

Social Cultural Factors Influencing Participation of Women in School Administration in Public Secondary Schools in Mvita sub-County, Mombasa County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

Women participation in secondary school administration in Kenyan public secondary schools is a powerful means to contribute to social economic development. However, it is not known how social cultural factors influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county, Mombasa County Kenya. The study therefore investigated social cultural factors influencing participation of women in education administration in public schools in Mvita sub county, Mombasa Kenya. The target population was 223 respondents in 20 public secondary's in Mvita sub county. Census and random sampling methods were used to choose the participants. The sample comprised of 100 teachers and 20 head teachers, one sub county director of education, one sub county staffing officer, and one sub county quality assurance officer. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. The validity of the instruments was checked by my supervisor. The instruments were piloted in three secondary schools in Mvita county to establish their reliability. Test – retest method was used to compute reliability coefficient from the data collected from the pilot study. Reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.75 for each instrument. The descriptive statistics used were frequencies and percentages. The data collected in this study was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 20.0. The research findings established that family responsibilities cause gender imbalance in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita county. It was therefore recommended that the government should come up with more affirmative action policies at the school and college level and ensure that they are implemented in order to correct gender imbalance and guarantee women opportunities for participation in school management positions and policy making. The study findings also revealed that personal interest in leadership positions influenced negatively participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county. It was recommended that Teachers Service Commission should encourage female teachers to apply for vacant management positions whenever they are advertised.

Key Words: Attitude, Knowledge, Stereotyping, Education

INTRODUCTION

The concept of gender equality means giving men, women, boys and girls equal rights, obligations and opportunities. It also means that gender should not determine their rights, responsibilities and opportunities (UNICEF, 2017). Gender equality and equity are related; however, they are not the same. Gender equality means treating both genders fairly, depending on their needs. This may include alternative therapies or treatments that are considered different but equal according to rights, benefits, obligations and opportunities (ILO, 2016).

As indicated by UNESCO (2014), gender equity occurs when people have equal rights and equal opportunities to add to political, monetary, and community-based development and enjoy the outcomes. Gender equality is the social equality of the similitudes and contrasts among ladies and men, and the different jobs they play. The importance of gender impartiality in society is clearly defined by goal 5 of the UN Sustainable Development. Gender equality is a basic human right that is required for a prosperous, peaceful and sustainable world (UNICEF, 2017).

Gender equality in education has gained traction by accepting that equal opportunities and equal treatment for girls and boys can enable them to use their full potential (UN Millennium Project, 2015). There has been a shift in thinking from the pluralist focus on gender parity to gender equality. According to Unterhalter (2015), significant barriers have been left to women's educational opportunities, which includes gender-sensitive subjects and learning materials, equality, and the management of schools ignores or reduces the incidence of gender-based violence in schools. Personal growth and development are dependent on the quality of education received.

Education guides us on how-to live-in society but unfortunately, it is disrupted due to the nonparticipation of women. Men and women are like the two wheels of a chariot. They are equally important, and should work together in life (Banham, 2016). Educating girls is one of the most important issues in the development of the country. This is a very powerful way to increase economic growth in certain families and countries as a whole (Ahamad & Narayan, 2015). Every child should have access to dignity and equality in quality education without discrimination (UNICEF, 2017). Women's education in many developing countries has been the focus of policy and governance in recent years (UNICEF, 2019). A girl faces many challenges when it comes to education. The esoteric culture and patriarchal choices make these challenges even more difficult and complex (Odomore, 2015). Although women have the power to teach where leaders are employed, they are not well represented in the management of education (Naidoo, 2014). There is gender inequality in the management of education even though women are preparing for leadership positions. Women live at lower levels and in the grades of classroom teachers (MOEST, 2017). They are grouped into lower- and middle-class categories (United Nations, 2016).

The challenge of gender equality is not uncommon in Kenya, but it is a global problem. In Australia, schools are equally divided by gender, with 51% males and 49% females (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). In 2013, 71% of general teaching power and 57% of school leaders were women (McKenzie et al., 2014). While women currently make up 73% of the teaching staff, data are not available on what percentage of school leaders are present as women (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018). In 2013, there were few women in leadership positions against the percentage of working teachers. While 81% of teachers in primary schools were women, 65% of primary school leaders were women. There were 58% of women teachers in high schools, and 48% women school leaders (Mackenzie et al., 2014).

Gender equality in school leadership is important because it makes the team smarter. Evidence suggests that different groups handle similarly classified data. When making decisions, racially diverse groups look at many facts with care and accurately than competing groups (Rock and Grant, 2016). In terms of education this means a better decision and a round pedagogy in the classroom. Second, it enhances new ideas. Evidence from the financial sector demonstrates equality in gender leadership groups, age-related approach and education enhancing innovation in new product models, leading to increased profitability (Lorenzo et al., 2018). In schools this translates to school leaders who may be using new methods to reduce the workload of teachers and increase collaboration.

Statement of the Problem

Education is the driving force in achieving the economic pillar of vision 2030 that seeks to improve lives of all Kenyans by achieving a 10% gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate. In an effort to achieve this objective, participation of women in public secondary schools is a multifactor and includes higher academic achievements and discipline. However, it is not known how social cultural factors have influenced participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county. This study was set to investigate whether social cultural factors influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita county.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study proposed to;

1. Investigate how family responsibilities influence participation of women in secondary school administration in Mvita sub county.
2. To find out whether personal interest in leadership positions influence participation of women in secondary school administration in mvita sub county

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How does family responsibilities influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county
2. How does personal interest in leadership positions influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 223 respondents in 20 public secondary schools in Mvita sub county. The selection of the schools was done using census because there were very few schools, while participants were selected using simple random sampling method. The sample comprised of 100 teachers and 20 headteachers, one sub county director of education, one sub county staffing officer, and one sub county quality assurance officer. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. The validity of the instruments was checked by my supervisor. The instruments were piloted in three secondary schools in Mvita county to establish their reliability. Test – retest method was used to compute reliability coefficient from the data collected from the pilot study. Reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.75 for each instrument. The descriptive statistics used were frequencies and percentages. The data collected in this study was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 20.0. The results were presented using frequencies and percentages

RESULTS OF THE STUDY AND DISCUSSION

The study was set to investigate social cultural factors influencing participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county. Information was collected from 223 respondents and data analysis generated the following results

Family responsibilities and how they influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools

Principals and teachers were asked to give their opinion regarding statement that family responsibilities influence active participation of women in secondary school management in Mvita sub-county. Their responses are as shown in table 7 and 8.

Responses by Principals on Whether Family Responsibilities Affect Active Participation of Women in Secondary School Management. N=20

Statement	SA (f)(%)	A (f)(%)	U (f)(%)	D (f)(%)	SD (f)(%)
a). Marriage hinders active participation of women in management positions	0(0%)	0(0%)	1(5%)	3(15%)	16(80%)
b). Parenting hinders active participation of women in management positions	8(40%)	12(60%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
c). Domestic work hinders active participation of women in management positions	6(30%)	12(60%)	2(10%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

d). Dual responsibility hinders women from taking up management positions	6(30%)	14(70%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
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Key: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; U- undecided; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree

Table above shows that 16(80%) of the principals strongly disagreed that marriage hinders active participation of women in management. Twelve (60%) agreed that parenting hinders active participation of women in management positions. This is because of the fact that women have to go for maternity leave thus making them break from management thus leaving a gap. Also parenting comes with responsibilities like taking care of sick children, taking them to hospital, looking after them thus creating a break in the normal routine of the management. Twelve (60%) of principals agreed that domestic work hinders active participation of women in management while fourteen (70%) agreed that Dual responsibility hinders women from actively participating to management position.

Responses by Teachers on Whether Family Responsibilities Affect Active Participation of Women in Secondary School Management. N=100

Statement	SA (f))	A (f)(%)	U (f)(%)	D (f)(%)	SD (f)(%)
a). Marriage hinders active participation of women in management positions	0(0%)	0(0%)	2(2%)	80(80%)	18(18%)
b). Parenting hinders active participation of women in management positions	77(77%)	13(13%)	3(3%)	7(7%)	0(0%)
c). Domestic work hinders active participation of women in management positions	58(58%)	33(33%)	0(0%)	9(9%)	0(0%)
d). Dual responsibility hinders women from taking up management positions	47(47%)	44(44%)	0(0%)	9(9%)	0(0%)

Key: SA- Strongly Agree; A- Agree; U- undecided; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree.

The respondents were also asked to indicate whether marriage hinders active participation of women in management position. Table 8 shows that 80(80%) of teachers disagreed with the statement that marriage hinders active participation of women in secondary school management. Eighteen (18%) of teachers strongly disagreed that marriage hinders active participation of women in management. seventy-seven(77%) strongly agreed with the statement that parenting hinders active participation of women in secondary school management. while 13(22%) agreed with the same statement. This was because of the fact that women have to go for maternity leave thus making them to break for some period of time affects their management roles. Domestic work also hinders women’s active participation of women in management position. Thirty-three (33%) of the teachers agreed with the above statement while 58(58%) strongly agreed that domestic work hinders active participation of women in management of secondary schools in MvitaSub County. The findings also showed that the split between work and family obligations adversely affected women’s performance in management. It was noted that 47(47%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that dual responsibility hinders active participation of women in management. The results agree with the findings of Greyvenstien (1996) who supported that a woman’s place is assumed to be restricted to the home where she is a wife, child bearer and homemaker whereas men are taken to be breadwinners and provided for family units. From the interview findings, the Sub County Director of education, sub county quality assurance officer and sub county staffing officer in their response cited that marriage and family is considered first priorities and that school management would break up families hence one would take up the responsibilities after their children were fully grown up.

Personal interest and how they influence participation of women in education administration in public secondary schools in Mvita sub county

In questionnaire principals were asked whether female teachers apply for management posts whenever they are advertised. Their responses were as summarized in Table 9.

Table 9: Principal Responses on Whether Women Apply for Management Positions Whenever Advertised. N=20

Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	6	30%
No	14	70%
Nil response	0	0%
Totals	20	100%

Table 9 shows that 14 (70%) of the principals were of the opinion that female teachers are not willing to apply for management posts whenever they are advertised while only 6 (30%) were of the opinion that female teachers were willing to apply. The findings reveal that majority, that is, 14(70%) of principals were of the opinion that female teachers do not apply for management posts whenever they are advertised. Teachers were asked in a questionnaire to give their opinions as to whether female teachers do apply for management positions when advertised. Their responses were as indicated by Table 10

Table 10: Teachers Responses on Whether Women Apply for Management Positions Whenever Advertised. N=100

Statement	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	40%
No	59	59%
Nil response	1	1%
Totals	100	100%

Table 10 shows that 59(59%) of the teachers responded as no. This means that majority of the female teachers do not apply for these positions. On the other hand, 40(40%) of the teachers gave a yes answer. This shows that some female teachers though the minority have shown interest in management positions.

Reasons as to Why Women Lack Interest in Management Positions Principals were asked in questionnaires to indicate whether they strongly agreed, agreed undecided, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with reasons on personal interests that discourage women from participating in education management. The responses were as indicated in Table 11 and 12.

Table 11: Reasons as to Why Female Teachers Lack Interest in Management Positions of Secondary Schools as Indicated by Female Teachers N=100

Reasons	SA (f)(%)	A (f)(%)	U (f)(%)	D (f)(%)	SD (f)(%)
a). Fear of being transferred	75(75%)	19(19%)	4(4%)	1(1%)	1(1%)
b). staying in school compound	81(81%)	9(9%)	6(6%)	4(4%)	0(0%)
c). Compulsory in-service courses and seminars	58(58%)	33(33%)	0(0%)	9(9%)	0(0%)

Table 11 shows that 75(75%) teachers strongly agreed, that female teachers are discouraged from participating in educational management because of fear of being transferred. sixty-five (65%) of the teachers strongly agreed that compulsory in-service courses and seminars greatly discourage women from actively participating in secondary school management. Women are reluctant to attend seminars and tours

especially those which take more than one day. This is because of their domestic roles which demand a lot of time. They therefore have no time for seminars and tours. Their spouses do not like them spending out or coming home late. eighty-one (81%) of teachers strongly agreed that the policy that requires principals to stay in school compound discouraged women from participating in educational management. Interview findings on personal interest in management positions the sub county director of education, sub county quality assurance as well as sub county staffing officer said that many female teachers shy away from responsibilities and thus, they do not apply for the positions once advertised and this affected them as they progress in their careers. They fear being transferred on promotion.

Table 12: Reasons as to Why Female Teachers Lack Interest in Management of public Secondary Schools as Indicated by the Principals N=20

Reasons	SA (f)(%)	A (f)(%)	U (f)(%)	D (f)(%)	SD (f)(%)
a). Fear of being transferred	14(70%)	6(30%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	0(0%)
b). Staying in school compound	12(60%)	3(15%)	1(5%)	2(10%)	2(10%)
c). Compulsory in-service courses and seminars	10(60%)	6(30%)	2(10%)	2(10%)	0(0%)

Key: SA- Strongly, Agree; A- Agree; U- undecided; D- Disagree; SD- Strongly Disagree.

From Table 12, 14(70%) principals strongly agreed that transfer policy discouraged women from participating in educational management while 6(30%) agreed, that women are reluctant to take up promotions to management posts because they usually come with transfers. Transfers tend to separate couples and women would rather turn down promotions than be transferred. This policy implies that a teacher should be ready to work in any district in Kenya. Women are the most disadvantaged whenever they are transferred because they have to move with their children. Whenever transferred to hardship areas, women and children suffer the most because husbands don't want to accompany them there and this may split the family. This is the most important policy among the policies that discourage women from participating in educational management. Twelve (60%) of the principals strongly agreed that the policy that requires principals to stay in school compound discouraged women from participating in educational management, 3(15%) agreed, 1(5%) were undecided while 2(10%) disagreed. Potential female principals were uncomfortable with this policy. Staying in school compound meant that female principals staying separate from their spouses who may be staying elsewhere. Women are reluctant to take up promotions that would make them stay away from their spouses. Ten (60%) principals strongly agreed that compulsory in- service courses for principals discouraged potential female principal from management, 6(30%) of them agreed, 2(10%) undecided, while 2(10%) disagreed with the statement. Women are reluctant to attend in- service courses especially residential ones. Such courses make women to stay away from their families. Their spouses are against this especially if they are held in restaurants. The study revealed that women were reluctant to take up headship posts as headship is too demanding in terms of time. The study also revealed that majority of female teachers do not apply for management posts whenever they are advertised. This is especially so for headship positions. Women had a negative attitude towards holding management positions in education. A combination of factors like unfavorable school policies, culture that undermines women and too much domestic work makes women have a negative attitude towards education management. This study finding agrees with a study carried out by Wanjama (2002) who found out that women do not show interest in management positions in management of education. Lack of time and lack of support from spouses make women to lose interest in educational management. The study revealed that female teachers were uncomfortable with meetings taking place in hotels and restaurants as their spouses were against it. Furthermore, women were reluctant to take up headship positions because they feared being transferred. In most cases, promotion to headship positions comes with transfer. Women prefer staying with their spouses and avoid transfers which may separate them; hence they do not like principalship. The policy that requires principals to stay in the school compounds discouraged many potential female principals from applying for

headship positions. Staying in school compound means female principals staying away from their spouses who could be working elsewhere. Most husbands would like their spouses to stay with them at their place of work or at home. Hence women were reluctant to apply for or take up headship positions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions were made. It was noted that family responsibilities negatively influence active participation of women in secondary school management. Most of the respondents agreed that parenting and child bearing hinder active participation of women in management thus few women are found in management position in secondary schools. The most affected are women between the age of 30 to 40 years old. Study findings show that most of the female principals are above forty years. As a result of this, it is concluded that most women, especially those in their early marriages and child bearing age are hardly involved in management. In conclusion therefore, outdated culture that deems women as the only people responsible for all family chaos, baby care among others should be avoided. Otherwise, the number of women participating actively in education management may not increase.

Personal interest in management has also been found to affect active participation of women in management of secondary schools. This is because of fear of being transferred on promotion, staying in school compound especially in boarding school as well as attending seminars and workshops. These according to many women may lead to separation of families. Again, many spouses are against their wives being promoted for similar reasons. As result very few women are interested in management position and they do not apply for such once they are advertised. The government should therefore amend some of these policies that discourage women from participating actively in secondary school management. Otherwise, their number may not increase.

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