RESEARCH ARTICLE

FEMALE TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE INFLUENCE OF INSTITUTIONAL FACTORS ON LEADERSHIP ASPIRATION IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KERICHO COUNTY

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	In Kenya the number of primary school teachers by gender is more or less 1:1 however gender gap in leadership in favour of men persists. For instance women hold less than 20% of all leadership positions in primary schools in Kericho County. This research was founded on the Theory of planned behaviour and the Model of Administrative Career Mobility, from which a conceptual framework was formulated. Mixed methods designs were adopted. A survey questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect data. The study population consisted of all 461 public primary schools in Kericho County. The study established that there was a weak negative significant relationship between the perception of institutional factors and leadership aspiration with a coefficient of -0.123 at a p-value of 0.05 and accounted for 1.2% of the variation in leadership aspiration. The study concluded that perceptions of female teachers on institutional factors influenced the female teachers' leadership aspiration. The study recommended that school policies that are based on equal opportunity principles should be developed to create a leadership team in primary schools. It also recommended the development of programs for enhancing the access of female teachers to leadership positions in primary schools in light of their aspiration for leadership.

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute approximately half of the population of the world and thus potentially half of its work forces (United Nations, 2010). According to International Labour Office (2013), only 52% of women participate in the labour force, compared to 77% of men, suggesting that there is a huge population globally that is underutilised economically. Furthermore, in all regions, the proportion of women in leadership is much less than their overall proportion in the employed population. According to United Nations (2010), the proportion of females in higher occupation ranges from a low of 10% to 40% globally, with less than 30% in Eastern Africa. In Kenya, women represent one-half of the active population (Kenya Demographic Profile, 2014) and should, therefore, be able to participate on an equal footing with men in all spheres of political, economic and social life of the country, and particularly in the decision-making process.

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However, Kenyan women are under-represented in the labour workforce and also in the management and decision making positions (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Nevertheless, there were 98, 93 female teachers against 101,764 male teachers compared in 2010 there were 83,202 female teachers and 90,186 male teachers. Institutional factors have been known to impede the rise of women into leadership (Okafor, Fagbemi and Hassan, 2011; Gaus, 2011). In the USA, Glass (2000) explains that one reason for the steady increase of women superintendants is that superintendent search firms have been more aggressive in identifying women candidates, and there is a gradual shift by school boards towards a more even distribution between women and men. A research on gender equality in educational leadership by Arar and Abramovitz (2013) indicates that in developed societies, issues of prejudice against women principals have lessened and we have more women joining school management. This shows that there is concerted effort in developed nations to ensure that women join leadership without which the scenario would be similar to that of developing nations. Research done in Asian countries seems to portray under-representation of women in leadership

due to impediment that are found within institutions. In Pakistan, Rarieya (2007) found out that institutions are not accommodating to the female leader. They are characterised by intimidations from male colleagues and non-supportive work structures. Gaus (2011) examined the factors that deter female teachers from holding principal positions at elementary level in Makassar in Indonesia. The findings indicated that female teachers were discouraged to ascend to principal positions because of institutional factors and also socio-cultural factors. The study focus was on the aspiration for the position of the school principal and did not generally examine all leadership positions that deputize the principal. The aspirations for these subordinate leadership positions in schools should be investigated because entry into these positions will create a robust pipeline that will eventually increase more women in leadership positions. A study by Kirai and Mukulu (2012) revealed that the organization's discriminatory practices in recruitment, selection and promotions are the most significant impediment of women career advancement in Kenya's civil service. Lack of mentors for the women and as well as the lack of networking services were also identified. Osumbah (2011) revealed that even though other barriers caused the under representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Kenya, organizational barriers were the strongest. Also female headteachers in rural primary schools in Kenya perceived that female teachers did not apply for leadership posts because of time-commitment, poor remuneration, fear of geographical mobility and fear of responsibilities associated with headship (Wangoi 2012). These studies were majorly self reports by women in middle and senior management. The present study sought to find out how female teachers perceive institutional factors and how they relate to their aspiration for leadership. It is also noted that apart from Wangoi's study in Kenya, the majority of the studies that investigated institutional factors were in organizations that were not public primary schools.

Research Objective

The research objective was: To establish female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors and their aspiration for leadership in public primary schools in Kericho County.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Interrelated concepts delineated from the Theory of Planned Behaviour and from the model of Administrative Career Mobility believed to influence leadership aspiration of women, formed the basis for this study. Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework model showing the various components of the study. The variables that relate to and influence female teachers' decision to aspire for leadership make up the independent variables, namely the female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors. The dependent variable, which is leadership aspiration, may be the outcome of one dependent variable or the interaction of several independent variables. Any or all of these variables may be intervened by the educational level of the teacher, the leadership experience, the teaching experience and the age of the female teacher. Indicators of the independent variables were identified from the two theoretical models that underpinned this study. The Institutional factors were identified as perceived structures of opportunity, perceived support by school management, the presence or absence of female role models in leadership and perceived promotion procedures.
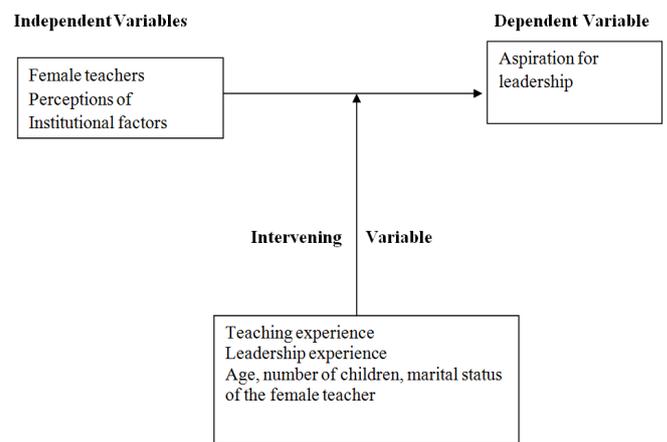

Figure 1: A Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Female Teachers' Perceptions of institutional Factors and Aspiration for Leadership Positions

The female teachers' perceptions of the independent variable was measured each using a five point likert scale. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the coefficient of determination were used to establish the relationships between the female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors and aspiration for leadership in public primary schools.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The Theory of planned behaviour and the Model of Administrative Career Mobility was adopted for this study. A survey questionnaire and an interview schedule were used to collect data. Mixed methods design was utilized. The study population consisted of all 461 public primary schools in Kericho County. The study employed stratified and simple random sampling techniques to sample 327 female teacher respondents from the target population. Female senior teachers and deputy head teachers were purposively sampled from the sample of schools. This study employed the concurrent triangulation strategy to analyze and interpret data. Descriptive techniques, One Way Analysis of Variance, the Pearson Product Moment correlation and regression analysis were used to analyze the quantitative data. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews were transcribed, organized into emergent categories, sub categories and themes.

RESULTS

Complete and usable data was obtained from three-hundred and seventeen (n = 317) female teachers, representing 97% of the teachers surveyed. The return rate of the female teachers' questionnaire was high thus justifying the adequacy of the data collected for the study.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of respondents were as presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5.

Age of Respondents

The data pertaining to the age of the respondents were collected. The mean age of the respondents was 36.5 years. The distribution of their ages was as indicated in Table 1. The highest percentage (37.2%) of female teachers who responded to the survey was aged between 30 to 39 years. This ndicates a unimodal distribution with the peak found between

Table 1. Age of the Respondents

Age of female teacher	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
under 30	32	10.1
30 -39	118	37.2
40 -49	97	30.6
50 -59	68	21.5
60 or over	2	0.6
Total	317	100.0

30 to 39 years. Two teachers (0.6%) were aged over 60 years. Ten percent of the female teachers were 30 years and below. This could imply that the younger teachers who are 30 years and below have not been employed by the Teachers Service Commission. The recruiting agency gives priority to teacher graduates who have stayed out longer after completing their teacher education course to teach in public schools. Because of this, the younger cadre of teachers, who recently graduated were most likely absorbed in privately owned schools or they taught as employees of Boards of Management of public schools. This category of teachers was beyond the scope of this study. There is a variation in age among the female teaching staff in the study. It is expected that each age group would aspire for leadership differently basing on their dissimilarities in domestic responsibilities and in their experiences in teaching and leadership which likely grounds their self confidence. The age of the female teachers also has particular importance in shaping their perceptions of social norms concerning the occupancy of leadership.

Table 2. Marital Status and Number of Children that Female Teachers have

Marital status	Frequency (f)	Percent %
Never married	31	9.8
Married	254	80.1
Widowed	17	5.4
Divorced or separated	12	3.8
Partnered	3	0.9
Total	317	100.0
Number of Children		
0	13	4.1
1	20	6.3
2	49	15.5
3	85	26.8
4 or more	150	47.3
Total	317	100.0

Table 2 shows that 254 (80.1%) female teachers were married. 150 (47.3%) female teachers had four or more children, slightly less (by 5.4%) than the number of female teachers who had three or less children. This demonstrates that apart from their teaching careers, these teachers also have responsibilities for child rearing and domestic tasks. The women's prescribed social roles concerning family responsibilities may outdo their ambition for leadership. It is observed that the traditional culture has limited a woman's role to the home and degrades their abilities in other sectors such as leadership (Barng'etuny, 1999; Saeeda, nd). It is therefore expected that female teachers will aspire less for leadership with more domestic responsibilities.

Table 3. Highest Education Qualification of Primary School Female Teachers

Education Qualification	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Masters degree	13	4.1
Bachelor's degree	73	23.0
Diploma	116	36.6
P1 certificate	112	35.3
P2 certificate	3	.9
Total	317	100.0

Table 3 indicates that majority of the female teachers (99.1%) had P1 qualification and above. A high percentage (36.6%) of teachers had a diploma certificate in education, followed by those with a P1 certificate. P1 certification is provided in certificate level colleges in Kenya through a two year, residential programme. Only 3 female teachers had P2 certification, an indication that this level of qualification is almost being phased out in primary school teaching. The percentage of female teachers who hold qualifications of a diploma and above is 63.7. This portion of female teachers can qualify for positions of formal leadership in primary schools. However, there are other prerequisite conditions set by the Teacher Service Commission that one has to fulfill before being appointed to take up these positions. Education qualifications attained by female teachers should translate into feelings of preparedness for leadership in schools. Studies such as Owuso (2014) revealed that most women did not possess the prerequisite educational qualification needed to take up leadership positions. According to participants in Owuso's study, female teachers' chances of being chosen for leadership were high if only they had attained the qualifications. Although, educational qualification is used as criterion when selecting educational leaders, questions of whether this criterion specifically prepares female teachers to access and handle leadership needs to be established.

Table 4. Female Teachers Primary School Teaching Experience

Teaching experience in years	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
1-5	62	19.6
6-10	68	21.5
11-15	41	12.9
16-20	49	15.5
over 20	97	30.6
Total	317	100.0

The data indicates that slightly less than half (46.1%) of the female teachers have been teaching for over 16 years. Teachers who had taught for five years and below were 19.6%. From the survey, a high percentage of female teachers seem to be more experienced in teaching. Female teachers need to have the required teaching experience to gain access to leadership. With a vast teaching experience a female teacher is perceived as having the credibility to possess leadership potential. One of the minimum requirements for a teacher to be promoted into administrative positions is to have a minimum of five years' continuous teaching experience (Teachers' Service Commission, 2008). By looking at the sample's educational qualification, 80% of female teachers have more than five years in service.

Table 5. Leadership Positions held by Female Teachers in Primary Schools

Leadership Position	Frequency (f)	Percent (%)
Senior Teacher	23	7.3
Deputy Head Teacher	18	5.7
Head Teacher	5	1.6
Other Positions	109	34.4
No Leadership Position	162	51.0
Total	317	100.0

Table 5 shows that out of the 317 female teachers involved in the study, 5(1.6%) held the position of a head teacher. This is an indication that few female teachers rise to headship.

Table 6. Female Teachers' perceptions of the influence of Institutional Factors on leadership aspiration (n=317)

	Institutional Factors	Percent who responded			Mean	Standard Deviation
		Disagree (1)	Un-decided (2)	Agree (3)		
1	Women receive fewer opportunities for professional development at work	30.7 (97)	5.4 (17)	63.9 202	2.3323	.91567
2	Institutions and education sector lack policies to support women career progression to leadership	35.6 (113	9.5 (30)	54.9 174	2.1924	.93332
3	Promotions to school leadership is not based on performance	39 (122)	8.6 (27)	52.3 (164)	2.1342	.94795
4	Male hierarchies are more likely to promote/appoint men for leadership positions than women in schools	25.4 (80)	6.3 (20)	68.3 (215)	2.4286	.86904
5	Men are promoted to leadership faster than women	20.6 (65)	5.4 (17)	74.0 (233)	2.5333	.81467
6	Inhospitable organizational culture act as a barrier to women career progression	27.8 (88)	11.0 (35)	61.2 (194)	2.3344	.88331
7	Lack of women in school leadership/ management hinder women career progress	33.4 (106)	7.3 23	59.3 (188)	2.2587	.92912
8	Lack of understanding among school management committee and leadership of the value of gender diversity at senior levels impede women career progress	20.5 (65)	9.1 (29)	70.3 (223)	2.4984	.81375
9	Being transferred to other institutions upon promotion discourage most women from applying for school leadership	33.1 (105)	5.0 (16)	61.8 (196)	2.2871	.93266
10	Female teachers have to be persuaded by other people to apply for a promotion post	48.9 (154)	8.3 (26)	42.9 (135)	1.94	.95746
	Overall Mean				2 .293	

The data indicates that 14.6% of female teachers held top leadership positions in schools while 51% of the female teachers were only involved in classroom teaching and did not participate in school administration.

Research Objective: The objective of the study was to establish the influence of female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors and aspiration for leadership in public primary schools in Kericho County.

Table 6 includes a summary of item responses, means and standard deviations for items representing the institutional factors. The participants stated their position on 3-point likert-type scale ranging from disagree (1) to agree (3). The results were as shown in Table 6. As shown in Table 6, the institutional factors scale comprised of 10 items and the average mean score of all items was 2.293. On a three point scale, 1 to 1.66 means that institutional factors are not perceived as influencing leadership aspiration. A score between 1.67 and 2.33 indicates a neutral stand, while 2.34 to 3 indicates that the institutional factors are perceived to be influences. The findings indicate that the female teachers took a neutral stand on how they perceived institutional factors in influencing their aspirations. However, item 5 (Men are promoted to leadership faster than women) had a very high mean of 2.533 with 74% of the female teachers agreeing to the statement. A high percentage (64%) of the participants agrees that women receive fewer opportunities for professional development at work.

Two (18%) of the interviewees reported attending an in-service management course that was offered by Kenya Education Management Institute after they were appointed, while the rest are yet to attend these courses. A bigger proportion of female teachers (62%) agree that transfers to other stations upon promotion did hinder them from progressing to leadership. This could be because of the duties that women have by being wives and mothers. Most of the female teachers in the study were married and 96% had at least one child. If these teachers are to factor in the family responsibilities, then they would be reluctant to get promoted in other institutions.

The promoted teachers would have to relocate to other regions in the county far from their homes. A high percentage (74%) of the participants agreed that male teachers are promoted faster than the female teachers. The respondents in the study therefore recognized that the male teachers moved up the ladder to join leadership faster than them. The male hierarchy in the schools' organizational structure are likely to appoint the male teachers more than the female teachers. Majority (68%) of the female teachers agreed with this statement. Men tend to nurture, inspire and appoint similar others to the schools leadership thus propagating their dominance in school leadership. More female teachers (59.3%) agreed that the lack of women in school management hinder women career progress. 33.4% of the responses did not agree that the absence of female leaders would hinder the career progression of the female teachers. Interview findings pointed out that despite not having inspiring female role models in schools, female leaders interviewees still managed to progress to leadership. Slightly more female teachers 154(48.9%) compared to 135(42.9%) disagreed with the statement that female teachers have to be persuaded by others to apply for leadership positions. However, interview findings revealed that most female leaders were convinced by significant others to apply for the positions that they held. The culture within an institution may discourage female teachers from aspiring for leadership positions. The findings revealed that more female teachers (61.2%) agreed that the culture within the schools is insupportable of their progression into leadership. The women who disagreed with this statement were 27.8%.

Table 7. Relationship between Female Teachers' Perceptions of Institutional Factors and their Leadership Aspirations

		Leadership Aspirations
Female Teachers' perceptions of Institutional factors	Pearson correlation	- 0.123*
	Sig (2-tailed)	0.015
	N	311

* Correlation is significant at 0.05 level

From Table 8, it can be observed that the relationship between female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors' and their leadership aspirations was weak, negative and significant, r

(311) = -.12, p< 0.05. Perceptions of institutional factors negatively relates with the school leadership aspiration. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a negative significant relationship between the female teachers' perception of institutional factors and their leadership aspiration. This indicates that the perceptions of institutional factors negatively impacts female teachers' leadership aspirations. The more the female teachers perceive institutional factors as influences of leadership access, the more their leadership aspiration lessens. To estimate the influence of female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors on their leadership aspiration a regression analysis was computed and the results were as shown in Table 8.

Table 8. Regression analysis of the Relationship between Female teachers' Perceptions of Institutional factors and their Leadership Aspiration

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.123[a]	0.015	0.012	5.711

Predictors: (Constant), Institutional Factors

Table 8 shows that female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors are a significant predictor of their leadership aspirations. From the table it can be observed that female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors accounted for 1.2% of their leadership aspirations. This means that 88.8% of the leadership aspiration could be explained by other factors. The study further sought to test the significance of the relationship between the female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors and their leadership aspirations by predicting the power of the model with that of an intercept only model. ANOVA test was computed and the results are as shown in Table 9.

Table 9. ANOVA Test for the Relationship between Female Teachers' Perceptions of Institutional Factors and their Leadership Aspiration

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	154.468	1	154.468	4.736	.030[a]
Residual	10079.282	309	32.619		
Total	10233.749	310			

a. Predictors: (Constant), perceptions of Institutional Factors
b. Dependent Variable: Leadership Aspiration

The results from Table 9 shows that female teachers' perceptions of institutional factors are a significant predictor of leadership aspirations (p = 0.030). They can be relied on to explain the leadership aspirations of female teachers. To establish the actual influence, a linear regression was computed and results were shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Simple Regression Analysis of Influences of Female Teachers' Perceptions of Institutional Factors on Leadership Aspirations

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	25.542	1.434		17.811	.000
Institutional Factors	-.090	.041	-.123	-2.176	.030

Dependent Variable: Leadership Aspiration

From Table 10 it can be observed that one unit increase in perceptions of institutional factors would lead to a decrease of 0.090 units of female teachers' leadership aspirations as signified by the negative coefficient (-0.090). This finding agrees with the Career Mobility Model that posits that organisational factors influence an individual's action to move into educational administration.

DISCUSSION

Female teachers have been perceived to have low aspirations for leadership due to the institutional culture that is influenced by societal gender stereotypes, negative attitudes towards female leaders, exclusion from male group, lack of role models, occupational segregation, and lack of support from superiors (Gaus, 2011). Training and development opportunities seem unavailable to female teachers. The professional development programs not only enables the female teachers to progress career wise but also brings them out of their gender stereotyped cocoon cultures. It is during these trainings that female teachers interact with role models and mentors. The lack of these opportunities may explain the inability of female teachers to transform their aspirations into leadership access. Similarly Okafor, Fagbemi, and Hassan (2011) revealed that fewer developmental opportunities were made available to women managers in Lagos and therefore could not access higher leadership positions. This is an indication that irrespective of whether the institutions are educational or not, women experience few opportunities for training and professional development.

Interview findings revealed that female leaders were appointed to leadership without being trained for school management. However most of the interviewees were studying or planning to enroll in a course that would enhance their chances of becoming school leaders. They were pursuing general diploma and degree courses that are self sponsored. Specialized courses in school management and leadership would be beneficial to female teachers as they aspire to higher positions of leadership. Kenya Education Management Institute training programmes for the headteachers has been found to positively influence competence in management (Syombua, 2015). Other than Kenya Education Management Institute, a specialized course in Educational administration is offered at the graduate level. This shows that women are not consciously prepared to join leadership by giving them the opportunity and even sponsoring them for leadership courses.

Another factor that may discourage movement from one school to another is the remoteness of the new station. The schools in which female teachers are appointed to are sometimes found in the interior regions of the county which may have insufficient infrastructure such as schools for their children (middle class parents prefer to take their children to privately owned schools), hospitals and roads. Teachers may opt out of such appointments weighing the benefit of remaining a classroom teacher and enjoying the developed infrastructure *vis a vis* accepting a promotion and being transferred to a remote area where facilities might be limited. In this case the social norms and cultural stereotypes such as roles of women in being custodians of the home has provided a basis that is unseen for female teachers to decide whether leadership roles are suitable for them and whether they should take them up. These decisions are determined by the way that institutional structures often influenced by the societal culture work, keep

female teachers from advancing in the school's leadership hierarchy. In a study by Griffith (1992) women who were enrolled in an administrative program perceived that male teachers were preferred for principalship. This indicates that female teachers sense some of favouritism when it comes to promoting male teachers. According to interaction centred theory identified by Kiaye and Singh (2013), men give clear indications to promotional gatekeepers about their career ambitions, career successes and their readiness for the next step making their movement higher up the hierarchy even faster. The observation that female teachers drag in getting to higher positions may be because they do not have network that will spring board them to leadership paths. It is through these networks that the female teacher will clearly declare their aspirations for leadership to gatekeepers who may influence their promotion decision. Men already have well established network of which women experience some difficulties to fit because of their meeting times, activities and places (Mwebi, 2008, Ballenger and Stephen, 2010).

Addi-Raccah (2006) revealed that men in two of the educational systems under his study, tended to promote other men to vice principal position while excluding women from administrative positions. This becomes a strategy to prepare the next principals who will replicate the process of preparing the next generation of male school principals. Addi-Raccah suggested that the socio cultural context of the educational system seemed to have less impact on the way men behaved toward other men such that even in situations where majority of the staff were women, the men were still likely to appoint a fellow man. Factors within the school have been pointed out as inhibiting the leadership aspiration of the female leaders. Although equality policies that legitimize female leadership are clearly endorsed in schools, there are practices that are promoted unconsciously that enhance the female teachers' low leadership aspiration.

Another observation made by the interviewed female leaders is that appointments of senior teachers in schools are not clearly defined in the policy. Different schools have different ways of identifying and appointing the senior teachers. Some appointments are done ad hoc. In this way many women may be locked out when it comes to being appointed. It will give room for favoritism and biasness when identifying the best candidates. One interviewee pointed out that school appointments are marred by corrupt activities involving bribery thus making women to shy off from aspiring to lead. Female teachers get discouraged because they know that someone else may be given the opportunity not on merit. The system is also full of corrupt dealings. A senior teacher categorically said that women do not condone bribery. Education officials are known to ask for bribes so that they can give favors from the Ministry office. Women are either honest beings or may not be courageous enough to offer bribes. One interviewee, explained; "Being in administration forces you to be corrupt. The head teachers have to bribe the education officials at the county head quarters so that they can get favors or get things moving. For instance if they want a teacher transferred they will liaise with the education officials to do so and make a small payment. I would never want to be part of such deals. It can bring curses upon my children." These women express their disappointments with the systems. They point out that as much as policies have clearly been developed to guide management, people have to canvass for things to be done which draws a lot of bribery.

Similarly in Gaus (2011), elementary teacher respondents revealed the existing and prolonged practice of collusion and nepotism in the selection process of school leaders. In Gaus's study, the participants do not get to become leaders because of the corrupt recruitment process, while in the present study; the participants do not want to be leaders because they feel they will be part of the corrupt system. All in all corruption stands out as a stumbling block for the female teachers. There are also reports of school management committees getting involved in the misuse of school resources. A senior teacher revealed that primary schools often receive funds for development from the Constituency Development Fund, Kenya Education Sector Support Program funds among others bodies which if not carefully monitored the finances can be misused. She gave her experience: "When I was a headteacher in one of the primary schools, I was able to apply for the KESSP fund and we were lucky to get it. When the money came everyone became an interested party including the area Member of Parliament who wanted to endorse projects that were not in the initial plan. I realised that people wanted to use the public resources for their own use. I put down my foot but that was where my problems began. *"Niliingililiwa sana"* [I faced a lot of opposition]. I had to resign after sometime."

The management of schools' resources if not checked can be embezzled especially if there is no forum where finances are accounted for. The senior teacher at that time was heading a rural school where parents are illiterate and may not be able to question the use of the finances. She claimed that whenever she tried to question any use of funds, she was referred to as a stumbling block deterring any form of development. Eventually she was isolated and was unable to work. She added that women are honest and do not conform to a corrupt culture. This study indicates that the majority of those in leadership are men and are likely to appoint their fellow men into leadership even in cases where we have more female teachers in school. More female teachers agreed that the lack of women in school management hinder women career progress. Findings from the survey revealed that very few (5%) respondents held top most leadership positions. A female role model in a school has significant positive influences on career aspirations among women (Onyango, Simatwa, and Ondigi, 2011). When female leaders succeed in their roles they can serve as a proof for female teachers that they are capable of becoming leaders.

On the contrary Hoyt (2011) revealed that if the role model is "high level" then she is labeled as exceptions to the norm, causing negative effects, in terms of self-perceptions and, in turn, leadership aspiration. If female leaders in schools are few, the chances of being branded outstanding and behaving out of the norm may give the female teacher that false impression that leadership is unattainable. However Hoyt suggests that "role models at any level can be inspiring to the extent that individuals identify with them, deem their success as attainable, and they successfully disconfirm, at an explicit level, gender-stereotypical belief" (pg. 33). Hence other women tend to aspire for high achievements in order to emulate the successful female role models. There are few female leaders in schools that can inspire female teachers. These female leaders sometimes are deemed extraordinary such that their achievements seem unattainable. In addition, these female teachers who rise to positions of leadership tend to conform to and support the existing dominant norms and may not be ambitious enough to break the prevailing

traditional gender stereotypical belief regarding leadership (Addi-Raccah, 2006). In any case, for these female leaders to be appointed into leadership they might have conformed to the prevailing culture. It is no wonder that the female teachers are left without effective role models. Efficacy beliefs are raised when observing other people successfully perform a task. This brings out the importance of role models as explained by Hoyt and Simon (2011). Their study suggests that role models at any level can be inspiring as long as individuals can relate to them and can undo gender-stereotypical beliefs. Majority of the female teachers instead identified the male administrators as their mentors and role models. This is not to suggest that female leaders were not worthy of being looked up to but it is because of their inability to undo the prevailing culture. Most probably the few female leaders who are available conform to the gender discriminative culture and forget to nurture their fellow female colleagues. It is of paramount importance to take up affirmative action that will build a more robust pipeline of upwardly mobile female teachers who will take up leadership positions in order to inspire and successfully lead others to leadership.

Although more female teachers agreed that promotion was not based on performance, a good number (39%) did not agree with it. This implies that for appointment of leaders, other factors may be considered, other than merit. Since few women are not appointed then there is a likelihood that gender of the aspiring teacher is put in place. All in all, there is an indication that institutional factors are perceived to negatively influence leadership aspiration. Structures within institutions encourage gender discrimination and therefore lowering the leadership aspiration. Interview findings revealed that women have identified their colleagues and especially women as their main critics. This confirms the saying that "women are their own enemies". The interviewees reveal that women leaders are criticized a lot when in leadership by both men and women. A deputy headteacher pointed out that when she was appointed she faced a lot of resistance from her colleagues. Many of them found it difficult to recognize that she was now an authority and no longer a peer. She turned a deaf ear to their criticism and continued doing her duties as per the guidelines. She claimed to have been straightforward when she was a teacher by doing what was required of her. Her critics could not find any basis of the disapproval. She argues that sometimes it is good to be promoted and taken to a new station rather than staying in the same school. She concludes that familiarity breeds contempt. Criticism as a factor that discourages female managers was also identified by Osumba (2011) who explained that women tended to avoid where they risk facing criticism and receiving negative feedbacks. Osumbah also revealed that women in management tended to be more concerned about how they are perceived by others.

Another deputy headteacher also mentioned about the undoing of critics when in leadership; "when you are a leader you face a lot of criticisms from colleagues and the community. For any decision that I make someone is ready to make a bad comment. Men are usually not affected by gossip like women. In fact you have to be really tough so that gossip and criticism does not put you down as a woman leader. In comparison to the men, women revealed that their colleagues were harder on them when they make decisions and deliberations. This finding agrees with Huston (2016) that highlights research in business enterprises and suggests that people judge female leaders decisions more harshly especially if the decisions are bad.

According to Huston, leadership is perceived a male domain and people find is easier to accept a bad decision when made by a leader in a gender appropriate role. Female leaders' role conflicts with their gender role and therefore the decisions that they make may be taken with a lot of apprehension and thus the criticisms. Female leaders are therefore very cautious when making decisions and sometimes they may not risk making any. This scenario may render the female teacher incompetent and may discourage other aspiring female leaders.

The institutions seem to mirror society's ideas about who is suited for leadership and who should be developed and trained for these positions. Although recruitment and promotion decisions in educational organizations are supposed to be based on policy and set criteria, informal and social expectation are expressed about persons best suited for particular positions. The gender, faith and even age of the candidate is considered. The findings express a scenario where women perceive the management procedures as favouring the men. Those in top positions, majority being men, have played a role in maintaining the patriarchal culture in promotion, training and development and other personnel practices that advantage men while excluding the female teachers. To confirm the influences of perceived institutional factors on female teachers' leadership aspirations, the null hypothesis "there is no statistically significant relationship between female teachers' perception of institutional factors and their aspiration for public primary school leadership positions" was formulated and tested. The relationship between the female teachers' perception of institutional factors and their aspiration for leadership in primary schools was analyzed using the correlation analysis. The aspirations of female teachers for public primary school leadership were measured using the modified leadership Aspiration Scale adopted from Gregor and O'brien (2015).

Perceived institutional factors such as school conditions, especially remoteness of the school locality (Chisikwa, 2010), transfers upon promotion (Onyango, Simatwa and Ondigi, 2011), school culture on who becomes a leader (Ngan, 2011), interview process marred by gender stereotyping (Tallerico, 2000), the principal's support (Nandwah, 2011) have been found out as influencing female teachers' leadership aspiration. Studies have cited challenges that come when family members are separated when a female worker is promoted (Scarlet, 2010; Kiaye and Singh, 2013). Transfers destabilize the family unit and as most studies put it movement of the wife has a bigger impact on the unit. Most female teachers are not willing to take up leadership responsibilities because of movement from their families. Female teachers prefer staying in stations that are closer to their homes and families. It is noted that they would rather move to their spouse's station if their spouses are transferred than if they are transferred themselves. A senior teacher interviewee says, "It is going against the culture for a man to follow his wife to where she is transferred to". This brings up the role of the traditional culture where it seems wrong for a man to relocate basing on his wife's relocation. It is like submitting to the whims of a woman, which according to the African culture is very unmanly. Female teachers are therefore forced to stay in schools near their homes year in year out as they maintain their classroom teaching positions. Similar views were held by Scarlet (2010) whose findings revealed that women taking up superintendent positions identified the ability to relocate as a major barrier to taking up leadership positions.

Where men relocated, women were often left behind to handle the household affairs unlike when the woman relocated, the family usually went with her pausing quite a challenge or came in with dire consequences such as marriage breakup (Scarlet, 2010). Another factor that may discourage movement from one school to another is the remoteness of the new station. The schools in which female teachers are appointed to are sometimes found in the rural regions of the county which may have insufficient infrastructure such as good schools for their children (middle-class parents prefer to take their children to privately owned schools), hospitals and roads. Teachers may opt out of such appointments weighing the benefit of remaining a class room teacher and enjoying the developed infrastructure *vis a vis* accepting a promotion and being transferred to a remote area where facilities might be limited. Another issue mainly faced by small rural primary schools is that of understaffing.

The school managers often have the dilemma of offering quality and sufficient teaching to the pupils amidst a lean teaching staff. Teachers do not take up teaching positions in rural primary schools because of the invariant challenges. For example interviewees in rural schools mentioned staff housing as lacking or in a dilapidated state. In the rural setting, the locals have not built houses for renting. The conditions under which these female teachers work are not favourable. One senior teacher gave her experience; "When I was posted to my current school I looked for housing so that I could move my children near to the teaching station. I did not get any house for rental. I managed to get a house near the market centre which is around four kilometers from the school. I walk eight kilometres daily to and fro and sometimes I use b*odabod*a (motor bike). When it rains getting to school is a challenge."

Based on the various challenges that are encountered when managing a public primary school in the rural regions, more often than not a man is preferred. A man is seen as capable to handle these challenges even if a woman may equally have the ability to handle the issue. Male hierarchies in schools have been pointed out in the study as influencing the appointment of school leaders. School committees and top school leadership in schools are dominated by men. Since they play a significant role in appointing leaders they tend to appoint those individuals similar to themselves. Berkery, Morley, and Tiernan, (2013) study found out that males continue to perceive the males as more suitable for managerial positions based on the agentic nature of the managerial post. This being the case, the suitability of men for leadership would continue to be sustained and would see them succeed in holding the positions. Also consistent with Msila (2013) and Tallerico (2000) inspiration from role models was positively associated with leadership aspirations. Women leaders who act as role models may help the female teachers figure out whether leadership is a possibility for them. By observing their experiences, female teachers may note ways to achieve a balance between work and family responsibility. Female role models may demonstrate high levels of achievement that are inspiring to the female teachers who may want to emulate them. In a study by Addi-Raccah (2006), female leaders in schools in Israel who had more social power due to their "dominance and normative support in the school's broader social environment", were able to promote their female co-workers to positions of leadership. The present study implies that the few female school leaders had less influence to break the prevailing traditional gender stereotype by inspiring and promoting their fellow female teachers. It seems that if more women join leadership they will gain more social power and will most likely challenge the gender structure in schools by promoting other female teachers to leadership. One of the senior teacher interviewees said that when women apply for these positions they are not shortlisted. This could either be because of the perception of those involved in short listing or because the women may not have networks that inform them of the opportunities available to access leadership in school. Another interviewee, who is a deputy headteacher in a rural school, did not apply for leadership because she felt that the panelist would not consider her since they would perceive her as having too many responsibilities as a woman. School policies may facilitate more women joining leadership. Some directly impact on the appointment of women to leadership such as the two thirds gender policies which dictates the increase of either gender in any appointive or electoral position while others may impact indirectly. One interviewee reported that in her sub county, educational officials are keen on encouraging female teachers to participate in leadership. This is based on the guidelines the Ministry of Education has laid down to ensure equal opportunity before appointing aspirants to school leadership.

Policies such as Free Primary Education re-introduced in January 2003 by the Kenyan Government have impacted on female teachers' aspiration in away. FPE policy has not only played a role to reach a large proportion of the out of school children especially the girls, but has also made management of institutions bearable. This is in terms of provision of learning facilities and also it has reduced conflicts with parents and communities. As a deputy headteacher puts it: "I was lucky I was appointed into leadership when FPE had just been introduced. I therefore did not need to send children home all the time to bring money for this and that. The Free Primary Education really supported me. I had told the Area Education Officer when I was appointed that I really hated the duty of sending pupils home to bring five shillings for a particular school need because that is where conflict between the parents and school administration begins. Parents never cooperate and if you keep asking for money you will be accused of misappropriation of funds."

It is apparent therefore, that some of the policies developed in a way cushion the role of the head teacher. If policies developed are adhered to, then working collaboratively among stakeholders will ensure that schools management becomes a success. However, some of the interviewees expressed the female teacher's lack of desirability for headship because of the pressures inherent in government policies such as Free Primary Education which has caused large enrolment in public schools. Headteachers are faced with the responsibilities that are brought about by "educational reforms" on top of the day to day task of running the schools. The headteacher is supposed to do a balancing act by ensuring that no learner is left at home and that meager resources are used efficiently to achieve the educational goals. Although female teachers now dominate primary school teaching they are likely to be first viewed as a responsible for domestic responsibilities and then a teacher or school leader. Appointing panel and those already in leadership are likely to perceive a female teacher as unable to fit into roles of leadership because of their primary roles of nurturing and taking care of the home. This agrees with Saeeda's (nd) views that "the practices are accommodated by shifting and patterning organisations within the discourse of

the 'family' where women manage like mothers as in the family setting, but with little control over policy or resources". If such practices are upheld either consciously or unconsciously then female teachers will not rise to leadership. Domestic responsibilities may not augur well with aspects of ascending to leadership such as transfers and change of stations. These family commitments presented a barrier to leadership to female teachers particularly those with dependants. Findings from the study suggest that the institutions propagate gender differences when it comes to the aspiration of leadership. It reflects the historical traditional stereotypes that view men as leaders thus creating male dominated hierarchical structure. This suggests that male teachers are more likely to move up to occupy positions of leadership compared to the female teachers. This finding grounds the Career Mobility model's assertion about women being excluded from higher level jobs due to factors associated with the organizational context. The model particularly identifies availability of role models, organizational characteristics and sex role stereotypes that affect the structure of opportunity as influencing aspirations for leadership. This would lead us to suggest that until schools change to embrace gender sensitive practices and reflect societal changes, gender typing of the leadership role in schools will persist and in turn lower the female teachers' aspiration for leadership.

Conclusion

Perceived influence of institutional factors by the female teachers negatively influenced their school leadership aspiration. The female teachers perceive factors within the institutions as those that influence leadership access and in turn these perceptions impact on their leadership aspirations. This implies that policies and practices within institutions tend to communicate a mismatch between how women are seen and the characteristics people tend to associate with leaders. Interviewees also brought out the experiences associated with the leadership roles such as excessive time commitments and the difficulty with handling tasks such as disciplining of pupils as challenging to the female teacher. The female teachers were discouraged to seek promotional opportunities due to the demands of the job which were believed to conflict with the needs of their families. The way female teachers perceive institutional factors will either raise or lower their leadership aspirations.

Recommendation

Capacity building institutions such as Kenya Education Management Institute and professional bodies such as Kenya National Union of Teachers should organize for programs on site with courses that deal with gender and leadership. Ministry of Education to develop a policy that should encourage female participation in educational management. Women in primary schools should be sensitized to demystify the fact that school leadership is for men.

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