



Journal of International Business, Innovation and Strategic Management

2020: 4 (1): 1 - 14

ISSN: 2617-1805

DETERMINANTS OF FEMALE TEACHERS PROGRESSION TO EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN GARISSA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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To Cite this Article:

Dahir, K.A., Rotich, S. & Muindu, P. (2019). Determinants of Female Teachers Progression to Educational Leadership in Public Secondary Schools in Garissa Sub-County, Kenya. *Journal of International Business, Innovation and Strategic Management*, 4(1), 1 - 14

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of selected determinants of women teachers' leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county. The specific objectives were to examine the influence of cultural factors and gender role stereotypes on women progression in leadership. The research was carried out in 9 public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county. The target population was 9 principals and 54 heads of departments. The study was based on social feminist theory and the research utilizes quantitative and qualitative approaches that adopt survey research design. Census method of sampling was used to select the participants. The researcher collected quantitative and qualitative data by use of questionnaires and interviews respectively. Principals of the schools were subjected to interviews while heads of departments were issued with questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson correlation while data from interviews was analyzed thematically. Validity of interviews was ascertained with the help of supervisors while for the questionnaire's reliability was tested by use of Cronbach Alpha index that gave 0.72. The findings revealed that cultural beliefs and gender role stereotypes remain barriers to women teacher's progression to

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leadership in Garissa sub-County at the rate of 38.2% ($r = .382$) and 37.4% ($r = .374$) respectively. This study recommends that the government with stakeholders should consider advocacy paradigm against bias traditional beliefs and gender stereotypes in the county.

Key Words: *Cultural Factors, Gender Role Stereotypes, Women Progression in Leadership, Garissa Sub-County, Kenya*

INTRODUCTION

Gender parity in leadership is important because true progress in society transformation cannot happen without a diversity of perspectives in leadership role. Despite calls for gender parity, little has been done on women teachers' leadership progression in institutions of learning in Garissa sub-county. This is in spite of the government effort to achieve gender equality, more specifically on discrimination against women in the society in general and in the education sector. If this scenario continues, it may not be easy to realize the good international conventions such as Social Development Goals and Vision 2030 on equity and equality. Garissa sub-county has demonstrated that cultural practices are biased on women leadership progression in public secondary schools. There is a negative attitude among men towards women who want to be in leadership positions at the expense of their family roles. This has affected women in assuming higher leadership positions

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Women continue to aspire to leadership positions in educational institutions around the world to provide a gender perspective on educational change and development. This is illustrated by the principle of equality between men and women, recognized for the first -time in 1945 by the United Nations Charter, then by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948. It was followed by the Fourth Conference 1995, which called on governments around the world to adopt a gender-sensitive education system to ensure the full and equal participation of women in education administration, policies and decision-making as well as to narrow the gap between men and women (BPA, 1995). Many world conferences, including the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995, the Cairo Conference on Population and Development 1994 and the World Summit for Social Development 1995 have recognized that despite the progress made to improve the status of women, there are still gender disparities in participation in executive and electoral political positions. A study by the US Bureau of Census indicated that the number of women in paid employment and their participation rate in the labor force increased rapidly from 47% to 51% between 2008 and 2018 (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). In Australia, the number of women in management positions is very low and accounts for 16.3% of management positions in 2015 and 2016. Some of the factors are structural and cultural constraints, and the fact that women spend more time on unpaid work than men (Labor Force, 2015).

In Canada, the presence of Canadian women in leadership positions over the past two decades has changed little and still men were more than twice the women (Ottawa, 2011). Women in Addis Ababa has been underrepresented in decision-making positions at the highest level and demand innovative measures to bring about meaningful change (ILO, 2015). The Millennium Development Goals of 2000 promotes gender equality and the empowerment of women. However, in some Kenyan societies, the traditional concepts of women are still inferior to those of men, with many arguing that African culture should be preserved to justify the subordination of women (Bell & Nkomo, 1992). ECOWAS (2006) notes that the number of women in the labor market are at the lowest levels of schooling in the organizations.

Nzomo and Mullei, (1995) noted that men have always dominated women in the political, religious, economic, academic



and domestic spheres. In Kenya, 2017 general election out of 47 counties only 3 women were elected in the gubernatorial seats despite the 1/3 rule of the constitution (Ismail, 2017). Learning institutions in Garissa sub-county are no different on gender disparity.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Kenya constitution (2010) stipulates that women and men have equal access to opportunities in political, economic and social life. However, there is still gender disparity in public secondary schools' leadership in Garissa Sub-county. The data in Garissa sub-county indicates that out of 9 principals, only 2 are females, thus raising concern on what really hinders women to aspire to progress and participate in school leadership.

OBJECTIVES

1. To establish the influence of culture on woman teachers' leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, Kenya.
2. To examine the relationship between gender role stereotype and women teachers' progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, Kenya.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between cultural practices and woman teachers' leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between Gender-role stereotype and women progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture and Women Leadership

The cultural belief and practice of the people affect the way they behave in their workplaces (Rao & Abraham, 2003). They assert that the values of society cannot be separated from their behavioral pattern within the workstation and this will eventually influence their performance as group leaders. Challenges and obstacles at work can influence women's progress if neglected and can add to the glass ceiling. Females are the key caregivers of children and the aged. As a result, women refrain from higher positions. Many women choose to interrupt their careers early to educate their children (Goff, 2005). Strout (2001) argues that culture and social standards are more than family roles, as leaders in the work place might not be quite fulfilled in the workplace. Men workers within the organizations may not even support the situations as they have been brought up with culture of dominance of maleness over femaleness. Females in these sorts of situations might need to be self-confident or firm in many instances which could be seen as being harsh. Kamau (2001) emphasizes that the different needs of women enable them to create their own glass ceilings, so that they only look artificial as if glass ceilings are hampering their career. The ever-increasing glass ceiling makes it impossible to talk about women's choices in the family. It seems that many women in senior positions are reluctant to hold senior management positions because they cannot risk political conflicts and the pursuit of family life.



Wentling (2003) has shown that the twin roles of women causes tension and conflict due to a social structure which is still more dominant. Pertaining to her study on women within the workforce in Delhi, Wentling shows that the traditional authoritarian set up of Hindu social structure continues to be the same and women face difficulties of role conflict. Changes in attitudes of men towards women can help to overcome their problems. Woman in marriage life have heavier responsibility than men, society has prescribed roles for both women and men on the basis of tradition and this makes women ineffective in external functions. Once a woman has got married, she cannot take up any career unless granted permission by the husband (Brines, 1994). Ahmad (2007) investigated work-family conflict experienced by 239 married women in two-career families, social support and conflict management strategies. And the study found women experienced more family interventions than work interventions which has a significant impact on women not seeking higher leadership positions. (Natalie, 2007) argues that time constraints and job requirements are becoming a more important factor in promotion where majority of females are forced to select between a family and a profession. Women are very reluctant to travel and work long hours at home, which further complicates their chances of assuming leadership positions (Woodlard, 2007).

Verlander (2004) submits that women's responsibility in the family and the society internally and externally are many: as a wife, a woman is expected to stand next to her husband as beloved wife and best friend to build a team work in establishing a happy family; as a mother, she is expected to be an educator and supervisor of the children to provide them with spiritual and physical strength to face challenges in life and is expected to make the home comfortable and well-managed for all members of the family. Many scholars indicate that fewer females reach top managerial positions globally as compared to male in numerous capacities; politics, careers, or smaller committee groupings. In the United States of America and United Kingdom for instance where gender equity is assumed to have been attained; women constitute 40% of the entire work force and only 2% hold top management positions (Cole, 1997). Sophia (2011) found that most of the career women felt discontented with career progress because they are discriminated against in career progression opportunities. The research suggested that institutions should strive to make sure that career development programs were set to enhance development amongst employees.

Babita (2006) argues that women are low in their top management jobs despite all awareness put in place globally. The study indicated that the glass ceiling considered a myth by many was real and are nurtured by the organizational culture, policies and strategies besides women's own inadequacies. Yu-Ying (2007) stated that women experience work-family conflicts related to their gender roles. Work organizations and families are the two most important institutions for individual employees, who require a high degree of dedication and tactful balance. Culturally, the society is male dominated. It portrays women as lesser to men and women who do not perform domestic roles are viewed as deviants making it difficult to assert themselves when it comes to seeking positions outside the home (Virginia, 2007).

Gender Role Stereotypes and Women Leadership

Gender stereotypes create a widely accepted judgement or bias about certain characteristics or traits that apply to each gender or a set of beliefs about the personal attributes of group of people (Ashmore & Del Boca, 1981). Dominating tendencies in women's behavior, caused by the requirements of their social roles, thus become stereotypic of women. Therefore, when women display communal and domestic behavior in order to fulfill their social roles satisfactory, these are incorporated in the female gender role. Deviating from norms leads to negative sanctions from the society.



When one fails to behave according to the descriptive norms in a specific situation, one is met with moral disapproval (Eagly, & Diekmann, 2000). Women's social roles as homemakers and housewives, has isolated them in their homes and kept them from taking part in the building of society's political and corporate structures. Based on their social roles, men are, on the other hand, expected to be the task-leaders in society. This means that a higher level of power and status are associated with male gender roles. Ronald Mustapha, and Lisa (2010) argue that women in senior positions experience negative attitudes, inequality and lack of support towards their career development and work satisfaction. He argues that covert and explicit practices that uphold the biased nature of gender that interfere with women's management must be actively challenged (Wood, 2008). Catalyst (2005) report on stereotype reveals that females "take care", while Men "take charge" stereotyping in U.S business leaders exposed. The report examined perceptions of women and men leadership among very senior U.S managers. The study shows distinct variances between male and women leaders, and it is perceived that there are more women leaders than male leaders who were effective at "care taker" behavior's such as supporting others and rewarding subordinates. Research has found that gender is not a reliable predictor of how a person will lead.

Powell (2000) suggests that women's social expectations play a greater role in family duties; such as caring for the elderly, children and spouse. She should just attend the funeral / mourning and nobody raises her eyebrows if the man is also a manager but stays for an hour and leaves the funeral home or does not go to the funeral for meetings. They also point out that women pay the highest price specifically in the family field. In addition, multiple roles for women in the family, society (traditional norms), and the workplace create double or multiple burdens that hinder their career development and transition to managerial positions (Sadeghifar, 2003). She also understands that if the mother has more than just a manager, the manager who has to look after her children, for example, takes them to the hospital when they are sick, goes to the markets to buy them goods and to stay home when the caregiver leaves. to meet the needs of families. Accordingly, many female managers no longer want to choose between career and family ambitions - an uneven distribution of family responsibilities that continues to be driven by their career progression (Clarke & Wall, 2014). Women are the most visible victims of real glass ceilings which has made it difficult for them to reach the peak in senior management (Savage, 2002).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was carried in 9 public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county and adopted positivism paradigm that assumes that the reality is objectively given and measurable using properties which are independent of the researcher in that knower and known are independent. Positivism follows well-defined structures during studies and relies on quantitative data that is more liable than qualitative. (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). This study used survey research design. The design utilized qualitative and quantitative mode of data (Denscombe, 2010). It allows the examination of the relationship between variables and make it easy for the researcher to draw conclusions. The study targeted the 9 public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county that comprise of 63 respondents. Census method of sampling was used to pick all the school principals and heads of departments since the number of respondents were few. The sample population for this study were 9 principals and 54 heads of departments which give a total of 63 respondents. The questionnaires were administered to the heads of departments while the interviews were administered to principals. Collected data were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Interpretation of results were based on α (.05), 54 degrees of freedom (df), probability level (p) and r-critical (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2003). Results from the tests were presented using tables and pie charts.



DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant relationship between cultural practices and woman teachers’ leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county.

To establish whether there was a relationship, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to assess the relationship between culture and women leadership progression levels (M = 2.25, SD = .559) and women leadership progression (M = 2.21, SD = .566) as indicated in Table 1. The study had 54 degrees of freedom, at an alpha level of 0.05.

Table 1

Study Variables’ Means and Standard Deviations			
I/V and D/V	N	Mean	SD
Culture	54	2.25	.559
Women leadership Progression	54	2.21	.566
Valid N	54		

This table shows a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to assess the relationship between culture and women leadership progression levels (M = 2.25, SD = .559) and women leadership progression (M = 2.21, SD = .566). The results of variables mean were subjected to Pearson correlation (r) as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Pearson’s Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Culture and Women Leadership Progression in public secondary schools.

Variables	Culture	Women leadership Progression
Culture		
Pearson correlation	1	.382
Sig (2-tailed)		.004
N	54	54
Women leadership Progression		
Pearson correlation	.382	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.004	
N	54	54

P < .05, df= 52.

Results of the computation in Table 2 indicated that there was a positive correlation between the two variables r .382, .004, p < .05).

These results show a positive significant relationship which means that if culture related issues is addressed properly in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, gender disparity will be solved and women leadership progression will be improved. With a p-value (.004) less than the chosen alpha of .05 in this analysis, it meant that the null Hypothesis was rejected and it read as There is a significant relationship between culture and women leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county.



The principals were interviewed with the aim of getting their opinions on the influence of culture on women leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, when selecting them to management positions. They were asked three questions on culture (Appendix 2). Respondents 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 gave a ‘yes’ response and out of the 9 Principals, 7 responded with a ‘yes. This represent 77.8%.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant relationship between Gender-role stereotype and women progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, Kenya.

To establish whether there was a relationship, a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to assess the relationship between gender role stereotype and women leadership progression levels (M = 2.24, SD = .596) and women leadership progression (M = 2.21, SD = .566) as indicated in Table 3. With 52 degrees of freedom, and at an alpha level of 0.05.

Table 3

Study Variables’ Means and Standard Deviations			
I/V and D/V	N	Mean	SD
Gender role stereotype	54	2.24	.596
Women leadership Progression	54	2.21	.566
Valid N	54		

This table shows a Pearson product-moment correlation was computed to assess the relationship between gender role stereotype and women leadership progression levels (M = 2.24, SD = .596) and women leadership progression (M = 2.21, SD = .566).

Table 4

Pearson’s Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Gender Stereotypes and Women Leadership Progression in Public Secondary Schools

Variables	gender role stereotype	Women leadership progression
Gender role stereotype		
Pearson correlation	1	.374
Sig (2-tailed)		.005
N	54	54
Women leadership Progression	.374	1
Sig (2-tailed)	.005	
N	54	54

P < .05, df = 52.

Results of the computation in Table 4 indicated that there was a positive correlation between the two variables r .374, p .005, p < .05). If p is less or equal to alpha the hypothesis is rejected that means the result is statistically significant. These results show a positive significant relationship which means that if gender role stereotypes are meaningfully addressed in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, then consequently gender disparity will be overcome and hence women



will attain the opportunity to lead in educational institutions. With a p-value equal to the chosen alpha of .05 in this analysis, it meant that the null Hypothesis was rejected and it could now read as “There is a significant relationship between gender role stereotype and women leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county. Nine principals were interviewed with the aim of getting their opinion on the effect of gender role stereotypes on women leadership progression in public secondary schools in Garissa sub-county, when selecting them to management positions. They were asked three questions on gender role stereotypes (Appendix 2). Respondent 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 said yes, which translates to 88.9% Gender role stereotypes discourage women from taking up management positions. They are conscious that their leadership is looked down upon and are inclined to turn down opportunities for their career advancement.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that culture, gender-role stereotypes and education influence women leadership progression. This is in spite of the government effort to achieve gender equality, more specifically on discrimination against women in the society in general and in the education sector in particular. If this scenario continues, it may not be easy to realize the good international conventions such as Social Development Goals and Vision 2030 on equity and equality. Garissa County has demonstrated that cultural practices are biased on women leadership progression. There is a negative attitude among men towards women who want to be in leadership positions at the expense of their family roles. This has affected women in assuming higher leadership positions. The men have taken advantage of traditional beliefs to cause fear among women progressing to leadership positions. The stereotypes that women “take care” while men “take charge” are created to discourage women from ascending to higher leadership positions. The gender- defined roles have been biased in Garissa County as they directly make men to be liberated, aggressive and decisive while women remain vulnerable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study came up with the following recommendations:

Outdated cultural norms have to be addressed through advocacy by the government and stakeholders. This ensures that member of the society discard traditional beliefs that women are inferior to men and that their roles are domestic and taking care of children. Teachers Service Commission should formulate an affirmative action policy for female teachers to be recruited into leadership positions.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was recorded by the Authors

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