RESEARCH ARTICLE

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO LOW PARTICIPATION OF FEMALE IN MANAGEMENT POSITION OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH-HORR DISTRICT, MARSABIT COUNTY, KENYA

Jirm Elle Benno and *Lydia Cheruto Kipkoech

Department of Education Management, University of Eldoret, Kenya

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Participation of women in the managerial position of public primary school has been reported to be low. Participation of women in administrative position may give women direct access to decision making and provide substantive role model for female students/pupils. It opens up a world of opportunities to women especially in this era of equal representation of gender. The Study adopted a naturalistic and survey design; it targets the Head teachers, teachers, school management committees and sponsors in the district. Document analysis was used to assess the number of male and female teachers, the number of female teachers in management position in the district. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in tables and graphs and charts using frequencies, percentages and degrees. Qualitative data was presented using narrative report. The result and the findings of this study reveals that socio-cultural beliefs and values, female teacher self-perception, are some of the major challenges facing female teachers participation in management position. The study has also recommended concrete measure such as adult and continuing education to promote lifelong learning.

INTRODUCTION

Women have a critical role to play in the well-being of a nation. Forum for African Women. Educationalist (FAWE, 2004) notes that the total benefits of education multiply where there is an increase in female participation in schooling and management. It is unfortunate that certain societies and cultures have not fully recognized this fact (Weber, 2000). He further explains that patriarchy ideology stresses male superiority and dominance over females. This domination is manifested in all spheres of life from the domestic level (family level) where decisions are made by the males and excited by the female. This goes on in political environments, education sectors and leadership where men are key players and decision makers in giving priority. Studies and researchers have shown that women around the world are facing the dilemma of identity. Majority of the women since Beijing conference of 1995 are struggling to discover who they are and where they stand today: in the family, the community and the world. Though women's personal expectations and roles are changing in some nations especially in industrialized nations,

majority of men around the world still have their own opinions about the place of women and want to impose certain standards of behaviour on them (Munroe, 2001). Munroe (2001) stresses that the question of women status in management and the issue of equality and equity is relevant to every society and culture regardless of races or creed. Women are struggling with the delicate balance of attending to the needs of both their families and their career job competition with men, emotional turmoil, loss of income due to divorce; separation, single parent-hood, and early marriages stemming from patriarchal society cultural changes in the way women and men interact. Mathotra (1997) asserts that although 83% of the mid-level women have is a strong desire to- move up to a higher levels in their companies, politics and institutions their chances of landing a senior executive jobs are 60% those of men. He say, "Women are promoted on performance while men are promoted on potential" that means that some women may have to work even harder than their male counterparts to get promoted to senior posts. The perception of management as masculine prevents women from applying for promotion positions, because they believe they do not have the qualities to be managers (Morris, 1993). Some even feel that communities are not ready for women managers but in his research Whitaker (1990) found that these assumptions were more present in the educational institutions than in the communities. This may be due to a

Corresponding author: **Lydia Cheruto Kipkoech**
Department of Education Management, University of Eldoret, Kenya.

number of factors such as lack of management skills in curriculum, supervision, finances, human resources, and physical facilities, lack of devotion of services, position-centred policies, unpopular programmes administered conflict between style (needs) and expectations. Failure to get feedback, poor community relations or inflexibility in decision making all on the part of women heads. Gender disparity in management of our public institution especially by women has been in existence for quite along time. This issue of low representation in all sectors of life by women has negative impact on role modeling of girls in areas of management of schools and other institution (Mugo, 2009).

In Kenya, gender roles that relegated women to a lower status continue to characterize in aspects of life such as education, politics and development (Gok and Unicef, 1999). The fact that all the girls schools were headed by female teachers to serve as role model for girls to work hard to become future managers of our schools is now headed by male teachers thus the situation does not facilitate role modeling of girls. In the past considerable research in the world, Africa and Kenya as focused on gender disparities, poor performances in schools, socio-economic factors, accessibility, dropout and retention of girls (Unesco, 2005). Even under the new constitutional dispensation when women's rights are meant to be enhanced, female candidates are either shying away from elective and managerial posts government not appointing them in management or are being marginalized by political parties by not nominating the female candidates. Effective management of the public primary schools require services of both male and female distributed in an equal manner, particularly in Nomadic/ pastoral areas w'here boys and girls are not valued equally. This will ensure that pupils in schools have appropriate role models in teaching and also management. The importance of having women in administrative positions is to involve them decision making process especially in an areas that affect gender disparity i.e. gender imbalance. oppression and discrimination. Table 1 below shows the distribution of management positions in public primary schools in North Horr.

Table 1. Distribution of management positions in Public Primary Schools in North Horr

Location	Number of teachers		Total	Percentage of	
	Male	Female		Male	Female
North Horr	26	9	35	74.3%	25.7%
Dukana	10	4	14	71.4%	28.6%
Gas	13	1	14	92.9%	7.1%
Balesa	12	5'	17	70.6%	29.4%
Illeret	8	2	10	80%	20%
Total	69	21	90	76.7%	23.3%

Source: District Education Officer North Horr, 2011.

From the Table 1 above, it is evident that the number of male and female teachers is not equal. The female teachers formed only 23.3% of the total teachers in the public primary schools in the district. This situation has prevailed in the district long after independence since there was no a public school or institution in the district before independence. Genovese and Thompson (1993) argue that the story of a woman's rise to power traces her encounters with obstacles, restriction and deterrents that faces any ambitious person in her society as well as the resources, that may be available and skills that may be acquired to circumvent them. Historically these difficulties

are due to various prejudices that tended to favour men at the expense of women. The society has been patriarchal in nature and leadership has thus tended to go to male gender and women have socialized to believe and accept this position in the society. This beliefs and influence of patriarchy contribute to women inadequate and ineffective participation in political, elective, and other leadership offices. Olser (1997) claims that Kenyan women cannot take managerial post because of the travel time involved, heavy domestic responsibilities and husband's resistance are identified by both male and female teachers in Kenya as barrier to career advancement. Gender policy (2007) states that values, ideology and images forms much of the context in which the socialization process shape occupational and family life, depending on their social class, race and sex, specific types of work are encourage, tolerated or tabooed. This early condition is nearly crucial to later occupational decision where patriarchal culture dominates in almost every society. It is bought to be the root cause of gender disparity. Mlama (2005) asserts that since most of the gender constraints to education and management emanate from the deeply entrenched cultural, attitudes, political influence and practices of the parents, community opinion leaders and government representative, it requires the whole community effort to change them. That means the whole community must be convinced of the need to change such practices to gain success in trying to change them.

In less developed countries, girls are given raw deal as compared to boys. Roth (1991), notes that indeed, to the extent which education is associated with status, a woman is supposed to be less than her husband. This is mainly because girls are considered as temporal members of their families as they get married to benefit husband's families, therefore, paying for their education is not considered a good investment. Since the introduction of free and compulsory primary education by NARC government in 2003, increase in girl enrolment has improved and also pertaining to gender disparities Kenya has made progress in the educational management of women than countries in East African region . On the contrary some ethnic groups inside Kenya, like the Gabbra of Northern Kenya have ignored the idea of promoting woman's participation in education or other institution, mainly because they want to keep girls at home for the benefit of getting dowry at an early stage. The Gabbra community claims that education has negative impact on their society because girls are making their own choices in life. Female teachers participation in education management in general has raised global concern in the last three decades. The situation in Kenya, especially in North-Horr district as whole is of even great concern because women managers are fewer than their male counterparts, despite the increasing number of women joining primary school teaching and the number of promotions. This seems to be factors playing against the public expectation of continuous increase of women in primary school management. In this era of enhancing more female participation in attaining higher education and joining competitive careers, role modeling for girls attaining higher education in primary school is an answer. The objective of the research was to assess the factors affecting female teachers participation in management position in public primary school in North-Horr District, Marsabit County.

Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objective;

To determine to what extent the female teachers perceive their participation in primary schools management positions in North Hon- District, Marsabit county

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) approach in order to present a more complementary and comprehensive view about the female teachers participation in management of primary schools in North - Horr district. According to Burke and Omwuegbuzire (2004) mixed method research is an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches in answering research questions rather than restricting or constraining researcher's choices. It is an expansive and creative form of research. Specifically naturalistic design for qualitative and survey design for quantitative used in the research design. The study adopted naturalistic design to study the assessment of female teachers' participation in North-Horr District in the natural setting in order to describe, analyze and interpret the participation of female teacher in educational management in the district. The element of quantitative research was conducted by use of the survey design. Survey design was used because of its appropriateness in establishing relationship between variable and facilitating the collection of information for determining the population parameter (Jaeger, 1988).

Sample and sampling procedures

The sample of the study was drawn from the four locations of the district. Respondents were -individuals and representative from different target groups which were head teachers, teachers, school management committees and sponsors. Sixteen (16) school management committees from four locations, two (2) male and two (2) female from each location were sampled through stratified and simple random sampling. Eight (8) head teachers were selected from four locations, 7 male and female. The only female head teacher in the four locations was selected through purposive sampling. Sixteen (16) teachers were also selected, 8 male and 8 female were sampled through stratified and simple random sampling. Two (2) sponsors were selected purposively.

Data collection Instruments

To collect the data the researcher used different instruments which he considers to be suitable for different types of information needed for this study. These instruments included questionnaire and document analysis to collect quantifiable and statistical data on assessment of female teacher participation in the management of public primary schools in North-Horr District. Also interview guides was used to collect in depth information for the purpose of describing and interpreting the factors affecting the female teachers' participation in management position in the public primary schools in North-Horr district.

Table 2. Socio-cultural factors affecting female participation in management of Public Primary schools in North Horr, Marsabit County

Characteristics		Head teacher		Teacher		School		Sponsor
						Management Committee		
Socio-cultural factors		n = 8	n =	16	n	= 16	n	= 2
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Male dominance	8	100	16	100	16	100	2	100
Domestic/household Chores	7	87.5	14	87.5	15	93.75	2	100
Early marriage and dowry	7	87.5	15	93.75	14	87.5	2	100
Low status of women	6	75	12	75	13	81.25	1	50
Gender role	6	75	13	81.25	14	87.5	2	100
Discrimination of sex	3	37.5	7	43.75	8	50	1	50
Low self esteem	6	75	6	37.5	5	31.25	1	50
Fear of failure	3	32.5	7	43.75	7	43.75	0	0
Cultural attitude	2	25	5	31.25	6	37.5	1	50
Gender biasness	2	25	4	25	7	43.75	1	50
Lack of confidence	3	37.5	4	25	8	50	1	50
Gender male preference	7	87.5	13	81.25	14	87.5	2	100
Total	8	100	16	100	16	100	2	100

Source : Research study (2012)

Target Population

Gall (1996) defines population as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, event or objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of the study. The target populations for this study the teachers, school management committee, sponsors and head teachers from North- Horr district. The whole district has 20 primary schools. The total population of all the teachers is 90; 21 female and 69 male teachers (DEO, North-Horr). This population is targeted due to the fact that it belongs to purely pastoralist community and therefore expected to provide the relevant data for the study.

Data Analysis Procedures

This included breaking down of the raw large components of research data from the field into simpler synthesized information which could be easily understood. The procedure helped the researcher to clean, code, compute and analyze the information in order to describe and interpret findings.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Socio-cultural factors affecting female participation in management in public primary schools

An item in all respondents' questionnaires and interview guides solicited for information of factors in the district that

affect female teachers' management position in public primary schools. The major socio-cultural factors given by the respondents as impediments to factors affecting female teachers' participation in management position in public primary schools included patriarchal Society, gender male preference, gender role, domestic/household chores, early marriage and dowry. The response is shown in Table 2 above. From the response from Table 2 above, the following socio-cultural practices hindering female teachers' participation in management in a major way. These are:- male dominance represented by 100% of head teachers, teachers, SMC and sponsors respondents. Domestic/household chores were represented by 87.5% of head teachers, and teachers' respondents, 93.75% of SMC and 100% of sponsors' respondents. Low cultural status of women was represented by 75% of head teachers and teachers, 81.25% of SMC and 50% of sponsor. Gender roles were identified by 75% of head teachers, 81.25% of teachers, 87.5% of SMC and 100% of sponsors' respondents. Gender male preference was represented by 75% of head teacher and SMC, 81.25% of teachers, 100% of sponsors' respondents. Other cultural factors that also affect female teachers participation are discrimination of sex, low self-esteem, fear of failure, cultural attitudes, gender biasness and lack of confidence. The finding of the study was also similar to the findings of a study carried out by Yattani (2005) in Maikona division Kenya. It noted that backward socio-cultural beliefs and values continue to deny female teachers right to participation in management position despite government effort which is practical in North-Horr district, Marsabit County.

Conclusion

Factors affecting female teachers participation in management position

The factors were classified into four categories namely; socio-cultural belief and values, female teacher self and community perception, political influence and administrative strategies used.

Socio-cultural beliefs and values

The major socio-cultural factors identified in the study were patriarchal ideology which stress on the male dominance and boy preference culture. The socio-cultural practices that are major obstacles were identified as:-

(i) Male dominance (stereotype). This refers to male potential at the expense of potential among women. This implies that women especially in this district have been denied access to opportunities which are easily open to their male counterparts. Gender male preference - this refers to favouring male to attend school while female do the domestic work at home. This factor has led to most of the head teachers to be male.

(ii) Cultural low status of women. The women were discriminated in decision-making process, traditional factors regarding women as child is attitude of community towards female teacher participation. Early marriage and dowry - this is marriage at an early age of girls below the age of 18 years for the purpose of getting dowries.

(iii) Gender roles/domestic chores - nature of workload at home which is specified for both sexes. Domestic/household chores - this factor contribute to female teachers not involved in management position

due to many workloads. Other factors identified by the respondents are; discrimination of sex, low self-esteem, fear of failure, cultural attitude, gender biasness and lack of confidence which hinders the female teachers participation in management in public primary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research study, the study makes the following recommendations aimed at enhancing female teachers' participation in management position in the district

- Creation of awareness and advocacy for female teachers and girls' education should be enhanced through community mobilization in public barazas, parent's day and prize-giving day.
- The government also through the Ministry of Information/Broadcasting using KBC local language station should set aside special days at least twice in a week where role model broadcast the benefits of female teachers participation with specific examples of success cases in all community. The broadcast should promote, advocate and sensitize the community on retrogressive culture that is an impediment to female.
- More girls boarding primary should be build in order to promote more female teachers to manage/head these schools. The government and NGOs should come up with more girls schools especially girl boarding to solve the problem of domestic labour and early marriage which has made few girls completing school to become future female teachers in management posts.

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