in senior and decision-making positions while women are placed in administrative or service roles (Faanu & Graham, 2024). Third, oil and gas companies may be furthering gender norms by their implementation of policies that place women in specific positions in the hierarchy of an organization (Faanu & Graham, 2024). Fourth, oil and gas companies are perceived to have stringent job divisions that enhance gender differences by introducing glass ceilings for women in their career advancement (Williams, 2018).

Several criticisms have been advanced towards the GOT. Bates (2022) note the theory has often been used as a means to explain and describe gendered organizations rather than empirically testing its validity using data to support or refute it. Huaman-Morillo, Linden, and Palmieri (2024) note that empirical studies that adopted the GOT have been limited to top leadership and executive levels from the context of developed nations. however, less empirical testing of GOT in lower-middle level management staff and in the context of developing countries. Rodriguez and Guenther (2022) highlights that GOT is not adequate to address the diversity, equality, and inclusion (DEI) concerns of the modern workplace in O&G companies that go beyond gender.

The theory is adapted to the study in the following ways. First, oil and gas companies can use hiring practices that are inclined to provide more opportunities for women to enter into the field for both technical and senior positions. Secondly, oil and gas companies can create and deploy opportunities for their female staff career advancement. Third, oil and gas companies can create and support programmes for mentorship in their organizations for their women staff to get formal support from mentors in their career development. Lasty, oil and gas companies can tailor and implement training that promotes gender diversity and inclusivity.

2.3 Empirical Review

This empirical review of literature focuses on the existing studies on gender diversity practices anchored on the research objectives.

2.3.1 Hiring Practices for Gender Diversity

In the United States (U.S.), Williams (2019) research examining job insecurity and gender inequality in the oil and gas industry based on interviews with men and women scientists and engineers at a multinational oil and gas company. A longitudinal online survey was administered to a cohort of 356 scientists and engineers who commenced work between 2008 and 2012 and two-thirds were white men. In addition, in-depth interviews with scientists and engineers provide a specific kind of evidence about the deserving professional. During downturns, oil companies may wipe out any progress they might have made on diversity hiring and promotions. They revert to being an almost exclusively white male bastion. When the price of oil rises and hiring begins again, they start from a position of almost zero diversity.

Lucas et al. (2021) research examined the how informal shortlists in male-dominated job openings in technology executives to test the hypothesis of increasing the consideration of female candidates. The sample consisted of 5,741 participants across ten studies where respondents were asked to provide an informal shortlist for a male-dominant job vacancy and then were asked to add candidates to the list. The findings revealed there were more female candidates in the extended lists showing that having a long shortlist strategy is a cost-effective and simple means for supporting gender equity efforts.

In a later study, Bosky et al. (2022) examined effects of mass layoffs, downsizing, and corporate restructuring through a case study of the oil and gas industry. Using a longitudinal survey that followed a cohort of recently hired scientists and engineers at a MNCs from 2012–2016. There was significant reduction-in-force resulting in significant gender disparities; approximately, 70% of the gender gap in departures can be explained by underlying gender differences in the formal layoff criteria and workers' experiences in the firm prior to layoffs, pointing to formal organizational processes as insidious mechanisms driving inequality. The firm stated that layoffs were determined by performance and skill set, but the actual attributes for surviving layoffs turned out to be more malleable and open to bias

In Canada, guided by feminist interpretive inquiry, Murphy et al. (2021) purpose was to understand the experiences of young women in blue collar and administrative positions within the oil and gas industry, in a small Canadian town. One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted with 13 women aged 18–30 years between 2018 and 2019. Gender-based discrimination in the hiring process was a shared experience among participants, as it was within the job itself. The increased hiring practices did not mean women will be placed in positions at all levels of an organizational hierarchy; and such hiring practices may be at most cosmetic changes without transforming the workplace culture.

In Nigeria, Chikwendu and Bature (2021) examined effect of gender diversity on the performance of Shell Petroleum Development Company. The study adopted survey research design by using primary data with the aid of questionnaire administered to the population. The population was 4,500 while calculated to a sample size of 367. The result indicated a negative and significant effect of gender diversity on performance. study recommended that the company should move from a recruitment process that reflects

affirmative action to one that values diversity based on performance, this implies that gender should not be a primary or critical criterion for qualification for recruitment as doing so will negatively affect performance.

2.3.2 Career Advancement Practices for Gender Diversity

In the UK, Shortland and Perkins (2020) examined how female expatriates interpret the effectiveness of practical implementation of equality/diversity policies, trusting this to support their expatriate careers. A cross-sectional, qualitative research approach draws upon in-depth semi-structured interviews with 14 human resources equality/diversity policy implementers and 26 current female expatriates in two oil and gas firms. Early-career stage female expatriates believe that equality/diversity policy implementation will support their international careers. At the most senior levels, women expatriates highlight unequal treatment breaching their trust in delivery of equality/diversity principles to support their expatriate career progression.

In China, Lin and Zhou (2024) explored impact of workplace relationships on the career development and well-being of women engineers in the Chinese energy industry grounded in social network theory and employs a qualitative methodology, including in-depth interviews with women engineers across various energy companies. The findings revealed that informal social networks, often male-dominated, play a crucial role in shaping career opportunities and challenges for women. These networks frequently exclude women, limiting their access to vital information and career advancement opportunities. Moreover, women in these industries face additional pressures from both male colleagues and female leaders, who may perpetuate existing gender biases.

In Indonesia, Rabbani (2024) aimed to explore, understand and analyze experiences of 6 women managers in oil and gas sub-sector regarding their career advancement by conducting an in-depth interview. The research anchored on career development theory. Using thematic analysis, this research found that the company's role in career development shows support from the organization to help the career development of female workers in the oil and gas sub-sector in the form of making gender-friendly policies in male-dominant industries, especially the diversity rate program in the form of a percentage of the number of female workers in one company to boost their careers.

In Oman, Alzadjali et al. (2020) sought to identify the factors that contribute to glass ceiling that affect women's career advancement. Several factors were identified while reviewing the literature; they are organizational, societal and personal factors. Snowball sampling method was used to recruit 180 employees from public and private oil and gas companies who are in junior management level. The findings revealed that women in the private sector faced glass ceiling more in some aspects whereas public sector employees in few aspects. The findings confirmed that organizational, societal and personal factors influenced career advancement of women.

In South Africa, Ketchiwou and Naong (2024) did an exploration into those organization factors that have an effect on career advancement on women from a sample of 237 respondents that were selected from the service sector. Convenience sampling methods was used to select its units of observation and mixed methods of data collection and analysis were used. Content and thematic analysis revealed that giving priority to women and providing skill development opportunities, giving assistance to women in managing their careers, work-life balance (WLB), providing mentorship that promote female career advancement.

In Nigeria, Egbuta (2019) research focused on the leadership succession planning and its effect on career development at the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) anchored on social cognitive career theory (SCCT) and common-sense theory. A descriptive survey research design was adopted in a population of 9,024 top, middle and lower-level management staff from which a sample of 1,960 was derived. Purposive sampling procedure was adopted and a structured questionnaire administered to respondents. The results revealed there was no established career path for employees and professional groups concluding that leadership succession practice had no effect on employee career development.

Ikwor and Chikwe (2025) assessed the association between workplace flexibility and employee performance in five oil and gas companies using a cross-sectional research method among 237 staff. A structured questionnaire was administered to respondents selected via a stratified random sampling method and its findings were analysed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Its output showed there was a moderate positive association between telework, flexible hours, and employee performance metrics including teamwork and adaptability. Using flexible work arrangements (FWAs) can

improve employee performance for oil and gas companies by enhancing employee satisfaction, diminishing absenteeism, recruiting and retaining premier talent.

In Kenya, Odunga et al. (2024) researched examined the perspective and knowledge of health managers on which workplace practices and policies contributed to their career advancement among women. A purposive sampling method was used to select its participants employing qualitative approaches implemented by 21 in-depth interviews and key informant interviews (KIIs) with respondents in public and private organisations. Thematic analysis was used to extract emerging themes and the findings revealed a few respondents cited the policies and practices that contributed to women's career advancement. FWAs were frequently mentioned as key to advancing women's career progression.

2.3.3 Mentoring Practices for Gender Diversity

Using a literature review, Lazoroska et al. (2024) sought to understand how gender has been integrated, what the main barriers and enablers for women are, and what strategies organizations have applied to achieve gender balance so that men and women face equal opportunities to partake in and influence decisions concerning the energy system. It found women's exclusion is not recognized as a problem that needs to be acknowledged, monitored, or addressed by the energy sector or policymakers. Professional mentoring and networking have largely been employed to fill the diversity gaps left untackled by the energy sector or policy makers. Opportunities for women to be meaningfully included in energy systems decision-making are still limited and fragmented.

In Malaysia, Siew et al. (2018) did an exploratory study examining the relationship between work-life balance (WLB), mentoring support and networking towards women's career advancement. This survey uses convenient sampling methodology to conduct the survey of 110 female employees in Malaysia. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression Test were used to analyze the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. The findings show that mentoring support was positively correlated with the dependent variable, women career advancement.

Using a sample of African women in the UK, Kagher and Stewart (2020) explores the concept of mentoring drawing on empirical evidence from 30 respondents in different sector including the oil and gas sector. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 30

women to address our research questions and the selection method used was purposive sampling. We recruited volunteer participants from friends and acquaintances in work organisations, and from social and religious networks. Thematic analysis was used to examine the narratives of how and why these women engage in mentoring highlighting there were no formal role models from the industry to the upcoming women. The findings suggest that the participants are not wholly dependent on formal organisational mentoring support as this was non-existent.

In Nigeria, Ogunmusire (2023) did an analysis of gender diversity in the oil and gas industry by five sub sectors: power, renewable energy, upstream, midstream and downstream guided by the gender differences theory. The study was guided by Gender difference theory. A survey was conducted between September 2020 and March 2021 with sample size of people working in the energy sector. The survey was in two parts, one for employers and the other for employees in the energy sector. The survey was completed by a total of 153 respondents; 118 for employees and 35 for employers. The results revealed that there was an inadequate mentorship reported by female employees in the sector.

2.3.4 Training Practices for Gender Diversity

In Saudi Arabia, Banihammad et al. (2023) used a case study method to examine strategies used in oil and gas companies' strategies for women's Career in the sector. The Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) was selected purposefully for the research. The findings revealed the company has implemented successful strategies to promote women on site. These include creating a gender-balanced work environment, investing in education and training, providing mentorship and leadership programs, addressing safety concerns, and celebrating success. Overall, these efforts have led to a more diverse and inclusive work environment, increased female representation and leadership, and improved safety and well-being for women in the industry.

In Nigeria, Chikwendu and Bature (2021) examined effect of gender diversity on performance of Shell Petroleum Development Company using survey research design in a sample of 367 employees. The research was anchored on the social identity theory (SIT). The output shows respondents strongly agreed (32.97%), agreed (29.97%), undecided (13.62%), disagreed (7.35%), and strongly disagreed (16.07%) that their organization's training was developed to meet the requirement of male and female employees. The

findings show most respondents were in the agreement group that the training provided suited both male and female employees.

Using a sample of companies from selected male-dominated industries, Oyiana (2021) conducted interviews with ten senior executives on gender mainstreaming (GM) using a five-phased approach: compiling, disassembling, reassembling, interpreting, and concluding. This found that GM interventions continue to emphasize policies relating to childcare and excluding more pressing issues on gender. A dearth of training was identified as one of reasons for the industry GM poor outcomes. Gender training was only targeted at bringing women up to speed on how to develop themselves. The organizations were lacking in awareness of what effective GM training entails (gender awareness training, gender analysis and planning training, and training for policy makers).

Oruebo and David-Alonge (2024) investigated the relationship between diversity and inclusion and team performance of the oil and gas firms in Rivers State. A survey study was carried out in this study anchored on social identity theory (SIT). The population comprised 4520 employees of the oil and gas firms in Rivers State and the samples were 317 employees of the oil and gas firms. The results show that diversity training and inclusivity of voices and perspectives, significantly contribute to enhancing team performance. diversity training programs promote innovative problem-solving and decision-making processes.

2.4 Literature Review Summary and Gaps

Gender diversity in the oil and gas sector has commanded interest from researchers as evidenced by this empirical review. However, some emergent gaps are highlighted and summarized in Table 2.1 that this addressed in its inquiry.

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature Review and Gaps

Author	Topic	Methodology	Findings	Research gaps	Study filling gap
Williams (2019)	Hiring practices in U.S. O&G	Longitudinal online survey	Gender diversity gains reversed during economic downturns; hiring favors white men	Limited insight on cultural and informal influences	This study provides insight into systemic and procedural barriers relevant to Kenyan O&G context
Bosky et al. (2022)	Layoffs and gender inequality in U.S. O&G	Survey-based analysis	Layoffs exacerbate gender gaps; formal criteria hide bias	Understanding lived experiences of affected employees	Reinforces need to examine how hiring practices impact gender diversity in Nairobi County
Lucas et al. (2021)	Recruitment interventions in U.S. tech	Experimental	Informal candidate shortlists increased female representation	Effectiveness across industries	Supports exploring candidate shortlists and professional networks to improve gender diversity in Kenya
Murphy et al. (2021)	Hiring & career experiences in Canadian O&G	Feminist interpretive inquiry	Persistent discrimination; hiring increases promotions	Limited understanding of organizational culture's role	Highlights the importance of organizational culture and gendered practices in Nairobi County O&G sector
Chikwendu & Bature (2021)	Diversity-focused hiring in Nigerian O&G	Survey	Negative relation between gender-focused hiring and performance	Context-specific outcomes of diversity policies	Illustrates need to balance merit-based practices with gender diversity in Kenya
Shortland & Perkins (2020)	Career advancement for female expatriates in U.K. O&G	Qualitative interviews	Generational divide in perceptions of diversity policies	Insight on early-career vs. senior female experiences	Supports examining career advancement mechanisms (FWAs,

					merit-based promotion, succession planning) in Nairobi County
Lin & Zhou (2024)	Informal networks and female engineers in China	Qualitative	Male-dominated networks limit advancement; reinforce biases	Quantitative impact of networks	Justifies investigating professional networks as a tool for gender diversity in Kenya
Rabbani (2024)	Gender-friendly policies in Indonesia	Policy evaluation	Policies supported career advancement	Effectiveness across sectors	Informs study of flexible work arrangements and policies to enhance women's career advancement in Nairobi County
AlZadjali et al. (2020)	Glass ceiling in Oman	Qualitative	Private sector women face greater barriers; culture & norms critical	Comparison across sectors	Highlights need to explore barriers to senior positions in Kenyan O&G
Ketchiwou & Naong (2024)	Career advancement in South Africa	Mixed-method	Mentorship, skills development, work-life balance promote careers	Limited cross-sector applicability	Supports exploring mentorship, employee resource groups, and training practices for promoting gender diversity in Kenya
Egbuta (2019)	Leadership succession in Nigeria	Case analysis	Lack of structured career paths inhibits advancement	Connection to policy and mentoring interventions	Justifies including succession planning and merit-based promotion as strategies in Nairobi County
Ikwor & Chikwe (2025)	Flexible work arrangements in Nigeria	Survey	Telework & flexible hours enhance performance & advancement	Quantitative evidence for policy effects	Supports exploration of FWAs as enablers of career advancement in Nairobi O&G sector

Odunga et al. (2024)	Policy awareness in Kenya	Survey & interviews	Low awareness of advancement policies; flexible arrangements key	Need for systemic implementation	Provides precedent for examining knowledge and application of diversity policies in Kenyan O&G companies
Lazoroska et al. (2024)	Mentoring in energy sector (global review)	Literature review	Mentoring fragmented; women's exclusion rarely acknowledged	Lack of systemic mentorship programs	Supports examining employee resource groups and international day celebrations as mentoring practices in Nairobi County
Siew et al. (2018)	Mentoring & networking in Malaysia	Correlation survey	Mentoring positively affects career progression	Limited sample, context-specific	Reinforces relevance of structured mentorship opportunities in promoting gender diversity in Kenya
Kagher & Stewart (2020)	Mentorship for African women in U.K.	Semi-structured interviews	Reliance on informal networks due to absent formal mentoring	Lack of organizational support	Highlights importance of integrating mentoring into organizational culture in Nairobi O&G sector
Ogunmusire (2023)	Mentoring in Nigerian O&G	Qualitative	Insufficient mentoring opportunities; recognized as critical	Gap between recognition and implementation	Justifies investigating formal and informal mentoring practices for women in Kenyan O&G companies
Banihammad et al. (2023)	Leadership & training in Saudi Arabia	Mixed-method	Structured programs improve female participation & team performance	Limited focus on integration with policies	Informs study's exploration of graduate management training programs for gender awareness in Kenya

Oruebo & David-Alonge (2024)	Mentoring & diversity programs in Nigeria	Survey & interviews	Leadership programs & training enhance participation	Context-specific strategies	Supports linking mentoring, training, and career advancement for gender diversity in Nairobi County
Oyiana (2021)	Gender mainstreaming	Policy analysis	Focused narrowly on childcare; limited structural equity	Lack of comprehensive implementation	Justifies evaluating effectiveness of training programs and gender diversity policies in Kenyan O&G

Source: Researcher (2026)

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter highlighted the gendered organizational theory as its theoretical lens. This was followed by an empirical review of literature based on the research objectives and following a global, regional, and local evidence where available and concluded with highlighting the research and knowledge gaps that the present study filled.

CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to present and justify the methods and procedures to be followed in the study. This includes describing the research philosophy, research design, population, sampling design and sample size, data collection, research quality, data analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

A research philosophy defines the foundational assumptions about the nature of reality (ontology), knowledge (epistemology), and how these shape the methods and interpretations of a study (Saunders et al., 2019). The main research philosophies are positivism, interpretivism, and post-positivism. The positivist philosophy promotes the idea that there is only one reality that can be observed using standardized measures and approaches. Interpretivism posits that reality is not objective but socially constructed through human interactions, meanings, and contextual experiences (Saunders et al., 2019). The post-positivist research philosophy integrates both interpretivist and positivist positions.

This research adopted the interpretivist research philosophy that aligns with the qualitative approach to research that seeks to understand how individuals in Nairobi's oil and gas industry perceive, experience, and interpret gender diversity practices. Rooted in the works of Weber (1978) and Schutz (1967), interpretivism emphasizes that knowledge is co-created through engagement with participants' subjective realities. Creswell (2014) notes that Interpretivists prioritize context-rich, in-depth exploration of phenomena, rejecting the notion of a single "truth" in favour of multiple, situated perspectives. In this study, interpretivism will be implemented by the face-to-face interviews with participants to give their stories and lived experiences on gender diversity practices in the oil and gas industry in Kenya. In addition, this data from respondents was presented in narratives to provide context to the respondents' social, cultural, and historical contexts.

3.3 Research Design

The study used the exploratory research design. According to Saka et al. (2023), studies that use an exploratory design are able to gain novel insight by asking questions to evaluate the subject under investigation in a new way. The design is practical for those researchers that aim to gain clarity on the phenomenon under investigation because of its precise depiction of the problem. The design was appropriate for the following reasons. The objective was gaining better understanding of gender diversity in a highly specialized and traditionally male-dominated O&G sector in Kenya that remains under-researched. The examination of the hiring, career advancement, mentoring, and training practices of O&G companies is a complex social phenomenon influenced by organizational culture, policies, and informal norms. This is suitable for an exploratory approach, which seeks to understand how and why things occur, rather than merely measure them. The exploratory design was suitable for identifying patterns, themes, and relationships to make policy recommendations.

3.4 Population

The units of analysis for this study were the oil and gas companies in Nairobi County. From a total population of 49 companies, 10 companies represented the target population/sampling frame. These companies were selected for their leadership in implementation of gender diversity initiatives. In each selected company, the units of observation were management staff, including a human resource officer and a senior executive. This made for a population of 24 individuals.

3.5 Sampling Design and Sample Size

A mix of purposive and convenience sampling was used to select respondents for this study. purposive sampling was used to select human resource managers and a member of the executive leadership in these firms. This ensured comprehensive coverage of key decision-makers who influence gender diversity practices, including hiring, career advancement, mentoring, and training. Thereafter, convenience sampling facilitated the recruitment of participants who were accessible, available, and willing to participate, a practical consideration aligned with the exploratory nature of qualitative research (Golzar et al.,

2022). Additionally, snowball sampling was leveraged to identify individuals with extensive experience, enhancing the richness and depth of the data.

These respondents provided a comprehensive view of gender diversity practices in the oil and gas sector, ensuring both organizational-level and individual-level insights. Operational and early-career staff were excluded because the study focused on organizational policies, decision-making, and strategic HR practices, which are primarily influenced by mid- and senior-level management. This exclusion ensured that the data collected were relevant, informed, and aligned with the research objectives.

Given the exploratory qualitative approach, sample size determination relied on the saturation principle, rather than formal statistical rules (Mocănașu, 2020). Empirical studies, including Guest et al. (2006) and Hennink and Kaiser (2022), confirm that 5–10 participants are generally sufficient for achieving thematic saturation in focused qualitative studies. Accordingly, 10 participants were selected, and data collection continued until 8 respondents provided sufficient depth and no new themes emerged, indicating that saturation had been achieved.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. Magaldi and Berler (2020) assert semi-structured interviews helped in striking a balance between the structure needed for consistency across respondents and the flexibility to explore unanticipated insights through open-ended questions. The interview guide (Appendix 2) provided the guiding questions for the interview but these also allowed for further probing so as to delve deeper into participants' responses, promoting a more comprehensive understanding of the complex nature of gender diversity practices in the workplace.

The interviews lasted approximately 40-55 minutes and these were audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture and retention of participants' responses. To enhance participant comfort and facilitate open communication, interviews were conducted at locations including company conference rooms or training rooms (during off-hours), neutral off-site locations, and private offices and residences of participants. This was critical in exploring a sensitive organizational topic such as gender diversity (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). During

these interviews, recordings were made after consent from participants to allow for the audio recordings.

3.7 Research Quality

Validity and reliability are the main components of establishing research quality in quantitative research. However, research quality in qualitative research is presented in terms of its trustworthiness which explains the extent to which the subjects and readers can agree on (Stahl & King, 2020). Lincoln and Guba (1985) advice qualitative researchers to enhance quality and trustworthiness of their research by its credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility describes the extent that findings from a qualitative inquiry are an accurate reflection of the reality of its participants (Stahl & King, 2020). Credibility was attained by spending time with the respondents before the interview to gain rapport before starting the interview to provide them the chance to synthesize their view to gender diversity in the O&G companies. Transferability refers to the level that research findings can be generalized to similar contexts under which research is being conducted (Stahl & King, 2020). The study adopted purposive sampling that allowed for selection of respondents that were representative and information-rich on gender diversity in O&G companies. These included selecting HR professionals, management staff across departments, and both upstream and downstream management staff.

Dependability consists of the unwavering and enduring nature of the findings of a study beyond time (Stahl & King, 2020). This principle was fulfilled by keeping records of the transcribed data that was originally recorded during the interview sessions. The researcher also took time to re-read the transcripts after a period of one week after the first thematic analysis to ensure stability in theme identification. Confirmability speaks to the objectivity and impartiality of findings to make sure that findings are not influenced by preferences and bias from researchers (Stahl & King, 2020). The researcher ensured this principle was maintained in the study by using a research assistant to conduct the interviews so as to distance any personal bias from the study. additionally, member checking was done for respondents to confirm that transcribed data was actually what they intended to say while making any corrections or inconsistencies.

3.8 Data Analysis

The data for the study was analysed using thematic analysis technique with qualitative analysis software, MAXQDA Analytic Pro software (version 24). Variety of analysis tools available in the software were employed in the analysis that made the analysis of the data easy and interesting. The analysis was performed within an analytical framework as shown in Figure 3.1. Irrespective of the analytical approach adopted, qualitative analysis entails several activities which Silver and Lewins (2014) categorise as organising, exploring, integrating, interrogating, interpreting and reflecting on data and the processes of doing the analysis. It must be noted that qualitative analysis is iterative in nature and does to follow a linear process.

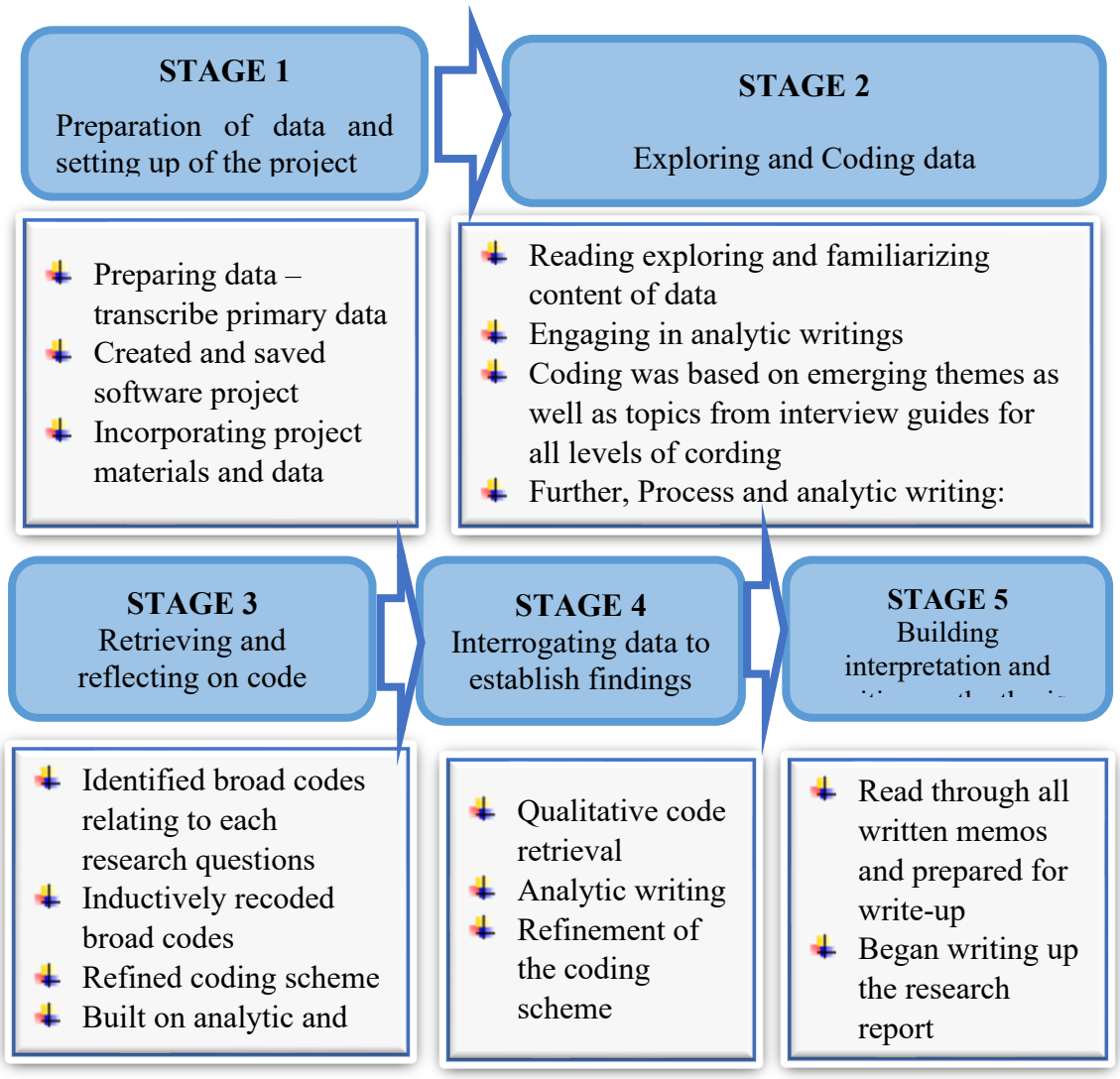


Figure 3.1: Analytical Framework for Analysing the Interview Data

The interview data were obtained from the audio recordings which were made during the interview and transcribed verbatim using the MAXQDA qualitative analysis software; the transcripts were imported into the Document system of the software project file for the study. The analysis of the data was very rigorous and was started with exploration of the data to enable the researcher familiarised herself with the data, highlighting and marking the areas that were of interest. Emerging themes were then coded. This exercise was effectively performed by using the AI Assist tool provided by the software which generated suggested codes to facilitate coding. In addition, based on the topics found in the interview guide, broad-brush coding was done. Figure 3.2 presents some of the activities performed during the exploration and the broad-brush coding. The key exploratory output illustrated in the figure include Coded Segment (left top corner window), Code System (left bottom corner), Code Strip and Document Browser (right bottom corner window), and Memo (top right corner window). The Coded Segment displays the content of the code labelled 'Recommended Initiatives' providing access to the coded segment of the data without necessarily having to read the entire original transcript. All the segments coded from the all the transcripts under this code are contained in the Coded Segment.

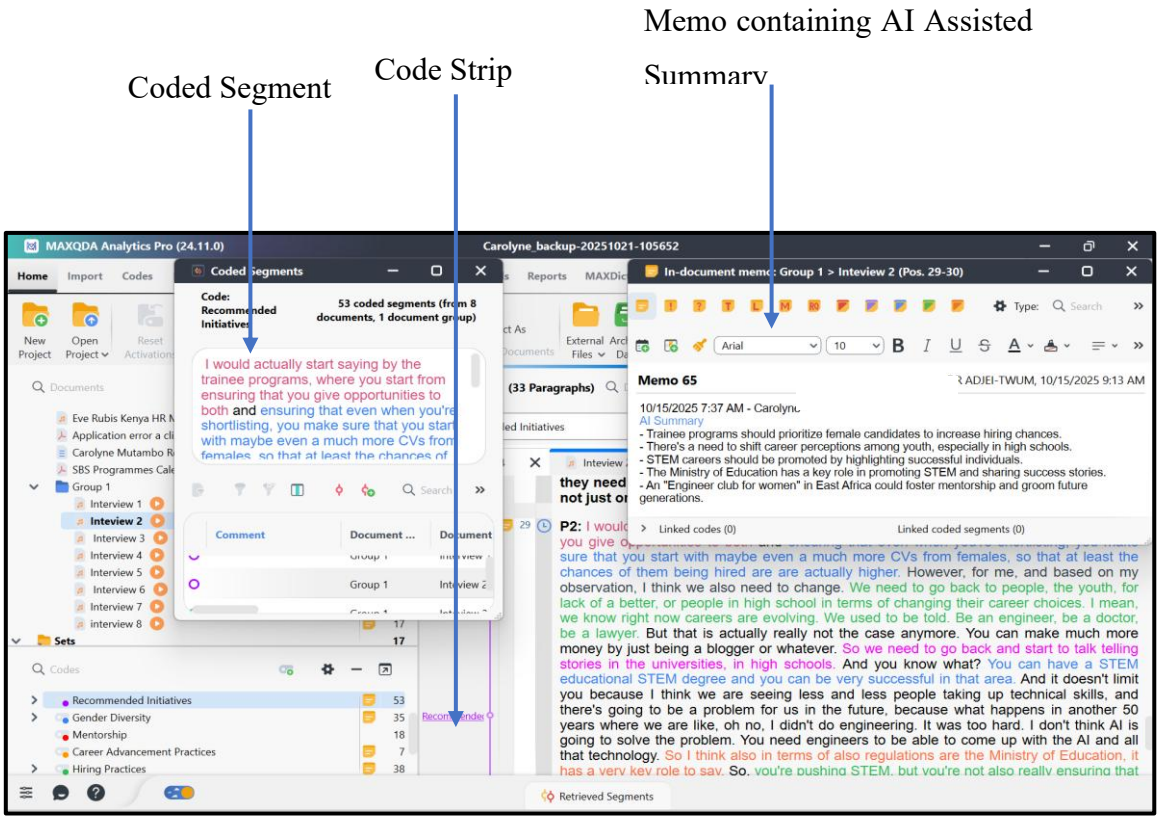


Figure 3.2: Exploratory Activities and Coding of Data

The code system displays the list of codes with the code labelled 'Recommended Initiatives' highlighted in blue colour while the Document Browser in the lower part of the lower right panel houses the coded section of the transcript that correspond to the code 'Recommended Initiatives' with the coding strip with the same code name. Further, a memo appears on the right top corner with AI assisted created summary content. The memo, as a tool provided in the software also enables the writing of one's ideas as they emerge from the exploration and reflections. Following the exploratory activities, retrieving and reflecting on the broad-brush codes creation of summaries for the broad-brush codes through a combination of manual approach and the assistance of AI Assist tool within the software using the Summary Grid (SG) tool provided in the software as illustrated by Figure 3.3.

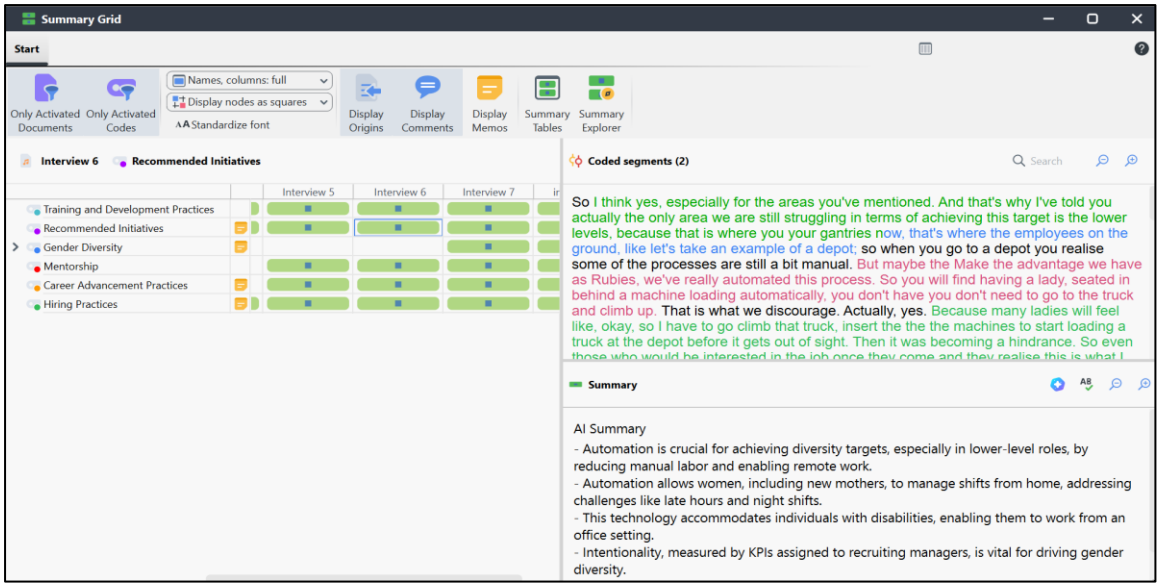


Figure 3.3: Summary Grid Displaying Summary Created for Recommended Initiatives

The SG which is made up of three panels, provides a panel that contains the code system on the left consisting of a matrix of documents by codes or themes that displays the text in the columns and codes in the rows. The intersection of the grids produces a node behind which is the coded segment. The right part of the grid is divided into panels: the upper panel displays the content of the coded segments when the node in the grid is clicked to enable the analyst opportunity to reflect on the coded segments to be able to create the summary; and a lower panel that provide space for the creation of the summary.

After creating the summaries for all the coded segments for the respective codes being analysed, the next activity involves opening Summary Table (ST) which displays the content of the summaries created in the SG in cells (Figure 3.4). The ST consists of the documents that represents the respective cases and the codes that are being analysed.

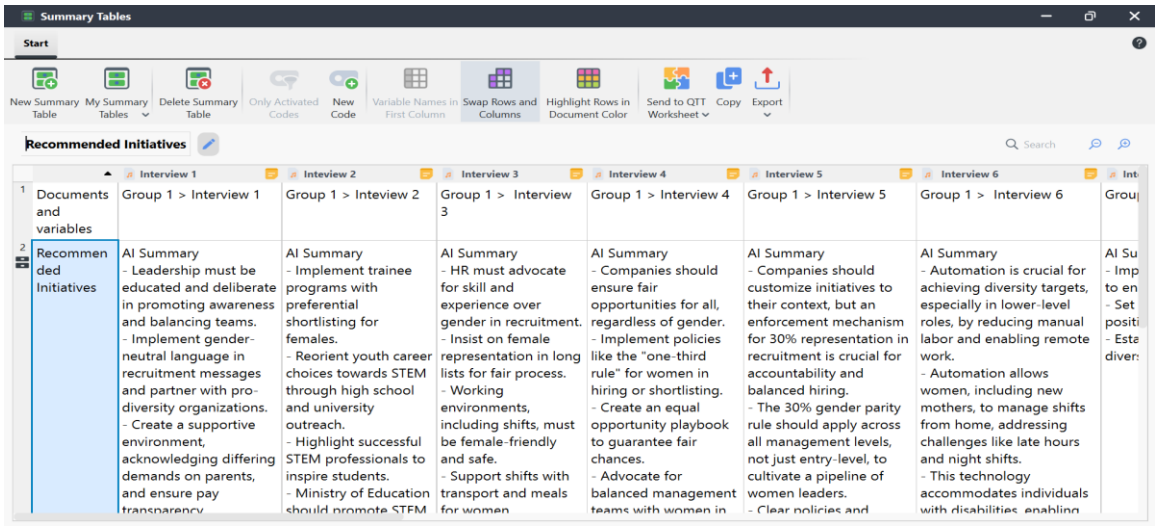


Figure 3.4: Summary Table Displaying Summaries for Recommended Initiatives

The ST offers a direct comparison of differences and similarities of the documents within and across the various documents. Retrieving and reflecting on data, and writing analytically using memo tool occurred concurrently during the analysis. Finally, the findings for the study were established through the examinations of the patterns of coding within the data using the Code Matrix Browser (CMB) tool provided in the software. The CMB is a visual tool that displays how codes are distributed in the cases or the documents. In other words, the CMB presents the codes assigned to the individual participants of the study (Figure 3.5).

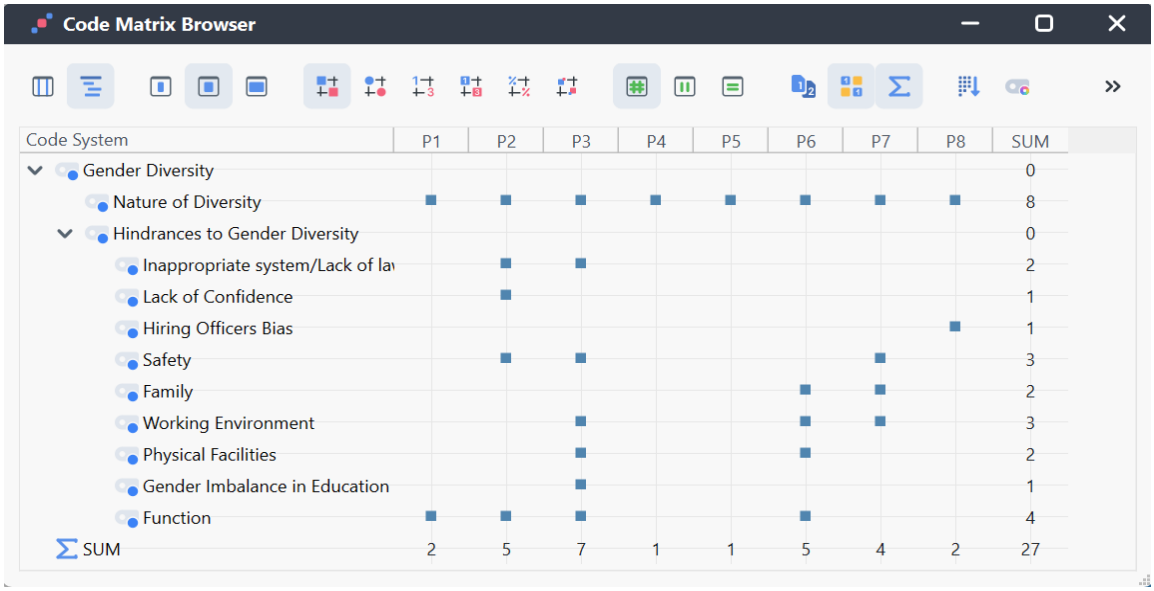


Figure 3.5: CMB illustrating the Nature of Diversity and Hindrances to Gender Diversity

As can be seen in the figure, the CMB is made of vertical and horizontal lines with the vertical lines (columns) representing the individual participants and the horizontal lines (rows) representing the themes and the codes developed during the analysis. At the intersections of the grids are nodes the that contain the coded segments. The CMB displays the codes that are present and those that are absent in specific documents leading to the establishment of the patterns of occurrence of codes in the documents

The CMB above displays nodes of uniform size and colour which is referred to as a binarize view which means either code is present or not present in a document and not the number times a code is assigned coded segments in a document. The implication is that the analysis adopted the individual cases or documents as the unit of analysis, considering only the presence of a code in the document.

Further, it could be observed from the CMB, the summations at the right end and at the bottom. The right end summation indicates the total number of cases or documents which have been assigned the various codes whilst the summation at the bottom shows the total number of the displayed codes assigned to the individual cases. By clicking a node, all the coded segments assigned to the code are retrieved for reflection and interrogation. For example, Figure 4.2 shows analysis of the hiring practices implemented in the oil and gas industries in Nairobi County of Kenya. As can be seen from the diagram, it is clearly visible

that the examination of the occurrence of codes in the documents establishes the patterns of distribution of codes and revealed that majority of the participants believe that having a Policy and Target Setting are the practices that well implemented during the hiring process of the oil and gas industry that aim at implementing gender diversity. Detailed discussion of the results obtained from the CMB are presented in Chapter 4 presents.

3.8.1 Overview of Codes

The analysis of the data involved creation of several codes. This section presents an overview of the codes that were developed and employed for the anaysis of the data for the study. The employment of the Code Cloud tool provided in the MAXQDA software led to the creation of the image presented in Figure 3.6. which is the pictoral view of all the codes used in the analysis of the documents in which there were a minimum of 3 occurances of the code in a document with the full code names; the sizes of the code‘s name in the cloud reflects the number of coded segments assigned to it. Thus, the bigger the sizes of the code name, the higher the number of times coded segments were assigned to it.



Figure 3.6: Code Cloud from the Analysis of Data

Further, Table 3.1 illustrates the emergence of key codes/themes across all interviews for Hiring Practices and Gender Diversity Improvement Strategies to illustrate the attainment of data saturation. The table clearly indicates that the themes that were identified in the 8th interview had all been already identified in at least one of the earlier interviews (P1 to P7). The recurrence of these codes across participants indicates that data saturation was

achieved, as no new themes emerged beyond the seventh interview (Guest et al., 2006; Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). This supports the adequacy of the sample in capturing the breadth of gender diversity practices in the O&G sector.

Table 3.1: Participant Thematic Saturation for Gender Diversity

Codes	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7	P8
Hiring Practices								
Target setting	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Merit and Fairness		✓			✓		✓	✓
Prioritizing Women				✓		✓	✓	
Existence of Policy	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gender Diversity Improvement Strategies								
Organizational culture transformation	✓	✓	✓			✓		✓
Fairness at workplace	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
Gender-Neutral Hiring practice	✓		✓	✓				✓
Mentorship and Coaching	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Commitment and Enforcement	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Supportive Environment	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	
Women Training programmes		✓	✓	✓		✓		

Source: Researcher (2026)

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Prior to the commencement of data collection, participants were provided with detailed information about the study's purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits in an informed consent form. The information in the consent form was shared and also read out to respondents before each interview and their verbal consent was needed to proceed with the interview.

Participation was entirely voluntary and respondents had the right to withdraw at any point during the data collection without facing any consequences. All information provided by participants, including interview responses and personal details, were treated with a high level of confidentiality. Further, respondents' identities were anonymized during the reporting phase where numerical codes were assigned to each respondent, and any information that could potentially identify individuals or organizations was carefully redacted.

To ensure the security of participant data, audio recordings, interview transcripts, and any other relevant documents were stored securely with restricted access to the principal investigator and the data analyst using password-protection. Data was retained for the period of the dissertation writing and it was securely disposed after completion. Ethical approval (Appendix 4) was obtained from the Strathmore University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee (SU-ISERC). This was followed by seeking a research license (Appendix 5) from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented and justified the methods and procedures followed in the study. This included describing its interpretivism research philosophy, exploratory research design, population and sampling design, interview guide as its data collection tool, enhancing the research quality, data analysis, and ethical considerations

CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The chapter presents the analysis of data obtained from the participants of study to address the aim and the research questions formulated at the beginning of the study. The aim of the study was to explore gender diversity practices in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya. In addition, a number of research questions were formulated to address the research problem. The main research question was how is gender diversity practiced in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya whilst the sub research questions included what hiring practices were implemented for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya; what career advancement practices for gender diversity are implemented in the oil and gas industry in Kenya; how mentoring practices for gender diversity in the oil and gas industry are implemented in Kenya; and what training and development practices for gender diversity are implemented in the oil and gas industry in Kenya?

Accordingly, to address the research questions of the study, semi-structured interviews were conducted after purposive sampling technique was used to purposefully select the participants for the study. Thematic analysis technique was used to analyse the data obtained with the support of MAXQDA qualitative analysis software. The analysis was conducted using various tools provided in the software. Examples of the tools employed in the analysis include AI Assist which facilitated summary creation in the various segments of the interview transcripts, identification of topics or themes and codes as well as paraphrasing segments of text; Code Matrix Browser (CMB) which facilitated the establishment of patterns in the data; Summary Grid (SG), Comment, Summary Table (ST), and several other tools.

Using a combination of deductive and inductive analytical approach (that is, abductive) a number of themes were developed from the analysis of the data. These themes include the practice of gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya; hiring practices in Oil and Gas Industry in Kenya; mentorship and leadership development including training and development practices; and career advancement and strategies for improving gender diversity. These themes form the main subheadings of the chapter.

4.2 Gender Diversity Practices at Oil and Gas Industry in Kenya

The interview explored the nature of gender diversity within the oil and gas industry in the Nairobi County of Kenya. Gender diversity was understood by the participants as balancing the number of male and female employees within an organization. For example, one participant commented that

> *When you balance it out from a total organisation point of view, you could have a better diversity number because of the other functions…it's not as bad as you look at it from a skill level.* (P3, Pos. 22)

Similarly, another participant in responding to a question on gender balance within his team, stressed that

> *Within my team, the company has, worked around ensuring that we have gender balance…we have 15 of us as the lubricant sales supervisors and out of the 15 we have seven ladies.* (P7, Pos. 24)

Yet, gender diversity was acknowledged to mean different things to different people. These comments show clearly that the concept of gender diversity as understood by the participants implies the number of female employees should be at par with that of their male counterparts within an organization. However, this was seen not to be case by almost all the study participants. The analysis is presented by the Code Matrix Browser (CMB) in Figure 4.1 that displays the pattern of coding based on the individual interviewees as the unit of analysis. The columns represent the cases or the interview participants whilst the rows represent the codes or the themes. Using both coded segments and the number of participants as the units of analysis, the analysis of the data revealed that the oil and gas industry is a male dominated industry.

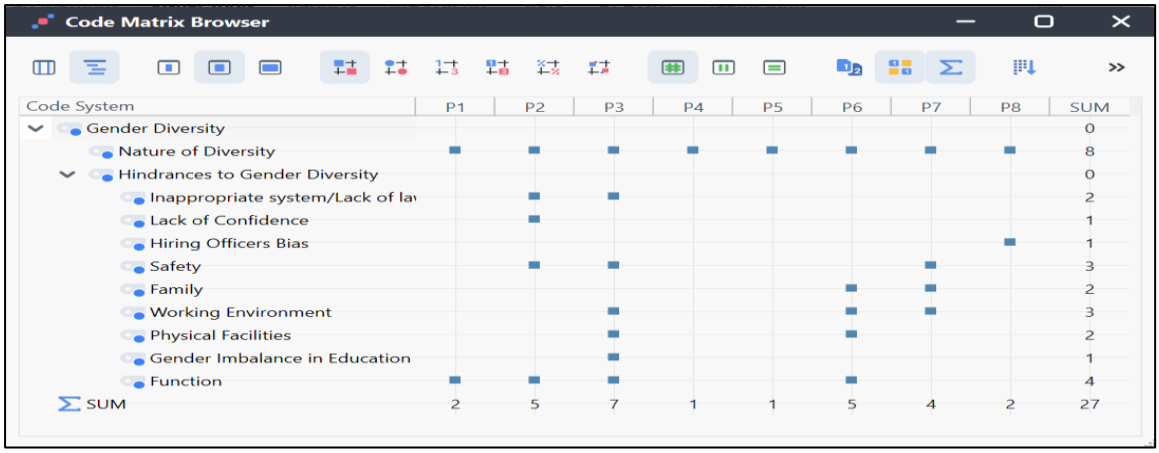


Figure 4.1: Nature and Challenges of Gender Diversity Practice in the Oil and Gas Industry

All the participants were of the view that the industry is more of a technical field which favours male than females. This was also observed in other aspects of the industry which are more of humanities such as accounts and procurement officers, where one could have more females to still be dominated by males. Though, all the participants agreed that the oil and gas industry is male dominated, they presented their views in different forms. A typical example of comments from the participant referred to as P1, who emphasized that the problem of gender diversity in the oil and gas industry is not just a matter for only the technical fields that involve engineering for which few females pursue in the education but also the non-technical areas:

> Even if you move away from [engineers and the likes] and go to the administrative part of it, the accountants, the procurement people; the front office, you find that, to a large extent majority are still men. (P1, Pos. 19)

In a similar vein, another participant acknowledged how important gender diversity is to the various industries, yet not something that is fully practiced within the oil and gas industry, even across several continents. She stated as follows:

> They keep on saying diversity is key…at least the common thread across all markets, regardless of whether you are in Africa or where you are…gender has always played a very key role. [However], women have not always been given the seat at the table; when you look at very big companies, the fortune 500, their top leadership, you'll see very, very few senior women at that level. (P2, Pos. 18)

How, it was explained by some participants that the organisations attempt to address the gender diversity issues by employing more female in the less technical engineering aspects

of the organisations such as sales, human resources, legal and other soft and less manual functions. For example, participant referred to as P3 posits that

> What some organisations do is that they push gender diversity in functions that are easy to get female talent…if you push marketing to have many females, legal, HR, so when we do the total sum of the organization, top level we are okay. (P3, Pos. 41)

These sentiments of imbalanced gender in the oil and gas industry were expressed my most of the study participants as a great concern as the industry is in all aspects is dominated by males. Accordingly, they adduced several reasons to explain why gender diversity is very low in the oil and gas industry in Kenya. These are considered and discussed in the next sub sections.

4..2.1 Barriers to Gender Diversity Practice within Oil and Gas Industry

As aforementioned, several reasons were identified by the participants to be responsible for the low gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Kenya as presented in Figure 4.1. Major reasons that were identified to underpin the low gender diversity include the nature of the task or the skills required to work within the industry; safety of employees, especially, female employees; working environment or condition; the absence of certain facilities at the workplace; family or social responsibilities of females. Other reasons identified by few participants included lack of confidence on the part of the females to apply for the roles deemed male jobs, inappropriate systems in Kenya that support gender diversity, and bias towards male applicants for job in the industry. The major barriers are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

4.2.1.1 Nature of the Task in the Oil and Gas Industry

It is generally believed that the core task of the oil and gas industry requires manual strength and technical skills which are pursued by more males than females, especially, at the higher and further education level. The engineering education that are pursued as careers of many have been taken up by males. This naturally leads to the male domination in the sector. The study participants variously described the nature of the task involved in the industry as the cause of the low gender diversity. A typical example of the comments by the study participants, taken from participant P6 who stated as follows:

> As a supervisor, you have to be there, moving papers, signing off manually for releasing trucks manually and everything, which is just maybe, working to the disadvantage of women. (P6, Pos. 15)

Again, another participant supporting the assertion that the nature of the task or work performed within the oil and gas industry favours male more than females explained his support in terms of the strength possessed by the genders in the organisations as some tasks would require more strength than others; and the methods that are employed in carrying out the tasks. This implies that the tasks and the methods that required more strength would more likely be performed by the male employees in the organisations. Thus, the participant stated that,

> it's around the different strengths that each gender brings to the company. From what we've seen, there are certain tasks and certain approaches to work that, for example, the men in the team will do a lot, will perform a bit better than …the ladies will perform. (P1, Pos. 14)

Similarly, another participant expressed as unfortunate situation as males dominate the oil and gas industry on the basis that the nature of the work in the industry favours male. She stated as follows:

> Unfortunately, oil and gas, just because of the nature of the business, for a very long time, I think women have been disadvantaged. (P2, Pos. 20)

From the foregoing analysis, it is clear that the nature of the task which is the core of business of the industry has been responsible for the low gender diversity within the oil and gas industry.

4.2.1.2 Lack of Safety of Employees

The analysis revealed lack of safety of employees, especially, females as another factor that is responsible for the low level of female representation in the oil and gas industry, more importantly, at the remote working areas. Some few participants were of the view that where safety measures are not appropriate or adequate, it becomes difficult for people to carry out their duties smoothly and effectively. This is more critical in the oil and gas industry where work within the industry occur in remote areas of cities, and countries and night shifts. This is supported by the comments from one participant referred to as P3 which states that

> Depot locations and late-night work create safety concerns that may discourage women from working in such environments, making certain operational sites less conducive to female participation (P3, Pos. 24)

Similarly, another participant expressed that

> Operational demands such as remote site travel and shift work make the oil and gas sector challenging, particularly in terms of safety and comfort for employees, although some provisions exist to support workers during rest periods (P2, Pos. 20, 27).

4.2.1.3 Working Environment

The working environment was referred to as the working conditions where there is lack of policies on sexual harassment, and an environment that provide harsh working conditions for female and many other conditions that do not support female workers. These working conditions have been seen to be responsible for the balanced or imbalanced gender situation in an organisation, that is, gender diversity. The analysis revealed that the working environment can pose a significant threat to gender diversity in the sector. Some participants expressed that the absence of clear policies regulating working relationships, sexual behaviour and misconduct between men and women at the workplace can present harsh working conditions for women and this discourages female interest in the oil and gas sector. This was communicated by a participant who was of the view that;

> If you don't have a strong sexual harassment policy, you find a lot of the girls or the ladies leave oil and gas because of that. Because at any time you're in a male dominated, industry, then the sexual harassment policy is not well communicated and applied. Yeah. Then you might find that, it's a very harsh environment for women. (P3, Pos. 25)

Another aspect of the working environment concerns the work schedule and timelines. Most of the participants expressed that this working condition was unconducive owing to the nature of the work schedules and timelines that naturally do not favor women, more importantly, working at the depots which tend to be located at the remote areas. It was observed that these are inflexible, especially, at the depots and aviation sectors where work goes on for 24 hours. The organizational structures and support systems are unreliable to smoothen the work process for females, even for the determined ones. This was pointed out by participant P6 as follows:

> Despite willingness and capability of women, the demanding and rigid work environment—characterized by long, irregular hours and 24-hour

> operations—can unintentionally exclude women, particularly in roles such as depot and refueling operations, thereby limiting their participation in certain areas of the industry (P6, Pos. 23)

Though some participants believe that the company presents flexible working hours and promotes work-life balance for all workers as echoed by participant P7:

> The company is promoting work life balance, whereby we have, flexible working hours, (P7, Pos. 54),

It was generally believed the working conditions are inflexible that do not favour the females, and that the flexible working conditions only occur at the sales section of the industry where most of the females would be working from the comfort of their cars and seats. From the analysis presented above, in a working environment where there is mutual respect for each other, work schedule is flexible more the females would feel okay working there which is not the case for most of the depots in the oil and gas industry and other remote location

4.2.1.4 Absence of Appropriate Physical Facilities

The lack or presence of appropriate facilities that support women at workplace was observed by some participants to be responsible for the balanced or imbalanced gender situation in an organisation, that is, gender diversity. According to the participants the difficulty in assessing facilities like washrooms is a typical example. Such essential facilities are often absent from site and this affects women working in the remote areas. This shows how the workplace has not evolved to accommodate women in the field. As one participant stated in responding to a question on how to improve gender diversity,

> You'd find facilities like washrooms were not available. So, you find that it is a limitation. (P3, Pos. 24)

Further, some participants expressed the harsh realities of lactating mothers in the industry who cannot find feeding areas for their babies. This shows an institutional inefficiency in providing for such women. Participant P3 strongly stated that

> If you have a new mother, the struggle will be, even where to keep her milk and all those things. (P3, Pos. 25)

From the analysis presented above, it is clearly shown that the physical facilities provided at the workplace, especially, the depots do not support females. Thus, affirming that the industry is built to suit and favour men, male dominated.

4.2.1.5 Family Responsibilities

The family responsibilities of both men and women towards their family poses a barrier to gender inclusivity at the workplace. This responsibility was discussed in terms of taking care of the young ones or the children, which in must case fall on the women, especially, during the breastfeeding period. This poses a huge barrier to women owing to the huge responsibility society place on women and childbirth, being pregnant or a new mother would definitely limit your ability to do the manual jobs such climbing and fueling tanks. Naturally, this situate not allow to working at the depots. This assertion is supported by comments from participant P6:

> The cycle of a woman, whether it is the monthly or the life cycle, there's one point you are a mother, there's one point you are expectant. So, you wouldn't still be climbing up the top of a tanker to fuel their true. So, by default the environment pushes you out. (P6, Pos. 23)

The participants went further to discuss the issue from the perspective of the male workers, and indicated that they are in their natural place of duty according to society since it is expected of them to work and bring money home. It was observed that because the role of women in the family or family-related issues, it would be appropriate to schedule the female workers for, say, morning shifts to enable them perform those motherly duties at home while their male counterparts are scheduled for night shifts. However, since males also have an equal responsibility to be present at home in shaping the lives of the family, such scheduling of working hours do not sit well with them as pointed out by Participant P6;

> So, as much as we can say, Okay. Yes. Let the ladies work in the morning, the men at night, the boy child, also will start crying; guys equity ‘I can't be the one only working at night. I'm also a father. I need to spend time with my children, my wife, (P6, Pos. 23)

4.3 Hiring Practices in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nairobi County

This section presents the analysis of the practices employed by the oil and gas industries in their hiring of employees as identified by participants of the study through the interview. Using the number of participants as the unit of analysis, the analysis revealed a number of

practices that are adopted by the industries in the hiring processes as presented in the CMB (Figure 4.2). From the figure, all the participants identified a total of five items that underpin the hiring practice of the oil and gas industries; critical among these considerations are deliberate policies and target setting, identified by almost all the participants followed by merit and fairness, and prioritizing women recruitment with only one participant identifying examination of employee composition to underpin the hiring practices.



Figure 4.2: Hiring Practices of Oil and Gas Industry

4.3.1 Deliberate Policy to Hire More Female

Generally, to ensure that any programme or implementation of vision of leadership of organisations should be backed by appropriate policy or deliberate actions. The analysis revealed that greater majority of the participants identified the existence of a deliberate policy or agenda to promote gender diversity in the oil and gas industry through the hiring process. For example, a participant posits that;

> Beyond just the job functions there's a deliberate policy that pushes us to make sure that when we're hiring, we balance. (P1, Pos. 14)

In a similar vein, another participant explained that in order to achieve the number of females required for certain positions, females are given priorities in filling some managerial position through deliberate actions. She commented as follows:

> Leadership commitment to gender equality has led to prioritizing women in recruitment for managerial roles, as part of efforts to meet gender representation targets (P7, Pos. 30)

Some of the participants expressed their joy in having made conscious effort towards achieving near parity of male-female employees at the senior management level and improvement in gender diversity at the middle level through deliberate actions; however, when considered at the organizational, female representation is still low. A typical example is the comments made by participant designated as P6:

> I'm really proud to say that because it has been deliberate, we've managed to achieve a 43% of the senior level in terms of gender representation. And at a middle level, we are currently at 38. And the overall part is where we are still a bit lagging behind because we are only at 23. (P6, Pos. 11)

It was revealed that these policies were implemented during the recruitment processes where the organisations ensures that the list of the potential applicants to be interviewed for the selection of the best has a balanced gender addressing the situation where male dominate to enhance the chances of female recruits. This is supported by the comment from one participant referred to as P8 when he stressed that the organisation has a policy that seeks to improve gender diversity:

> The organisation implements a 50–50 hiring policy to ensure gender-balanced candidate pools at both longlisting and shortlisting stages, promoting equal representation in recruitment (P8, Pos. 24)

In addition, the achievement of these policies was made through the development of KPIs which were given to all recruit officer at all levels to ensure that there is gender balance in their recruitment processes. In this way, the recruiting officers will ensure that they achieve their KPIs without which there will be likely consequences. This is exemplified by the comment from participant P6 who expressed that;

> Gender diversity is reinforced through KPIs assigned to recruiting managers, requiring them to deliberately ensure that a proportion of new hires or replacements are women (P6, Pos. 11)

From the foregoing, it is clear that without making that conscious effort through deliberate actions, it would be difficult to ensure gender diversity in an industry that is clearly a male dominated. However, some participants stated emphatically that their organisations do not have any such policies to ensure that during recruitment a particular attention is given to gender. This is supported by the comment made by participant P4, who in responding to a

question on whether his organization has a hiring policy that tend to promote gender diversity stated as:

> Not really. There's no formal strategic push that I've seen. No. (P4, Pos. 27)

The implication is that whereas some organisations has seen the need to promote female representation in the oil and gas industry in conformity with the Kenyan constitution as alluded to by some of the participants that thirty percent (30%) of employees should be female, there are some organisations which do not see gender diversity as something worth considering.

4.3.2 Target Setting

Relative to the organisations having policies intentionally formulated to ensure appropriate representation of female employees at all levels or gender balance in the oil and gas industry of the county in Kenya during the recruitment process is the issue of setting targets regarding the male-female composition of employees in the various organisations that must be achieved. Most of the participants were of the view their organisations have set targets for themselves toward enhancing gender diversity by putting in place programmes and activities that ensure more females are included in the long list to increase their chances of being recruited. For example, one participant in expressing her joy in what her organization has been able to achieve with respect gender diversity, stated that;

> The deliberate target-setting has led to measurable improvements in gender diversity, with significant gains at senior and middle levels, although overall representation remains lower, indicating ongoing gaps in achieving full organisational parity (P6, Pos. 11)

Similarly, the participant P5 in supporting the implementation of gender diversity targets set by the various organisations, said that,

> There are various targets across different companies. My current station at ZY Company, our initiative is to target at least 30% gender parity in hiring. This helps to create a more inclusive environment and ensures that women have fair representation. (P5, Pos. 26)

In addition, some participants were of the view that the targets should serve as the KPIs for the recruitment officers of the various units in the organisations to achieve. This enables them to be more intentional in including more females in the long and short lists of the

potential applicants during the recruitment process. This assertion is supported by the comment from one participant referred to as P6:

> For me, it has to be intentional and intentionality is, what's not measured, will never be done. So, there are KPIs …[which] has to sit with the recruiting managers, then you will be able to drive it very easily. (P6, Pos. 27)

4.3.3 Merit and Fairness

Also, from Figure 4.2, it was revealed that majority of the participants viewed merit and Fairness as a hiring practice that is implemented by the oil and gas industry players in Kenya. The participants described Merit and Fairness as a situation where equal opportunities or platform are created for both male and female genders during the hiring process whilst at the same time taking into consideration, their ability to perform the given task. It is believed that fairness which means creating a level playing field should guide leadership of organisations which is practiced in the oil and gas industry. Accordingly, one participant strongly stated that;

> in my experience across both companies I have worked with, I have always seen fairness in hiring. Gender discrimination has not been something I've encountered personally. (P5, Pos. 30)

The participant went further to explain how these organisations ensure that fairness is implemented during the hiring process which entails that the recruiting team deliberate on how to achieve the fairness and come to a consensus on the modalities and justification for it. He thus stated that,

> before the hiring process begins, there's typically an internal alignment that assesses whether gender considerations should be factored into a specific recruitment. If so, the HR team and relevant managers agree on a clear justification for this approach to ensure fairness and transparency. (P5, Pos. 28)

Further, whilst considering fairness, some participants observed that it is not just a matter of female inclusion as sought by the concept of gender diversity but rather the ability and the capability of the female; their skills and talents that enable them to perform excellently the tasks assigned to them. A typical example of such comments came from participant P2, who stated that,

> In most organisations we are not necessarily just saying we are putting women for the sake of putting women be it in leadership…it's the right people who can come [and] really compete with any other male in that position. So, it's actually just not sacrificing the quality or the caliber of the person in the role just because you're driving your gender diversity agenda (P2, Pos. 18)

Thus, according to some participants, recruiting employees for organisations, should be based on the qualities possessed by the potential employee, so that the one who fits well the available position should be hired. In the words of Participant P8 regarding recruiting someone for a position or a role;

> If the female is the most credible person or the most fit person for the role, then you would go forth and hire the female for that role. (P8, Pos. 24)

From the foregoing, it could be concluded that though it is important to promote gender diversity in the oil and gas industry, one should not lose sight of the fact that business organisations exist to make profit in their operations and therefore would only employ people who have the needed skills, the ability to executed the functions to perfection and not just because you are a male or female.

4.3.4 Prioritizing Women

The analysis also revealed that some organisations in the oil and gas industry of Kenya give priorities to the female, especially, in the hiring process such as encouraging more women to put in their applications whenever there are job opportunities. This was identified by few of the study participants as presented in Figure 4.2 For example, Participant P4, posits that,

> The efforts are here and there, like encouraging women to apply for the roles. It is not a full-blown policy, but the intention is there. In some cases, you can feel it. (P4, Pos. 29)

Similarly, participant P6 supported this claim by explaining how management decides to give certain positions to females or prioritizing recruiting more females:

> There are deliberate deliberate organisational approach to gender inclusion in hiring, where specific roles and shortlists are intentionally structured to prioritize female candidates in order to meet gender representation targets (P6, Pos. 17)

The deliberate hiring policies, target setting, and prioritization of women in oil and gas companies in Nairobi County demonstrate how organisational structures and practices can be used to actively reconstruct the gender order by attempting to correct historically male-dominated recruitment patterns. From a gendered organisation perspective, the use of gender-balanced shortlists, KPIs, and numerical targets illustrates an institutional recognition of embedded gender inequality and a strategic intervention to disrupt it. However, the persistence of merit-based narratives alongside gender-targeted recruitment also reveals the ongoing tension highlighted in gendered organisation theory between

formal claims of neutrality and the socially constructed nature of "merit," which can continue to reflect masculine norms of suitability in technical sectors.

Furthermore, the uneven implementation of gender policies across organisations underscores Acker's (1990) argument that organisations are not uniform in how they reproduce gendered structures, but rather vary in their capacity and willingness to transform them. Overall, the findings demonstrate that oil and gas organisations in Nairobi are both reproducing and, to some extent, challenging gendered inequalities, thereby confirming the core proposition of gendered organisation theory that organisations are key sites for the production, maintenance, and potential restructuring of gender relations.

4.4 Mentorship Practices In Oil And Gas Companies

The study sought to address how mentorship is practiced in the oil and gas industry. Hence, the interview solicited from the participants the mentoring practices that are implemented in the industry. It was observed that during the interviews, mentorsihp was discussed from two perspectives, first, in terms of the nature of mentorsip practiced, and second, in terms of the importance of mentorship to the empoyees and the organisations.

Figure 4.3 shows most of the participants were of the view that mentorship is practiced within the organisations by identifying the different forms that the mentorship takes and some importance for undertaken mentorship in the oil and gas industry. However, some few participants were of the view that their organisations do not practice any form of mentorship. The analysis revealed two main types of mentorships identified by the participants. These mentorships are the formal mentorship and informal mentorship. The details of the respective mentorships are discussed in the subsequent subsections. These types of mentorships are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

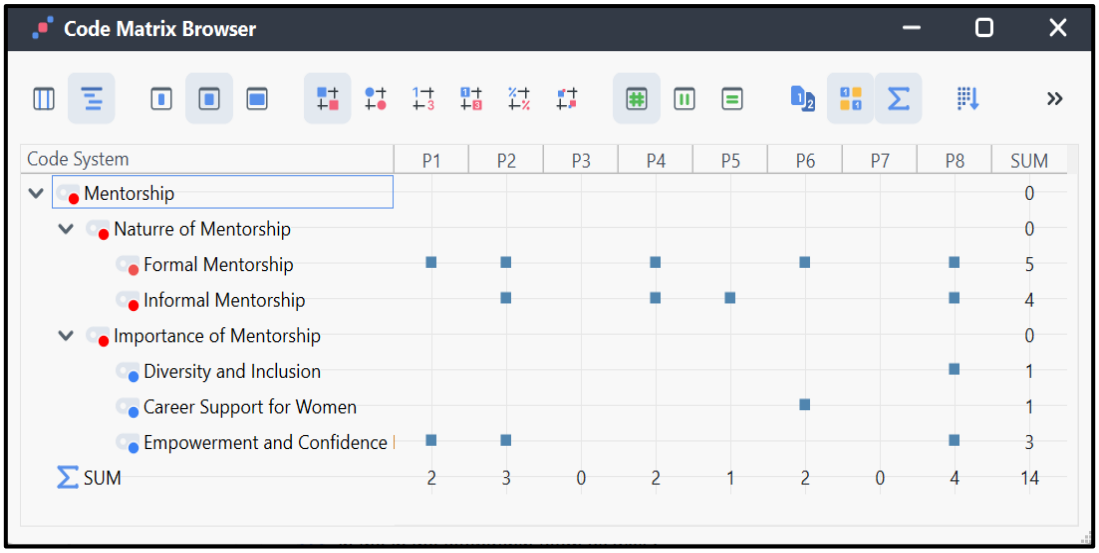


Figure 4.3: Nature and Importance of Mentorship

4.4.1 Formal Mentorship

This type of mentorship establishes a structure and formal way of mentoring employees in the organizations. It involves having identified mentors and mentees and well-structured system. The participants described the formal mentorship as a situation where a system of mentorship is instituted in the organisation to link mentees to identified mentors. It involves mentoring both new employess and existing employees who are taking up or occupying new positions within the organisations. This type of mentorship took several forms including organising forums that focus mentoring only females or males where females are made to mentor females and vice versa or both sexes involve in the mentoring programes together; the formation of resource groups to provide the needed support, especially, to new employees; and leadership mentorship For example, Participant P6 posits that;

> The organisation has established employee resource groups and themed engagement days to support staff, including dedicated groups for women that provide guidance, support, and networking opportunities.
>
> (P6, Pos. 19)

Various organizations have formal mentorship programs, but not all stretch up to top management, hence leaving a gap that is noticeably felt in support and grooming for leadership at higher levels. To address this gap, however, companies have formed employee resource groups where mentees are assigned to available mentors, targeted at addressing specific needs of women. As mentioned earlier, where mentorship is implemented generally for all the employees, the participants highlighted this type of mentorship by noting that effective mentorship, especially, at the senior level cannot depend on having

only women mentoring women but rather there should be the involvement of men. In fact, participant P2 explained that the exclusion of men from mentorship structures undermines the progress because it is men that women will continue to compete and collaborate with around the leadership table. This is seen in the excerpt below;

> The effective mentorship at senior levels should be inclusive of men, arguing that leadership development is not gender-specific and requires male involvement to support women's advancement and broader organisational equity efforts (P2, Pos. 25)

Mentorship at the senior levels accordingly needs to focus on leadership competencies rather than gender matching, enabling women to draw on insights provided by male allies who understand and support gender equity. This insight has formed the basis of leadership development offerings that have been designed without a specific gender focus, settling instead on equipping a diverse talent pool ready to thrive in male-dominated spaces. These development programs not only work toward building confidence and increasing visibility for women; they also normalize male engagement in progressing gender diversity, entrenching the principle that durability in culture shifts requires shared responsibility between the genders.

4.4.2 Informal Mentorship

Informal mentorship was described as the type of mentorship in which people who have been in the organisation for long tend to guide newly engaged employees without the existence of any mentorship programme or structure. In other words, it is a type of mentorship where individuals who believes they needed to be guided go out and seek for people to guide them in their activities. For example, participant P8 expressly stated that

> There is informal mentorship…indirectly you would find that…someone who's been there longer in the role in the organisation is requested, or has a mentorship with someone new in the organisation. (P8, Pos. 34)

Another participant who was designated as P4 when respondent to a question on the existence of a formal mentorship initiative program to promote gender diversity in his organization, especially, among the top leadership and senior management strongly stated that

> The straight answer is no. Such programs [mentorship] are not formally in place here yet. From what I've seen there is a very strong informal mentorship practice. (P5, Pos. 44, 46)

In a similar vein, another participant explained that informal mentorship takes the form of a superior mentoring his or her subordinate who reports directly to him at the workplace without necessarily being requested to that:

> In most cases supervisors tend to mentor the direct reports. It is informal, but it is there and it plays a role in shaping careers. (P4, Pos. 51)

However, as aforementioned the informal mentorship also took the form of the individuals going out to find people who can mentor them. This type of mentorship allows for professionals or employees in the oil and gas industry to openly reach out to senior colleagues for mentorship or ideas on career advancement. This type of mentorship allows the individual to choose a mentor who is more relatable in terms of background, gender or interests without waiting for a formal invitation. This is exemplified by the comments from participant P8 who posited that

> it's open if you feel like there's something that you'd want to learn from other people who have been there longer. It's an open market. You can reach out to anyone in the organisation who's at a senior level, and they would still be able to guide and mentor you. So, at times you don't have to wait for a formal invitation for that to happen. (P8, Pos. 34)

This form of mentorship is also typical at the senior levels where it is more individualized or group-wide leadership development programs. Here, participants highlighted the ability of employees to approach any senior leader, male or female, for advice informally, and therefore it seems that less formal forms of mentoring continue to fill in certain gaps left by uneven structures. While mentorship structures exist and are improving, there remains disconnect between the support given to early/mid-career women and the opportunities available at the higher echelons of leadership.

The adoption of informal mentoring as indicated by half of the participants implies the absence of formal mentoring structures which reflects how organizations may reproduce gender inequality through informal practices. GOT emphasizes that when career development processes are not institutionalized, they often rely on existing power dynamics and networks, which tend to favor men in male-dominated industries (Adewale & Aluko, 2019). The reliance on informal mentorship also places an additional burden on senior

women, who are expected to support others without formal recognition or resources. In addition, the limited reach of mentoring to operational and technical staff reinforces the gendered segmentation of roles, where women in lower or technical positions may have reduced access to career development opportunities. These findings suggest that while mentoring is recognized as important, its current implementation is insufficient to systematically address gender disparities. Without formal structures, mentoring remains inconsistent and may inadvertently perpetuate the very inequalities it seeks to address.

Overall, the mentoring practices identified in this study illustrate both efforts to support women and the persistence of gendered organizational structures. However, the lack of formalized mentoring systems highlights a broader issue where organizational approaches to gender diversity remain largely informal and fragmented. In line with GOT, these findings suggest that meaningful progress requires moving beyond symbolic and voluntary initiatives toward institutionalized mentoring frameworks that are embedded within organizational structures. This would ensure equitable access to mentorship across all levels and reduce reliance on informal networks that may reinforce existing gender inequalities.

4.4.3 Importance of Mentorship Practices in the Oil and Gas Industry

Furthermore, the analysis of the data explore that importance of mentorship to the oil and gas sector. Few participants identified some contributions that mentorship does for the various organisationa and moer importantly, the female employees. Some of these importnces include, empowering and improving the confidence levels of the female employees, provide career support as well as diversity and inclusion as presented in Figure 4.3. These are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

From the analysis, the participants outlined empowerment as an importance of mentorship practices in the oil and gas insdustry. Participants emphasized mentorship and targeted leadership development initiatives as playing transformative roles in empowering women in the oil and gas sector. Central to this is building women's confidence to perform and assert themselves in male-dominated spaces. Women have to be encouraged to believe that they are capable and therefore they can do it, as participant 1 put it.

> Let them know that they can do these things. It's not rocket science (P1, Pos. 19)

Other particular effective leadership programmes identifed to be implemented are those targeted deliberately at exposing women to senior level interactions, such as mixed-gender executive training cohorts and at empoering and building the confidence of the female employees in oil and gas sector. These interventions allow women to challenge subtle forms of bullying by pushing back, as and when necessary, and recognize that their male counterparts are not more knowledgeable than they are, thereby helping dismantle internalised perceptions of male superiority. The is supported by the comments from Participant P2 which states that

> Exposure to mixed-gender leadership environments helps women build confidence to operate in male-dominated spaces. It empowers them to speak up, challenge peers, and address issues like bullying, strengthening their leadership presence and effectiveness (P2, Pos. 25)

Again, some organisations foster gender-balanced leadership pipelines through equal nomination quotas (50% men, 50% women) for development programs, and held positions to ensure that women are not overlooked.

> Mentorship drove career growth by moving employees from local to central roles, boosting their confidence and visibility. Mentors' support and advocacy were key in recognizing potential and unlocking leadership opportunities, exemplified by a mentee rising to head the LPG sales department (P8, Pos. 36)

However, to realise the full benefit of mentorship, the research participants pointed out the important function of mentorship and leadership development programs for women to be prepared for and be suitable within the oil and gas industry. A prevailing opinion among participants suggested that women should be included in senior leadership development programs instead of being segregated within women-only forums and activities so that they can develop sufficient confidence to perform efficiently within a room filled with men. The participants felt that women should be made aware through such forums that they can perform equally well as men and that men do not possess superior knowledge and skills merely due to being men. It was noticed that organisations are now identifying and grooming young employees so that they can plan for their career goals and prepare for impending leadership positions while focusing on gender diversity at this stage. Participants from various organisations pointed out that women spontaneously pursue mentorship and coaching services, treating them as indispensable for advancing to higher

levels within the business structure. This was mentioned by the participant labelled P8 in the quoted text below;

> I think most females are more inclined to mentorship and coaching because they feel that if they don't do this, if they don't have someone to mentor them, if they don't have someone to get them there, then they're not able to get to their next level. (P8, Pos. 32)

In addition, the scope of mentorship allows for men and women to gain support for their career endeavours. This fosters collaboration and promotes industry growth. One participant recognized the human element in helping others grow by looking beyond their employee status. The participant stated that;

> Conversations also focus on supporting women's career growth while recognizing that they are individuals beyond the workplace—coming from families and holding roles as mothers, sisters, and daughters, which shape their experiences and needs (P6, Pos. 19)

Lastly, one of the importance of mentorship is that it allows for young professionals to be mentored by both men and women. This promotes diversity and inclusion and overrides the norm of young females being mentored by senior women in the organization. This helps in shaping their mindset for future gender diversity practices. One participant gave an example of such diversified mentorship at the workplace.

> For example, the current LPG sales manager, advanced after being mentored by her boss, who recognized her potential and was willing to take a chance on her leadership. This highlights how inclusive mentorship can uncover talent and enable women to rise into key leadership roles (P8, Pos. 36)

Formal mentorship programmes, including structured resource groups, leadership training cohorts, and targeted women-focused initiatives, reflect a conscious organisational attempt to interrupt historically masculine career pathways in the oil and gas sector. These interventions demonstrate how organisations are responding to embedded gender hierarchies by deliberately creating support systems for women, thereby aligning with gendered organisation theory's emphasis on organisational agency in reshaping gender relations.

At the same time, the findings also reveal the persistence of gendered organisational dynamics within mentorship structures. The limited reach of formal mentorship to senior leadership levels, and the continued reliance on informal mentorship networks, reflect what Acker (1992) describes as the "deep structure" of organisations, where informal practices

often reproduce existing inequalities. Informal mentorship, particularly through supervisor-subordinate relationships and self-initiated networks, tends to favour individuals with greater access to senior leaders—often men in male-dominated environments—thereby potentially reinforcing established power relations. However, the openness of informal mentorship networks also introduces spaces for agency and negotiation, where women can strategically access senior guidance and sponsorship.

Importantly, the emphasis on mixed-gender mentorship and male involvement in mentoring women reinforces a key insight of gendered organisation theory: gender is relational and embedded in organisational interactions rather than being reducible to women-only issues. The findings show that excluding men from mentorship processes may unintentionally reproduce gender boundaries, whereas inclusive mentorship approaches can disrupt the assumption that leadership development for women must occur separately. Furthermore, mentorship is shown to function as a mechanism of both empowerment and control within organisational structures. On one hand, it builds women's confidence, visibility, and leadership capacity in male-dominated environments; on the other hand, its uneven distribution across career levels reflects ongoing structural constraints in accessing leadership pipelines.

4.5 Career Advancement Practices and Gender Diversity Improvement Strategies

Again, the interview solicited from the participants the practices implemented in the oil and gas industry that are meant for enhancing the career of employees, especially, females; and the strategies that could be adopted to enhance the practice of gender diversity in the industry in Kenya. All the participants identified some career advancement practices and at least one strategy that could be employed to enhance gender diversity in the oil and gas industry.

The practices for enhancing advancement of the employees' career include the implementation of various gender diversity initiatives, promoting employees based on merits, adoption of organizational culture that ensures that gender diversity is inculcated in leadership as well as norms, values, and beliefs shape the company's work environment. Also, as presented in Figure 4.4 the strategies identified by the participants that could help improve gender diversity practice in the oil and gas industry are commitment of leadership towards implementation of measures that enhances diversity; adoption of fairness at the work environment; improving mentorship and coaching; adopting gender-neutral

communication; and implementing training, especially, for women. Other strategies include providing supportive environment, showcasing successful women in the industry, adopting automation in the operations of the various organisations, promoting female participant in STEM education, and formation of engineering club for females to whip their interest in the technical fields.

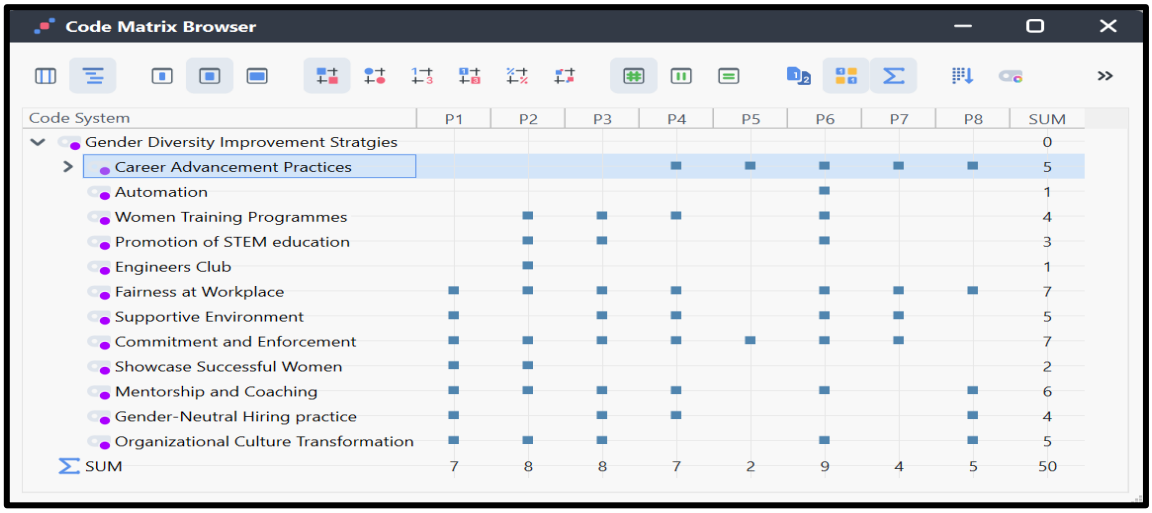


Figure 4.4: Career Advancement Practices

4.5.1 Career Advancement Practices

The section presents the analysis and results of the career advancement practices implemented in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya.

4.5.1.1 Flexible Working Arrangements

The analysis of the data revealed some practices implemented by the organizations within the oil and gas industry that facilitate the advancing of the gender diversity initiatives. The participants identified that organizations have started to implement measures for women to develop in their chosen fields and remain in the limelight for the leadership pipeline. Some participants mentioned that there are key performance indicators for women to develop in their chosen fields by increasing the pool of women to be promoted. In reality, the mentioned approach aims to change from providing women opportunities to supporting women in order to succeed. There are also careful considerations made by the organizations for new mothers to be given manageable but visible projects in order to continue their career growth since women have a tendency to be left out due to prolonged absence when they give birth. This is evidenced by the comment of one participant as follows:

> Deliberately we are ensuring that they [women] are accommodated. So whether it is assigning projects so we have hypos. So even if it's that hypo who this time round is a new mother or whatever, we are accommodating and having conversations whereby what project can you take up that you'd be comfortable to handle so that then you're not seen the whole year. Yes. Or you are missing. And yeah, sometimes, you know, out of sight, out of mind. So deliberately we are really trying to do that to ensure that there is they still have visibility. (P6, Pos. 17)

From a GOT perspective, these practices can be interpreted as organizational responses to gendered divisions of labour, where women's roles are shaped by societal expectations around caregiving (Williams, 2018). FWAs therefore represent an attempt to accommodate and mitigate structural disadvantages that women face within traditionally rigid organizational systems. By enabling continued participation in work during life events such as maternity leave, organizations are actively working to reduce gender-based career interruptions.

4.5.1.2 Leadership Development

There are also leadership development activities being used to develop the skills of women for their future aspirations. According to one of the participants, every program for the selection of leaders in the business or in the entire industry should have at least one female candidate, if not more.

> There's a medium-term successor and there's a long-term successor. So, for the especially the medium and long is that there needs to be at least one female in, in everyone's in whichever role it is that needs to be a female for that succession plan. It could be the more the females the better. And that is something that they ensure that is done. (P8, Pos. 30)

Further, in facilitating the advancement of the career of employees, organizations adopt the culture that ensures that those who are able to effectively execute their duties are awarded, especially, through promotion. This culture in the workplace is slowly evolving into the practice of merit-based hiring and promotions across both genders. Most of the participants hinted that there are equal opportunities and access for everyone to succeed. One participant mentioned that forcefully stated that

> Promotions are largely merit-based. Candidates must consistently meet or exceed their performance objectives. There's no two ways about that. (P5, Pos. 38)

4.5.1.3 Succession Planning

The interviews revealed that companies are generally adopting more strategies focused on involving more females in the succession plan. The participants stated that the organizations have started to develop career advancement initiatives to train the current employees for the leadership positions of the future. These plans are aimed at offsetting the natural bias in the industry to always choose men to fill the positions in the industry since they see them as the 'natural' fit. According to one of the participants, the truth of the matter is that without organizations making deliberate plans to offset the bias in the industry, there would be a tendency to always fall back on the men due to the natural biases of the culture. To overcome the problem of lack of women in leadership positions in the industry, the organizations have started to implement the rule that all of their succession plans have to involve at least one woman for both the short-term and long-term plans. Moreover, the plan aims to develop a continuous pool of women leaders in the industry. In support of the above claim, Participant P8 posits that;

> Succession plans are being made to favour females because if that doesn't happen, then naturally as well, because people gravitate to having male in suits and that's what they would do. But that's what they're trying to inculcate in terms of culture that in every succession plan, because it's normally 1 to 2. So of the two in short term and the two in the long term, that there has to be a female representative in the succession. (P8, Pos. 30)

Another aspect of the career advancement practices the structure to facilitate career advancement. In status quo, there is no formal structure supporting career advancement for both men and women. Some of the participants confirmed that there were no structured or documented procedure for doing that. Others noted that such measures were present but they were not structured or formal but rather existed as a norm. This is exemplified by the comments of participant P5:

> At the moment it [career advancement] does not exist in a formal written manner. It's just a general understanding…However, just to respond straight to your answer. No, there's no formalized process of doing that. (P5, Pos. 34)

The analysis established that gender has no direct influence on one's performance at the workplace and only played a secondary role. This places emphasis on skill competence over gender. One participant recognized the neutrality in the comment below;

> There's no two ways about that. Gender while being recognized, tends to play a secondary role to performance. (P5, Pos. 38)

The adoption of FWAs, targeted leadership development, and succession planning initiatives reflects organisational attempts to disrupt historically masculine career pathways that have traditionally privileged men in technical and leadership roles. The deliberate accommodation of women, particularly new mothers, through flexible project allocation and maintained visibility, illustrates how organisations are actively responding to structural barriers that would otherwise lead to women being excluded from career progression pipelines. Within gendered organisation theory, this represents an effort to challenge the "ideal worker" norm identified by Acker (1992), which assumes uninterrupted, full-time, and continuously available employees—an expectation that often disadvantages women due to caregiving responsibilities.

Similarly, leadership development and succession planning practices demonstrate how organisations are attempting to reconstruct gendered power relations by formally embedding women into future leadership pipelines. The requirement that succession plans include at least one female candidate reflects an institutional recognition of historical exclusion and an attempt to correct gender imbalance at senior levels. However, gendered organisation theory also cautions that such formal mechanisms may coexist with underlying informal practices and cultural assumptions that continue to privilege men as the default leaders. The participants' observation that "people gravitate to having male in suits" highlights the persistence of gendered cultural schemas within organisational decision-making processes, even when formal policies promote inclusion.

The emphasis on merit-based promotion further illustrates a central tension within gendered organisation theory. While meritocracy is presented as gender-neutral and fair, Acker (1992) argues that definitions of "merit" are themselves socially constructed and often shaped by masculine norms of performance, availability, and leadership. Thus, although participants emphasized that promotions are based on performance, gendered organisation theory would question whether performance criteria are truly neutral or whether they implicitly reflect historically male-biased standards of evaluation.

At the same time, the absence of fully formalized career advancement structures in some organisations indicates the persistence of informalized organisational systems, which gendered organisation theory identifies as key sites where inequality is reproduced. Where

processes are not clearly codified, career advancement may depend on networks, visibility, and sponsorship, all of which can disadvantage women in male-dominated environments such as oil and gas.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that career advancement practices in the oil and gas sector simultaneously reflect both transformation and continuity in gender relations. On one hand, policies such as flexible working arrangements, structured succession planning, and inclusive leadership development represent deliberate organisational interventions aimed at improving gender equality. On the other hand, the continued reliance on merit-based discourse, informal processes, and culturally embedded assumptions about leadership suggests that gendered power structures remain deeply embedded. In line with gendered organisation theory, the study therefore shows that organisations are not merely implementing gender-neutral career systems, but are actively engaged in both reproducing and reshaping gender inequalities within career advancement pathways.

4.5.2 Gender Diversity Improvement Strategies

As stated earlier, the interview explored the means by which gender diversity could be improved in the oil and gas industry in Kenya. The identified strategies are discussed in the subsequent subsections.

4.5.2.1 Leadership Commitment and Enforcement of Policy and Rules

The analysis of the data revealed that greater majority of the participants were of the view that gender diversity at the workplace can be achieved with clear policies, targets and enforceable measures for workers and managers to abide with. Commitment and enforcement were described as formulating and adopting policies that ensure that managers, recruiting officers and other officials of the organisations deliberately and intentionally promote gender diversity by implementing the content of the policy and targets set. Beyond policy, leadership buy-in emerged as key; where there is management buy-in of the business imperative for diversity, they can cascade initiatives effectively and embed them into business priorities rather than purely being HR agendas. Accordingly, some participants suggested that management should lead the agenda of gender diversity in the various organizations in the oil and gas industry to ensure the enforcement of the

rules and policy on gender diversity, including targets that have been set by the organisations. This is supported by the comment from Participant P3 who stated that,

> where I have seen diversity numbers improving is when it is led at the top. So, as a functional director, as a manager, when I get a long list, I should ask why are there no females in this list? Or why are there only females in this long list? (P3, Pos. 35)

In addition, another participant in supporting the assertion that management should ensure that the rules and policies are implemented towards achieving the gender balance or improved diversity, stressed that

> As a HR practitioner, you should insist that the applications as far as possible have female representation. So anytime you're presenting a long list, you try as much as possible to ensure that the long list has females so that at least they go through the process. (P3, Pos. 26)

Again, several participants recommended the use of measurable targets towards increasing the number of female employees at the various levels. It is believed that this would enable the organization to fulfill the requirement of the Kenyan constitution, that is, to ensure that at least one-third of hires or shortlisted candidates are women, as a practical way of improving representation and building a pipeline of female leaders.

> We even have it in the Kenyan constitution; one third rule could help. That is, make sure that at least a third of hires or shortlisted candidates are women. It's a simple arithmetic that can push things in the right direction. (P4, Pos. 35)

Finally, intentionality was consistently raised, particularly in recruitment, shortlisting, and succession planning, as a means through which women would be visible, retained, and promoted despite challenges such as maternity leave or socialized norms that have traditionally favored males. Participants also reinforced that KPIs on gender diversity should be assigned to recruiting managers and not only to HR, bearing in mind that driving inclusion remains an organisational responsibility. One participant explained that the strategy to achieve gender diversity relative to advancing career of women in the organisations in the oil and gas sector is

> to have [it] as a very clear policies and procedures, because operational organisations like ourselves are guided by this policy and procedures. If it doesn't exist in policy or procedure, then it's difficult to enforce. So I think the most significant approach that we could take is to have very clear policies that enforce this and procedures to follow through (P5, Pos. 52)

The forgoing analysis provides strong insights on the various aspects of career advancement in the oil and gas industry. These collective insights suggest that in fostering a gender-diverse workforce and advancing women in leadership positions, policy, measurable targets, and intentional leadership actions represent the foundations.

4.5.2.2 Ensure Fairness at Workplace

Fairness in this context refers to treating both genders equally, using the same yardstick, criteria and transparency in the work environment. Some participants hinted that in terms of remuneration, men are paid more than females in the same position or management level. The participants cited examples in the UK where organizations put in measures to ensure transparency in remuneration. For example, one participant expressed that

> The other issue that will be key for CEOs to address is issues around pay transparency. We've seen this happening a lot in the UK, EU where there's deliberate transparency to make sure that, people know what others are earning in the company. And it's very easy to find that male counterparts are paid higher for the same role that females are doing. So, if there's pay transparency in the in the workplace, it helps to advance gender inclusivity. (P1, Pos. 17)

Also, some participants proposed the 50-50 rule to ensure fairness and eradicate any form bias. This is evidenced in the comment from Participant P2 below;

> But much more importantly, in terms of the nomination, we are saying it has to be 50% delegates, 50% female, 50% male, to ensure that at least we are developing and we also have a balanced slate in that pool. (P2, Pos. 25)

The urgency for fairness was pointed out by one participant who mentioned that women in the industry who are hired mainly on the basis of gender in place of a more suitable male candidate are treated with disdain at the workplace. This establishes the fact that gender bias is abhorred in the workplace and more companies are shifting towards competence over gender bias. One participant argued that

> If colleagues find out that a lady was given a role simply because she was a lady and there was a man who had more experience, was better at the job, better leadership...you have actually set up the female for failure automatically, (P3, Pos. 31)

While participant P4 made a general statement that

> Companies pride themselves as equal opportunity employers, meaning everybody qualified regardless of gender, should have a fair shot at the role. So, this is what we should do. Everyone should have a fair shot. (P4, Pos. 31)

4.5.2.3 Improving Mentorship and Coaching

Another strategy identified by the participants that could improve gender diversity in the oil and gas industry is stepping up the mentorship and coaching activities. Indeed, there is a growing need to improve mentorship and coaching in the oil and gas sector. Most participants made several recommendations on incorporating mentorship programmes in the organizations. These mentorship programmes are meant to encourage young professionals especially females that they have equal opportunities and abilities to succeed in the industry. Some participants called for senior women in management positions to coach young females by sharing their experience and perspectives on achieving success as a woman in the field. This mentorship seeks to ensure continuity with hopes that the younger generation can succeed in the absence of the older generation. The following programmes were suggested by some participants; female development programs, management development programs, and emotional intelligence. On the issue of emotional intelligence, some participants expressed a cultural aspect of promoting mentorship. Whenever women vent their frustrations or displeasure, they are written off as being emotional. This participant suggested programmes that groom women into communicating their feelings without coming across as being emotional. For example, one participant recommended that

> It's about programs that prepare women for these careers. So, you can have mentorship, you can have coaching. You can have, female development programs, management development programs, emotional intelligence...So, it's very important that women are also taken through this, you know, a culture sensitization (P3, Pos. 31)

Similarly, another participant suggested that

> It's not too late to share an experience and Regardless of where you are in your career path, sharing it with someone who's either younger because there's also a reverse mentoring mentorship. So sharing with someone who's younger or older in the field of oil and gas would help. We've been mainly at times decide think that these people have been here for too long. (P8, Pos. 38)

4.5.2.4 Organizational Cultural Transformation Through Awareness Creation

From the analysis, it was indicated that most oil and gas companies may have clear policies regulating hiring process and working relationship but departmental leaders and other persons in high authority may not be aware of such steps to increase gender diversity at the workplace. The participants called for elaborative education on issues bordering on gender diversity. One participant questioned the rationale behind diversity initiatives, emphasizing the need for HR to articulate the business case and benefits, not just treat diversity as a KPI. It stresses understanding the "why" for managers and connecting HR agendas to the bottom line, questioning if diversity is embraced for genuine business need or current trends and reporting requirements. This is evidenced in the statement below;

> But beyond the policy, I think the leadership needs to be very deliberate in its awareness. Because sometimes you may have policy, but then you have leaders who are not very aware that they need to deliberately look out for these opportunities to balance their teams. So leadership needs to be educated, so to speak and aware of, the need for this to happen. (P1, Pos. 16)

In support of this assertion, Participant P3, advocated strong for the need to be aware of the reason for the adoption of promotion of the gender diversity, stating that;

> What is the need for the business? What is the need for oil and gas companies to embrace gender diversity? Or is it because it's the sexiest thing right now, that's why oil companies are doing it...So, I think that the why is very important. (P3, Pos. 35)

In addition, the awareness creation could take the form of organization of forums for workers where each one, especially, the female workers could express themselves, making everyone aware, especially, when they are being bullied intentionally or unintentionally by their male counterpart as they (the male workers) may not be aware of the effect that their actions and inactions would be having on the female workers or employees.

Also, the analysis revealed a deep-rooted issue where bias existed intrinsically in the mind of certain hiring managers due to the long-standing culture of male dominance. Most of the participants who recognized this issue called for a mental shift towards accepting women in the oil and gas industry. This shift can cause a change in organizational structure and culture to embrace more women in the field. However, some participants asserted that certain roles where distinctly for men owing to the nature of the job. For example, a participant explained that

> Shifting the mindset is more or less the hardest thing to do for people in the oil and gas sector. There are times you have challenges where you find the hiring manager is more inclined to hire a man as opposed to a woman. (P8, Pos. 26)

4.5.2.5 Adopting Gender-Neutral and Balanced Representation Hiring Practice

The analysis revealed that current hiring practice creates biases with the language used in job advertisements and during the hiring process. The use of "he" and other keywords that relate to masculinity like "aggressive" and "tough" clearly create impression that the job is for potential male applicants to the exclusion of the females. Thus, the participants were of the view that such expression should not be used in job recruitment adverts in order to bring a diverse pool of human resources, male and female inclusive. For example, participant P1 argues for,

> Things like using gender neutral words in the recruitment messages. It, does have an impact when you describe a role as 'the owner of this role will do this, this ABCD he will do ABCD and he will...' it paints a certain message to the recruiting [officer] or the person responding to this message that this seems to be a male role even without saying it. So. one of the things that can be a quick win is just making sure that it's gender neutral (P1, Pos. 16, 19)

It was also revealed that certain hiring process automatically disqualifies women based on their gender rather than skills and competence. The participant urged that human resource managers and interview panelists should advocate for qualifications based on merit, a system that evaluates a candidate based on his or her competence as these would help eliminate biases form the recruitment and promotion of personnel. Accordingly, Participant P3 suggested that;

> Recruiting officers should give the ladies opportunity to be in the long list; and that they are there for whatever role even if it's a promotion. Let the requirements that you are vetting candidates on be standard across, whether it's male or female. So that even women will know that to be a depot manager, 'I need to have worked in maybe a depot for five years. I need to have this management capability. (P3, Pos. 31)

The call for balanced representation and the use of gender-neutral advertisements and words came up several times during the interview, all geared towards eliminating biases from the oil and gas sector through such means as crosschecking the hiring lists for the ratio of men to women or using of a playbook or guidebook to ensure fair representation of both gender in the industry. Thus, it is believed that, to improve on the practice of gender diversity, recruiting officers ought to do their utmost best to craft the advertising messages

devoid of the gender bias expressions as well as choose their words carefully, especially, during interviews. This will indicate to all potential applicants (males and females) that equal playing field have been created for all.

4.5.2.6 Implementing Women Training Programmes

Few participants expressed various means by which women training programmes could be implemented to promote efficiency. The norm in mentorship for women is presenting female role models for young women in the industry to emulate but some participants expressed differing views on that by establishing the need for men in the field who appreciate the role women play in the sector. This presents a gender-inclusive mentorship and offers young women or mentees the opportunity to hear different perspectives from both genders while other implementation strategies focused on trainee programmes for young professionals and university students. The participants mentioned that initiatives like graduate trainee programmes, Apprenticeship, and Management trainee, contribute to early career development. For example, one participant explained how the oil and gas industry could reach out to the universities to support the academic programmes which are of interest the to the sector:

> creating interest and sponsoring programmes even at university level, so that you're bringing them into the organisation either as apprentices or as management trainee, where you really support them (P3, Pos. 31)

Additionally, some participants emphasized the need to leverage digital platforms like LinkedIn for leadership and career development in the sector. This is evidenced by this comment from Participant P4:

> I believe there's a personal check to this. And online tools like LinkedIn learning can be a game changer. There's so much relevant content there that can support leadership development and confidence building in women. And I would encourage everyone to go there and check. (P4, Pos. 61)

4.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed how gender diversity is implemented with the associated challenges that impede the practice of gender diversity in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, in Kenya. Also, the chapter dealt with the practices implemented in the process of hiring potential employees as well as mentoring practices within the oil and gas industry in addition to the practices that support advancement in career of the employees. Finally, the

chapter also discussed strategies that could be implemented to ensure that gender diversity in the oil and gas industry is improved.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discusses the findings and present the summary of the findings of the study as well as the recommendations and conclusions. Hence, the chapter provides four main subsections. The first ssection deals with the discussions of the findigs of the study while the second section covers the summary of the findings with the remaining sections deal respectively with recommendations and conclusions. The aim for this study was to explore gender diversity practices in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya which was achieved through research questions which addressed how gender diversity was practised in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya.

5.2 Discussion

The findings show that hiring practices in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County are shaped by a combination of deliberate gender diversity interventions and traditional recruitment principles. Most organisations have introduced deliberate policies and target-setting mechanisms aimed at increasing female representation, including 50–50 shortlisting requirements, gender-focused KPIs for recruitment managers, and organisational targets (e.g., 30% female representation). These measures reflect intentional efforts to correct historical male dominance in the sector, although implementation varies across organisations, with some lacking formal gender policies altogether.

The findings agree with Williams (2019) and Bosky et al. (2022) similarly demonstrate that structural and organisational processes—such as hiring cycles and layoffs—continue to reproduce gender disparities despite apparent neutrality in procedures. In the same way, Murphy et al. (2021) show that increased female hiring does not necessarily translate into career advancement, reinforcing the view that inequality is deeply embedded within organisational systems. Further, the findings aligned with Lucas et al. (2021), for instance, demonstrate that relatively simple procedural interventions, such as expanding candidate shortlists, can significantly improve female representation, while Williams (2019) and Bosky et al. (2022) highlight how economic fluctuations and formal organisational rules can unintentionally sustain inequality. This is consistent with the present study, which

shows that recruitment outcomes are influenced not only by individual merit but also by structured policies and organisational mechanisms.

The use of gender-focused policies such as 50–50 shortlisting requirements, gender KPIs, and recruitment targets in Nairobi aligns with Lucas et al. (2021), who provide evidence that structured interventions can enhance female participation in male-dominated sectors.

However, the findings disagree with other studies. One key difference lies in the nature of recruitment systems observed. The current study reveals a dual approach in Nairobi oil and gas firms, where formal gender diversity targets coexist with strong adherence to merit-based selection principles. This hybrid model is less explicitly reflected in much of the Western literature, such as Murphy et al. (2021), which places greater emphasis on cultural discrimination and workplace inequality rather than structured dual recruitment frameworks. Additionally, while studies in the U.S. and Canada tend to assume relatively established organisational systems for diversity interventions, the present findings show that implementation in Nairobi is uneven, with some organisations lacking formal gender policies altogether. This suggests a transitional stage of policy adoption rather than full institutionalization. Additionally, whereas Chikwendu and Bature (2021) report a negative relationship between diversity hiring and organisational performance in Nigeria, the current findings do not strongly support such a performance trade-off, instead presenting diversity initiatives as part of broader recruitment reforms.

The findings showed that mentorship is practiced through both formal and informal systems, although the extent and structure vary across organisations. Formal mentorship is organised through structured programmes such as employee resource groups, leadership development initiatives, and themed mentoring forums. Informal mentorship, on the other hand, is more prevalent and occurs through workplace relationships, particularly between supervisors and subordinates or through employees independently seeking guidance from senior colleagues. This form of mentorship is flexible and accessible, allowing individuals to choose mentors based on relatability or professional needs.

The findings align closely with Lazoroska et al. (2024), who observed that while mentoring and networking initiatives exist within the energy sector, they are often piecemeal and fail to produce systemic change. Similarly, the findings correspond with Siew et al. (2018), whose quantitative study in Malaysia established that mentoring support has a positive

relationship with women's career advancement Likewise, Kagher and Stewart (2020) found that African women in the UK oil and gas sector often rely on informal networks due to the absence of structured mentoring systems, which mirrors the present study's finding that informal mentorship is more prevalent and often fills gaps left by formal programmes. Furthermore, Ogunmusire (2023) highlights the inadequacy of formal mentoring opportunities in Nigerian oil and gas firms, despite widespread recognition of their importance. This is consistent with the current findings, which show that although formal mentorship exists in Nairobi organisations, it is often limited in scope and does not fully address career progression challenges for women, particularly into senior leadership roles.

The findings disagree with other studies including Kagher and Stewart (2020) emphasise a strong reliance on informal networks due to the absence of formal structures, the present findings show a more dual system in Nairobi, where both formal and informal mentorships coexist. This suggests a more developed institutional presence of mentorship programmes in Nairobi compared to some other contexts, even though gaps remain in their effectiveness and reach. Furthermore, Lazoroska et al. (2024) highlight that mentoring initiatives in the energy sector are often fragmented at a global level, but the current study provides more granular evidence of partial institutionalization, where formal programmes exist but are not consistently linked to senior leadership development pathways. This indicates a transitional stage of implementation rather than complete absence or full maturity of mentorship systems.

The findings indicate that career advancement practices are shaped by a combination of gender-responsive initiatives and merit-based organisational systems. Organisations have introduced flexible working arrangements, particularly to support women and new mothers, by ensuring continued visibility through manageable but meaningful project assignments. This is aimed at preventing career stagnation caused by prolonged absences and maintaining women's progression into leadership pipelines.

Leadership development and succession planning practices are also increasingly used to promote gender inclusion. Organisations deliberately ensure female representation in leadership pipelines and succession plans, often requiring at least one female candidate in both short- and long-term succession structures. These measures are intended to address

long-standing biases that favour men in leadership roles and to build a sustainable pool of female leaders in the industry.

Merit-based promotion remains a dominant principle, with career advancement largely tied to performance, competencies, and achievement of targets. While gender considerations are acknowledged, they are generally positioned as secondary to merit. Additionally, some organisations lack formalized career advancement structures, relying instead on informal norms and general understandings of progression.

The findings align with Shortland and Perkins (2020), who highlight the gap between the perceived effectiveness of diversity and inclusivity policies and their actual implementation in practice. Similarly, the findings showed that while FWAs, leadership pipelines, and succession planning initiatives exist, their effectiveness is moderated by persistent reliance on merit-based promotion systems and uneven implementation across organisations. The results agree with Lin and Zhou (2024), who demonstrate that exclusion from informal, male-dominated networks restricts women's access to career opportunities. In the Nairobi context, although informal norms are not the sole mechanism of exclusion, the reliance on informal understandings of career progression in some organisations similarly limits transparency and can disadvantage women.

Further agreement is evident with Rabbani (2024) and Ketchiwou and Naong (2024), who show that proactive organisational interventions such as gender-friendly policies, mentorship, and work-life balance initiatives can positively influence women's career advancement. The Nairobi findings similarly indicate that FWAs and intentional inclusion of women in leadership pipelines and succession planning are important enablers of career progression. The results support other studies from Nigeria and Kenya, such as Egbuta (2019) and Odunga et al. (2024), which highlight that weak or poorly communicated career development structures hinder women's progression. The Nairobi study similarly notes that some organisations lack formalized career advancement frameworks, relying instead on informal norms, which limits clarity and consistency in promotion pathways.

Yet, the findings disagree with previous studies. One key difference lies in the coexistence of gender-responsive and merit-based systems in Nairobi organisations. While much of the literature, particularly from contexts such as Lin and Zhou (2024) in China and Shortland and Perkins (2020) in the U.K, focuses on the dominance of structural or cultural barriers

that undermine women's progression, the present findings show a more explicit dual system where gender inclusion measures operate alongside strong merit-based promotion criteria.

The results are in contrast to studies such as AlZadjali et al. (2020), which depict deeply entrenched exclusionary systems and strong cultural barriers, the Nairobi findings suggest a transitional stage where organisations are actively introducing gender-responsive initiatives but have not yet fully institutionalized them. Further, while studies in Kenya (Odunga et al., 2024) and Nigeria (Ikwor and Chikwe, 2025) strongly emphasise flexible work as a key driver of career progression and performance, the Nairobi findings position flexible work more narrowly as a support mechanism for maintaining career continuity, particularly for women with caregiving responsibilities, rather than as a transformative driver of advancement on its own.

5.3 Summary of Findings

The summary of the findings of the study is presented based on the aim and the research questions formulated for the study from onset. The main question answered in the study concerns how gender diversity is practiced in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya with sub-questions that address the hiring practices in the industry; mentorship and career advancement practices as well as training and development practices. These summaries are presented the subsequent paragraphs.

The study sought to answer the main research question which addressed how gender diversity practices were practiced in the oil and gas industry. The findings revealed that gender diversity is not widely practiced in most organizations in the industry across the in Nariobi County of Kenya. Their best attempt at practicing gender diversity is to employ more women especially in areas where it is easy to get female talent like sales, human resource, legal and other less technical areas. These sentiments and concerns expressed by the participants led to identifying barriers to gender diversity practices in the industry. Here, the study revealed the following barriers: nature of the task or work in the oil and gas industry being more technical and manual which favour males than females; lack of safety for employees, especially, females who working at remote areas and night shifts; working environment which reflects the conditions in the male-dominated environment such as sexual harassment of various forms and inflexible work schedule, absence of appropriate physical facilities that support females in working some the remote oil depots and family

responsibilities in terms of childbirth and children care which mostly fall on the women. All these barriers point to organizational and societal failure to support gender diversity practices.

Also, the key findings with reference to hiring practices implemented in the oil and gas industry in the Nairobi County of Kenya are deliberate policies to hire more females where organisation have formulated policies and taken intentinal steps to recruit more females; target setting aimed at balancing the gender through equal representation of males and females in the long list where the chances of recruiting more females are enhanced; hiring based on merit and fairness and not just gender for diversity sake, and prioritizing women by encouraging more women to put in their applications whenever there are vacancies. Though the hiring or recruitment process is an essential aspect of gender diversity practice and the study sought to investigate how hiring practices are implemented in the industry. The reality on ground is that hiring practices are implemented to a lesser extent.

In addition, the major findings on the exploration of the mentorship practices, training and development implemented by the oil and gas companies include the formal and informal mentorship activities identified by the participants. This theme answered the question on mentoring practices in the industry. The analysis revealed two important highlights which includes the nature of mentorship and the importance of mentorship. The nature of mentorship was further categorized into formal and informal mentorship which is currently practiced in the oil and gas industry by most organizations. The formal mentorship relates to the existence of systems and structures that have been put in place to facilitate mentorship such as identifying and assigning mentors to mentees and other mentorship schemes. On the other hand, the informal mentorship which appears to be strong in some of the organizations who participated in the study, involves the individuals (mentors) identifying mentees to mentor and vice versa them without any formal structure or programme. For the importance of mentorship, the major finding was empowering and building confidence, especially, of the female employees who take advantage of the mentorship programmes; diversity and inclusion; and career support for women.

Related to the mentorship was the training and development programs. The analysis revealed that some organizations in the industry enforce training and development programmes to keep its staff abreast with current industry practices. The findings further revealed that these training programmes are mandatory to ensure an all-rounded commitment to career development. Also, the findings identified ways or strategies to

improve the training practice in the industry by implementing women training programmes and advocating for more young people to enter the engineering field by sensitizing them on career prospects through the introduction of more STEM degrees, telling personal stories and making it attractive to young people to acquire technical skills. Lastly, the findings revealed a growing concern of lack of interest in the technical field by young people who choose social media gigs for easy cash over technical courses they deem as difficult.

With respect to the implementation of career advancement practices in the oil and gas industry, it was found that the organizations are implementing various gender diversity initiatives, promoting employees based on merits, adopting of organizational culture that ensures that gender diversity is inculcated in leadership as well as norms, values, and beliefs that shape the company's work environment. Aside this, the analysis revealed strategies offered by participants that could improve gender diversity practices. These practices include commitment of leadership towards implementation of measures that enhances diversity; adoption of fairness at the work environment; improving mentorship and coaching; adopting gender-neutral communication; and implementing training programmes, especially, for women. Other strategies identified include providing supportive environment, showcasing successful women in the industry, adopting automation in the operations of the various organizations, promoting female participant in STEM education that would pave way for more females to be recruited into the technical fields of industry, and formation of engineering club for females to whip their interest in the technical fields. These strategies, when implemented will enhance and promote career advancement of women in the industry.

This study explored gender diversity in Kenya's O&G industry in Nairobi County, Kenya. Its specific objectives were to explore: hiring practices for gender diversity; the career advancement practices for gender diversity; explore mentoring practices for gender diversity; and understand training practices for gender diversity in the O&G industry. Gendered organization theory (GOT) anchored this study. The interpretivist research philosophy was adopted and implemented through an exploratory research design. The target population was 49 companies while 98 respondents comprised of human resource officers and senior management staff represented the target population as its units of observation. The sample size was determined as 10 respondents. The companies were selected by simple random sampling while purposive and convenience sampling were used to select its respondents. MAXQDA software was used to facilitate thematic analysis. From

the analysis, it was revealed that gender diversity is not widely practised in the oil and gas industry in Kenya which further led to identifying a number barriers limiting its progression: the nature of the work in the oil and gas industry; lack of safety of employees relative to work schedules and location of site (workplace); working environment or conditions; absence of appropriate physical facilities; and family responsibilities all of which do not favour female employees leading to poor diversity. In addition, the results indicate that hiring practices are implemented to some extent through deliberate policies to hire more females, setting targets in the organisations towards gender balance, implementation of meritocracy and fairness in dealing with the various genders, and prioritizing women recruitment. Further, the study revealed that both formal and informal mentorships are implemented in the oil and gas industry, yet there are more room for improvement as enhanced mentorship was identified as part of the strategies to improve gender diversity. Also, the study found few practices implemented towards advancement of employee's career such as various gender diversity initiatives, merits-based promotion, and adoption of organizational culture that ensures that gender diversity is inculcated in leadership; and diversity improvement strategies including leadership commitment and enforcement, ensuring fairness at workplace, organizational cultural transformation through awareness creation, adopting gender-neutral and balanced representation, and implementing women training programmes.

5.4 Contribution to Theory

This study contributes to the GOT by demonstrating how organizational structures, practices, and informal norms in the Kenyan O&G sector actively shape gender dynamics. Hiring practices, career advancement pathways, mentorship programs, and training initiatives all reinforced or mitigated gender inequality, aligning with the theory's assertion that organizations are inherently gendered through policies, roles, and interactions. Specifically, the study highlights how gendered expectations in technical and managerial roles, line manager responsibilities, and promotion practices influence the representation and progression of women in the sector.

5.5. Contribution to Practice

One key contribution to practice is the identification or establishment of the hindrances to the practice of gender diversity such as inappropriate working environmental conditions – both physical facilities that are lacking and harassment from male counterparts as a result

of lack of policies to protect them. Bringing this to the fore would enable organisations to formulate appropriate solutions to improve gender diversity. In addition, the study contributes to practice by establishing appropriate strategies that could be used to improve diversity when implemented within the industry. Examples oof such strategies include but not limited to ensuring that mentorship and coaching are taking serious within the industry and leadership of the organisations showing serious commitment towards addressing the issue of gender inequality within the oil and gas industry.

5.6 Conclusion

This section addresses how the research questions were answered or not, and how they were answered if answered. The overall question of how gender diversity is practiced in the oil and gas industry in Kenya was answered through the exploration of the nature of gender diversity; the hiring practices; implemented career advancement, training and development programmes; and implementation of mentorship programmes. All these for the subject of the sub questions answered in the study. Through careful data collection and the systematic thematical analysis, each of these questions were appropriately answered. In terms of the hiring practices, it was observed whilst some organisations are meticulous marking all efforts to improve female engagement through goal settings, recruiting base on merit and fairness, and deliberate policies, others do not see gender diversity as important thing to consider.

Also, it was observed that several programmes are put in place to ensure that females in the industry are not left behind in terms of development and advancement in their career in spite of the numerous challenges that were identified to confront the female employees in the industry. Some of these challenges are lack of safety of employees, especially, female employees; working environment or condition; the absence of certain facilities at the workplace; family or social responsibilities of females; gender-based discrimination in the recruitment and promotion processes and a lack of supportive mechanisms in place.

Further, implementation of mentorship programmes was identified to be done through both formal where proper structures are in place within those organisations that acknowledge the need to promote the agender of female employees and informal means where no structures are in place to ensure proper and mentoring of new employees, particularly, females.

In spite of the above, the study also explored the strategies that could be employed to improve gender diversity and for that matter the female representations at the various levels within the sector. A number of strategies were identified such as creating fairness at the workplace; commitment of leadership or management of the various to formulate and enforce policies towards gender diversity; transforming organisational, and using gender-neutral words and advertisement.

5.7 Recommendations

Based on the key findings from the study and the research questuions formulated from the onset, recommendations were made to guide industrial and academic practice of gender diversity towards improving policy, practice and theory. These are discussed in the subsequent paragraphs.

It is recommended that Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE) to provide guidance and assistance to O&G companies to develop gender diversity charters that spell out their individual targets, strategies to improve recruitment and selection of female candidates in open vacancies for male-dominated positions in both upstream and downstream organizations. It is recommended for national policy, standards, and guidelines to promote and institutionalization of flexible work arrangements in organizations to reduce absenteeism among female employees in and beyond the O&G sector to promote gender diversity in career development for staff. It is recommended for the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) to develop policy, standards, and guidelines for promoting graduate trainee programmes (GTPs) to promote gender diversity in O&G. This policy can guide companies in the designing of GTPs with a component of gender inclusivity to promote this agenda in the sector for the long-term.

Oil and gas companies should embed gender diversity into everyday organizational practices rather than treating it as a peripheral activity. HR departments should collaborate closely with line managers to ensure hiring, promotions, and succession planning actively support female representation at all levels. Recruitment processes should include longer candidate shortlists, outreach to professional networks, and gender-neutral job descriptions to widen the talent pool. Oil and gas companies should implement structured mentoring

programs, leverage ERGs to support career development, and create formal channels for feedback and guidance for female staff. FWAs, including telework and adjusted hours, should be systematically offered to accommodate diverse employee needs, while merit-based promotion policies should explicitly consider gender representation alongside performance. Additionally, ongoing gender diversity training should be integrated into management and graduate trainee programs to build awareness, skills, and inclusive behaviors. Regular monitoring and evaluation (M&E) progress, with actionable insights for managers, will ensure that these practices translate into measurable improvements in gender inclusivity across the organization. Organizations should adopt merit-based and gender-sensitive recruitment strategies that ensure fair representation of women at all levels, especially, in technical and leadership roles. To support women's career development, transparent promotion pathways and mentorship programmes should also be implemented. The sector should establish or enhance family-friendly practices which includes flexible working, parental leave, and assistance with child care. Such practices are critical in the retention of female employees, especially in a male-dominated and very demanding sector.

5.8 Limitations of the Research

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample size was small, which, while sufficient for achieving thematic saturation in qualitative research, may limit the generalizability of the results across all oil and gas companies in Kenya. Second, the study relied on self-reported data from HR managers and senior executives, which could be influenced by social desirability bias or selective recall, potentially affecting the accuracy of reported practices. Third, the research focused exclusively on management level staff, excluding operational and early-career staff, which may overlook experiences and perceptions of gender diversity at other organizational levels. Fourth, the study was limited to oil and gas companies in Nairobi County, which may not fully reflect practices in other regions or countries where cultural and industry-specific factors differ. Finally, the cross-sectional design provides a snapshot of current practices but does not capture changes over time, limiting the ability to examine the long-term effectiveness of gender diversity initiatives. These limitations suggest that while the findings provide valuable insights into gender diversity practices in the sector, they should

be interpreted cautiously and supplemented with further research for broader generalization.

5.9 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the limitations and findings of the study, it is suggested that future research involving gender diversity should examine how the identified themes for hiring, career advancement, mentorship, and training practices contribute to gender diversity under a quantitative research approach. This study would use a descriptive research design to interrogate the relationship between these practices and to determine their outcome on selected or defined gender diversity metrics in the oil and gas companies. Future studies should also focus on the experiences of women, be conducted in other areas besides Nairobi County, or investigate the long-term effects of diversity initiatives to add more to what has been garnered thus far..

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction

Principal Investigator,
Carolyne Mutambo
School of Business, Strathmore University,
Ole Sangale Road, P.O. Box 59857 – 00200 City Square,
Nairobi, Kenya
Email: carolyne.mutambo@strathmore.edu
Mobile number: 0726040164

RE: Introduction to respondents

Dear respondent, my name is Carolyne Mutambo, a student at Strathmore University and in partial fulfillment for an award of a Master of Business Administration for Executives, I am undertaking research on exploring gender diversity practices in the oil and gas industry in Nairobi County, Kenya. You have been selected as a participant in this research owing to your knowledge and experience in the oil and gas industry. Therefore, you are being asked to take part in this research study by responding to the attached questionnaire. Any further information needed may be provided by using the contacts shared above.

Thank you in advance.



Carolyne Mutambo

Appendix II: Interview Guide

Section A: Background Information on Participants

1. Please provide a description of your designation or position in this organization
2. Please describe your educational history
3. Please describe your career in the oil and gas industry
4. Please describe which activity your organization belongs in the oil and gas industry
5. Please provide a brief history of your organization in the oil and gas industry

Section B: Hiring practices for gender diversity

6. Do oil and gas companies (including your organization) have a policy of strategy for targeted hiring to promote gender diversity in the sector?

7. What hiring practices do oil and gas companies (including your organization) adopt to promote gender diversity?

8. What steps do oil and gas companies (including your organization) take or have in place to reduce or avoid gender-discrimination in the hiring and recruitment process?

9. Is there any personal experience or story that you can share on hiring practices you have witnessed in the oil and gas industry?

10. What recommendations would you make to enhance gender diversity in the hiring practices of oil and gas companies?

Section C: Career advancement practices for gender diversity

11. Do oil and gas companies (including your organization) have a clear career advancement policy to promote gender diversity in the top leadership and senior management level?

12. What promotion practices do oil and gas companies (including your organization) adopt to promote gender diversity in senior management and top leadership?

13. What steps do oil and gas companies (including your organization) take or have in place to reduce or avoid gender-discrimination in career advancement?

14. Is there any personal experience or story that you have witnessed on career advancement in the oil and gas industry?

15. What recommendations would you make to enhance career advancement that favours gender diversity in senior management of oil and gas companies?

Section D: Mentorship practices for gender diversity

16. Do oil and gas companies (including your organization) have a formal mentorship initiative or programme to promote gender diversity in the top leadership and senior management level?

17. Is there presence of informal mentorship practices among oil and gas companies (including your organization) going on to promote gender diversity in senior management and top leadership?

18. Is there any personal experience or story that you have on mentorship that you can share?

19. What recommendations would you make to improve mentorship as a means for promoting gender diversity in oil and gas companies?

Section E: Training and development practices for gender diversity

20. Do oil and gas companies (including your organization) have a training and development initiatives that promote gender diversity in top leadership and senior management level?

21. What training and development practices have oil and gas companies (including your organization) adopted that have promoted gender diversity in senior management and top leadership?

22. Do you have any personal experience or story that you have on training and development practices in the oil and gas industry?

24. What recommendations would you make to enhance training and development that favours gender diversity in senior management of oil and gas companies?

Appendix III: List of Oil and Gas Companies in Kenya

No.	Company Name	Type of Operation	Headquarters/ Location	Remarks
1	Tullow Oil Kenya Limited	Exploration and Production	Nairobi	Leading international player
2	Total Energies EP Kenya	Exploration and Production	Nairobi	Multinational oil company
3	Kenya Pipeline Company	Pipeline Transportation	Nairobi	State corporation
4	National Oil Corporation of Kenya (NOCK)	Exploration, Production, Marketing	Nairobi	State-owned
5	Oil Libya Limited	Marketing and Distribution	Nairobi	Regional marketer
6	Shell Petroleum Kenya	Marketing and Retail	Nairobi	Multinational retail operations
7	Gulf Energy Limited	Marketing and Retail	Nairobi	Local company
8	KenolKobil Limited	Marketing and Retail	Nairobi	Local and regional presence
9	Oryx Energies Kenya	Marketing and Distribution	Nairobi	Pan-African oil marketer
10	Vivo Energy Kenya	Marketing and Retail	Nairobi	Shell licensee in Kenya
11	Petrocam Limited	Exploration	Nairobi	Regional exploration firm
12	Engen Kenya Limited	Marketing and Retail	Nairobi	South African multinational

Appendix IV: Ethical Approval

22nd May 2025

Ms Mutambo Carolyne,
carolyne.mutambo@strathmore.edu

Dear Ms Mutambo,

RE: An Exploration of Gender Diversity Practices in the Oil and Gas Industry in Nairobi County, Kenya

This is to inform you that SU-ISERC has reviewed and **approved** your above **SU-Masters** proposal. Your application reference number is **SU-ISERC2923/25.** The approval period is from **22nd May 2025 to 21st May 2026.**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements:

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments, MTA) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SU-ISERC.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours of notification.
iv. Any changes anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to SU-ISERC within 72 hours.
v. Clearance for the export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.
vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to the expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.
vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days of completion of the study to SU-ISERC.

Before commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke/ and obtain other clearances needed.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Ambrose Rachier,
Chairperson; SU-ISERC

Ole Sangale Rd, Madaraka Estate. PO Box 59857-00200, Nairobi, Kenya. Tel +254 (0)703 034000
Email admissions@strathmore.edu www.strathmore.edu

Appendix V: Research Permit

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **780504**

Date of Issue: **10/May/2025**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that Ms.. Carolyne Mutambo of Strathmore University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: AN EXPLORATION OF GENDER DIVERSITY PRACTICES IN THE OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY IN NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA. for the period ending : 10/May/2026.

License No: **NACOSTI/P/25/4173260**

780504

Applicant Identification Number

Deputy Director
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Verification QR Code

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See overleaf for conditions