

INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPALS' MENTORSHIP PRACTICES ON FEMALE TEACHERS' PROGRESSION TO MANAGEMENT POSITIONS OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA.

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ABSTRACT

Gender parity in Management of Institutions is currently a matter of global concern. The study investigated Influence of Principals' Mentorship Practices on Female Teachers' Progression into Management of Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study determined how mentorship practices influence the number of Female Teachers who apply for the management positions in Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado County. The study was anchored on coaching and mentoring theories and model. Data was collected using questionnaires from 419 public secondary school teachers holding management position of Heads of departments, Senior teachers, deputy and principals managing public secondary schools. Interview schedule was used to collect data from the five (5) TSC sub county directors of education in Kajiado County. Stratified sampling technique was used to sample 205 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado while 4 TSC sub-county Directors of Education were purposively sampled. Qualitative data collected from the interviews was analysed using content analysis and presented in a narrative form

and the findings of quantitative data were presented by use of charts and tables. The study used Pearson's correlation analysis to test if there is a linear association between independent and dependent variables. Statistical package for social sciences was used as the data analysis software. The study investigated the influence of principals' mentorship practices on female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools. Some of the mentorship practices included exposing female teachers to peer mentoring, delegation of duties to female teachers and allowing competent teachers to perform management roles based on their capabilities and financial support to attend management training conferences. From the study it was found that practices like delegating administrative roles to female teachers boosted their exposure to management roles which motivate them to take management positions. It was suggested that there is need for the principals to use different ways of exposing female teachers to management training conferences and inviting successful managers to sensitize female teachers on pathways to management.

Key words : Female Progression into School Management, gender parity, management Mentorship.

INTRODUCTION

The world currently embraces fairness in the distribution of management positions to both male and female in manning educational matters (O’Gonnor, 2019). Mentorship of female teachers in the cultural practices of schools was stressed as a barrier to female teachers’ progression into the positions of principalship in Kenya (Guantai and Mwaniki, 2018). Gumus (2019) carried out a study on investigation of mentorship process and programmes for professional development of schools’ principals in the USA where lack of mentorship programmes was found to affect female teachers’ progression into management of schools. White (2023) assert that there are serious disparities in the allocations of management positions of the principals, deputy principals, senior teachers and Heads of departments in the management of Public Secondary Schools in most countries of the world.

A study conducted in Kajiado North sub-county on factors influencing female teachers’ progression into top management positions in public secondary schools indicated that the small number of female managers is dictated by institutional factors (Maiyo, Kalai & Kingi, 2018; Mulani, Ochieng & Kenei, 2020 & Moyo, 2022).

Principals’ mentorship programmes to teachers in Kenya acts as a motivation to teachers and influences both male and female teachers to progress into positions of management in public secondary schools. Some of the mentorship programmes used by the principals include; allowing competent female teachers to perform management roles based on their capabilities, exposing female teachers to management training conferences, inviting successful managers to sensitize teachers on pathways to management, delegation of duties to female teachers.

Most of these mentorship programmes indicated low percentages of female involvement as a result leading to low female progression into management positions in public secondary schools in Kajiado. The gap in the mentorship practices by TSC agents which include principals of secondary schools necessitated the research to improve the knowledge gap in Kajiado County in terms of female teachers’ progression into management of public secondary schools.

In their assessment of school leadership and gender in Africa, Tonny et al (2022) assert that women enter the workforce in similar number to men which means that at the lower levels in the classroom

teaching there is gender balance. The same is observed by Mbepera (2017) who attests that women tend to get lost along their career path towards getting the highest administrative positions of the school management. Many countries have introduced legislation against unfair discrimination of female at the place of work but the truth is different when it comes to the implementation of their legislation of female teachers (Cristales, Haguison & Sagala, 2023). Mc Clary (2019) asserted that mentoring for women on the road to the high school principalship was a great challenge to female teachers' progression.

Mcilongo and Strydom (2021) & Geleta (2019) assert that mentorship of female teachers plays a very big role in determining their involvement into management positions. Lack of sufficient mentors and role models have resulted to female underrepresentation in the positions of managing secondary schools. Related studies have too underscored that very few females are good mentors when they acquire the management positions (Dashper, 2019). In their research, Guantai and Mwaniki (2018) established that female teachers have been left out in top educational management hence leading to lack of mentors from the few in management. Their study appreciates that mentorship

should not only emanate from the females to females but also those men in administrative positions of the principal, deputy principal, senior teachers and heads of departments. The shortcoming in their study was the fact that they didn't indicate the ratios of male to female in management to be able to compare the numbers in mentorship.

Moyo (2017) and Mwanache (2019) carried out studies in Zimbabwe and Tanzania respectively on the causes of gender inequalities in Educational Management. In both studies, it was established that female poor representation in schools' management is related to educational practices in different countries. Both established that female teachers have a challenge of ascending to management positions. The gaps necessitated the study to establish on the management gaps which contributed to few female teachers being in the management of public secondary schools in Kajiado.

Statement of the Problem

Mbalikali and Onyango (2021) and Mwanache (2019) in their studies established that female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools is still a challenge in many countries. It is in most cases disproportionately skewed in favour of men with few female teachers getting into the management of public secondary schools. Dashper (2019) asserts

that there are limitations of female mentorship programmes at the workplace. Several countries use mentorship training and promotion of school managers in preparing teachers to realize their potential to take management positions (Bailey & Gibson, 2020). In Kenya, the gender equity has not been balanced with female teachers getting a smaller share in managing schools (Ngilu, 2019). Kajiado County appeared to be among the worst hit counties in the share of the management positions to female teachers.

Records from Kajiado's five sub-counties: Isinya, Mashuuru, Kajiado North, Kajiado Central and Loitokitok indicated low female inclusion in managing public secondary schools (Kajiado MOE and TSC records, 2022). The study sought to interrogate the Influence of Principals' Mentorship on female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools. Studies on female teachers' progression have been scarcely addressed in Kenya where mentorship programmes introduced by TSC through secondary school principals have not been equally implemented in the management of Kajiado public secondary schools. This resulted to low female progression into management of secondary schools in favour of male principals.

The researcher felt that failure to address this phenomenon would bring more damage by

encouraging male dominance in management positions and demotivating female teachers from accessing to these positions due to lack of enough female mentors in Kajiado County. From the gap of knowledge realized, there was need to investigate on the role of mentorship as a factor influencing female teachers' progression with a view to initiating balanced gender participation in managing public secondary schools in Kajiado, Kenya.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study sought to establish the influence of principals' mentorship practices on the female teachers' progression to management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado county.

Null hypothesis

HO1. There is no statistically significant relationship between principals' mentorship practices and Female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Female teachers' progression into management is a major problem in many countries (Gumus, 2019). He observed that in USA, several mentorship programmes are carried out to encourage many female teachers into principalship of secondary schools. Bergman, Alban and Brossard (2022), Beg et al (2021) in

their studies assert that gender bias is evident to male administrators in the teaching management in many countries while female teachers lag behind in terms of progression into management of secondary schools.

A study done in Latin America and the Caribbean alluded that the participation of female teachers into management positions was less than 20 percent (Adelman & Lemos, 2021). A similar study was done through a global school leaders' survey for India, Indonesia, Kenya and Malaysia where results indicated that majority of school managers were male against a few females in management which was due to few mentorship programmes to female teachers (Global school leaders, 2021).

Moyo (2022) carried out a study on gender inequalities in the education management in Zimbabwe. This reveals that female teachers slow progression to the top positions is a global phenomenon to be addressed to strike equity to both gender in educational management. White (2018) carried a study in Pennsylvania where the respondents of his research emphasized on mentorship as the major means of motivating female teachers into progression into management positions.

According to Parthasarathi (2022) informal mentoring provides emotional support which as a result increases self-confidence to those being mentored and so emphasis is vital to break the barriers of female progression. Institutions need these mentors to unite teachers at all levels and encourage them support female leaders to ascend into management positions of the HoDs, senior teachers, deputy and principal position. Miller (2020) in his study pertaining tackling race inequality in school leadership underlined that participation in educational management positions in both developed and developing countries was influenced by government inadequate mentorship programmes in the administration of educational systems.

A study carried out by Arshad (2017) stresses on the impact of mentoring practices in public learning institutions. Its emphasis was on gender qualification and assessed on gender management ratios in the universities of Islamabad. Equity in the allocation of management positions is achievable to both male and female which lack in many educational institutions due to poor structured mentorship programmes.

Mwalandwa and Simuyaba (2019) in their study assessed the factors that hindered females from accessing senior management positions in Solwezi district, Zambia. The study established it to be due to endocentric patriarchal ideology which disregarded the rights of female but with improved mentorship programmes, this would change the scenario and encourage female teachers into management. A study carried out on female teachers' underrepresentation in the Tanzanian education established that the Tanzanian Education System did not strike equality to both male and female in their appointment to senior educational management. Kanai (2022) conducted a study in Tharaka North sub-county which established that both male and female teachers were qualified to take up management positions. It recommended that principals through TSC should come up with training of both male and female which would encourage female teachers to take up management positions by reminding them of their innate ability not only to teach but also to lead.

Karie and Kavale (2019) carried out a study in Mogadishu. The study called for a review of institutional practices on mentorship which hinder female teachers from ascending to educational management in Somalia.

Their emphasis was to tap the abilities of Female teachers which remained unutilized in management of schools in Somalia by failing to take management positions. Its emphasis was that more mentorship forums were necessary to inspire female teachers into professional advancement. Ayuk (2021) in his study found out that there were barriers in female progression to management but talked of possibilities of getting solution to these barriers through mentoring women leadership in the higher education in Africa. That was a clear manifestation that women are handicapped from getting to the top management of public secondary schools which can only be solved by having mentorship forums availed to encourage them to go for principalship positions.

Ayuku's study is further supported by Colc Lough (2023) both of whom emphasized on the role of mentorship in the advancement of black women in Higher administration roles. The study was done in the department of administration and instructional leadership of the School of Education in New York. Female mentorship is highly emphasized by different scholars as the only way of encouraging many more females get to progress to the management of public educational institutions.

Bambi & Bakari (2021) in their study in Nigeria found out that principals’ mentoring skill highly correlated with teachers’ job performed in senior secondary schools. Their study was further advanced by “Quality Mentoring for the teaching careers” carried in a World Educational Conference (Mihaela, Adina & Letitia, 2023).

This article relates to what has formerly been done by other research authorities by unearthing the fact that female progression to management has not yet been solved. The study recommends for many more mentorship programmes by principals to motivate female teachers to advance from classroom teachers to managements of public secondary schools. Uwizeyimana and Mathevula (2018), in their study in Limpopo Province, South Africa observed that female teachers were qualified to take up management but institutional factors prevented majority from getting to those management positions. This study aimed at confirming or disaffirming these scholarly findings by examining the principals’ mentorship influence on female Teachers’ Progression to Management of public secondary schools. The study sought to assess the mentorship programmes used by school principals who are the Teachers Service Commission agents in the Progression of female teachers into management of Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado County.

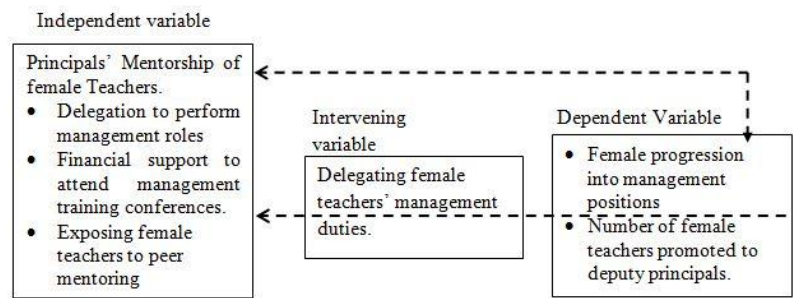


Figure 1 : Interplay between principals’ mentorship practices and female teachers’ progression to management in public secondary schools.

1. Theory

A theory supports the ideas between an argument. The study in this article was guided by coaching and mentoring theories and model. The theories were postulated by Binti Kamarudin (2020). The theories address on the importance of employees at the place of work (Mc Clary, 2019). The article addresses on progressive employee development at the place of work. It focused on determining whether mentorship programmes are adequate in influencing female teachers to progress into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County.

This theory was deemed relevant to this study because it sought to measure the influence of mentored female teachers on their progression into the positions of Heads of department, Senior Teachers, Deputy and Principals of secondary

schools in Kajiado County. It sought to establish from the respondents of the study on the frequency of use of various forms of mentorship for male and female teachers at different categories of management.

Coaching and mentoring at work place according to Mastura fosters the growth and development of staff, it increases employee confidence in their roles and it inspires the coaches and mentees at the place of work as asserted by Gill and Stone, (2017). The theories further emphasize on the role of mentors to the mentees as giving job specific guidance, junior employees learn from the senior employees and an opportunity for the mentees to learn from their mistakes and interact with the organizational or institutional management where this study delved on the management of public secondary schools in terms of female teachers' progression (Arshad, 2017, Victoria; Mathias & Jaime, 2023).

According to this theory, mentored employees are engaged on a more personal or professional level. The mentees are motivated and encouraged to keep working hard which is a win-win situation. Mastura (2020) asserts that as senior and junior-level employees interact more frequently, they grow more comfortable around each other.

They trust each other and create stronger bonds of unity. Mentoring further helps employees prepare for future leadership roles and provides an excellent opportunity for in-house progression. Bambi and Bakari (2021) in their study established that there is a very high correlation between principals' mentoring skill and the teachers' ascension into management positions of secondary schools. Coaching and mentoring theory effectively addresses the specific challenges that female face in the work place. Coaching can help female teachers' pair with their mentors who have successfully navigated their way to management positions.

The mentors assist the mentees in making strategic career decisions. Coaching and mentoring can play a crucial role in addressing and mitigating gender bias in the work place (Col Clough, 2023).

The theories explained reflected on the common barriers to female teachers' progression in the public secondary schools in Kajiado County where most of the management positions are held by male principals reflecting a serious imbalance between male and female teachers into the management positions of the HoDs, Senior teachers, deputy principals and principals in the

management of schools in Kajiado (Kajiado Education County Statistics Office 2022).

The emphasis in these theories is in regard to employee’s mentorship by the employer or senior management. This is to ensure that employees both male and female are mentored to progress into management positions at the place of work as observed by Little John et al (2021).

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

An illustration of Conceptual Framework is given to show the relationship between the Independent principals’ mentorship practices of delegation of duties to female teachers, exposing female teachers to peer mentoring, allowing competent female teachers to perform management roles based on their capabilities, exposing female teachers to management training conferences, inviting successful managers to sensitize teachers on pathways to management against the dependent variable of female teachers progression to management positions.

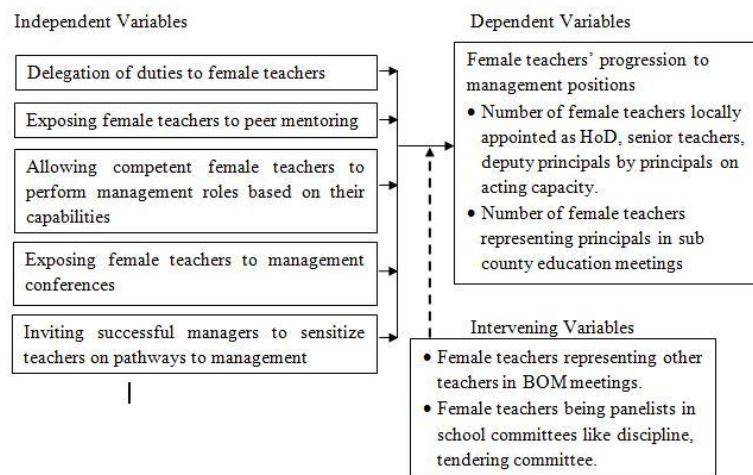


Fig. 1: Principals’ mentorship on Female Teachers progression to management positions.

METHODOLOGY

The study used a mixed methods research design. Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021) argued that this research design uses both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently where equal priority to each method was considered but the data obtained from each method was analysed separately. The target population was 424 respondents distributed by the different management positions held in the Public Secondary Schools and the TSC Sub County directors in Kajiado.

They composed of 419 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado County who included 81 principals, 83 deputy principals, 93 senior teachers, 162 heads of departments and 5 TSC sub county Directors of Education. The sample size of the study was 205 respondents.

Stratified sampling technique was used to select the 205 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado County.

The research instruments used were semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedule. The questionnaires were used to collect data from the HoDs, senior teachers, deputy principals and principals from the sampled schools. Interview schedule collected data from the TSC sub-county Directors of Education, Kajiado County. Pilot testing was done which consisted 10% of the sample as advised by Hazi and Maldan (2015). Pilot test aimed at refining the research instruments to make sure they were well understood by the respondents when answering the questions. To maintain instrument validity, the supervisors scrutinized the relevance of the content in the questionnaires. The necessary adjustments were done in readiness for the main data collection exercise. To address construct validity, the questionnaires were sub-divided into several sections where each section assessed information linked to a specific objective.

The results obtained from the pilot study were coded into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and the reliability coefficients for all the constructs in the questionnaires generated. Coefficients = 0.7 were deemed as sufficient and a measure of

construct reliability as asserted by Hew, Kim and Faith (2015).

The study used Pearson's correlation analysis. This was because it is the one used in testing if there is a linear association between an independent variable and a dependent variable. This is a key assumption when conducting a linear regression analysis. The study focused on only one independent variable being the reason why it did not bivariate Pearson's correlation analysis.

RESULTS

The study was to investigate the influence of principal's mentorship practices on female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The opinions of teachers are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of teachers in Management opinions on the frequency of use of various forms of mentorship for Female Teachers' Progression

Forms of Mentorship	Never	Rarely	Fairly Frequently	Frequently	Very Frequently	Mean	SD
Allowing competent female teachers to perform management roles based on their capacities	0.00%	9.10%	29.50%	31.80%	29.50%	3.818	0.971
Delegation of duties to female teachers	2.30%	9.10%	25.00%	36.40%	27.30%	3.773	1.031
Exposing female teachers to peer mentoring	2.30%	13.60%	29.50%	25.00%	29.50%	3.659	1.119
Inviting successful managers to sensitize female teachers on pathways to management.	4.50%	15.90%	31.80%	27.30%	20.50%	3.432	1.129
Exposing female teachers to management policies and literature	6.80%	20.50%	20.50%	36.40%	15.90%	3.341	1.180
Making arrangements	18.20%	11.40%	27.30%	25.00%	18.20%	3.136	1.357

ts for female teachers to understudy the school administrators.	0%	%					
Exposing female teachers to management training conferences	13.00%	34.10%	27.30%	18.20%	6.80%	2.705	1.133
Composite Mean and Standard Deviation						3.409	0.710
Valid N=44							

From table 1, the study established that mentoring programmes were fairly often implemented as a way of encouraging teachers' progression in to management positions in the public secondary schools in Kajiado County. With a particular focus on female teachers, the study noted that on average, these teachers were exposed to different kinds of mentorship programmes fairly frequently as asserted by deputy principals, senior teachers and HODs.

From the study findings, it was evident that the highly embraced or prioritized forms of mentoring female teachers in a bid to promote their progression in to school management were, the delegation of duties to them, exposing them to peer mentoring and allowing those competent among them to perform management roles based on their capacities.

While the principals on average acknowledged that exposing female teachers to management mentorship, making arrangements for female teachers to understudy the school administrators and exposing female teachers to management training conferences were undertaken frequently. Deputy principals were of the view that greater attention was diverted to principals internally assigning teachers to perform duties of their gender but on competence basis and also the principals acting as good mentors to their deputy principals. Deputies had the opinion that the Teachers Service Commission does not mentor teachers to take up mentorship positions through school principals who act as the TSC agents. Deputies from the sampled public secondary schools believed that mentorship of those in leadership in their schools towards enhancing female teachers' progression was conducted to a large extent contrary to the views of the principals.

Majority of the senior teachers felt that most principals were good mentors to them. They encouraged them to apply for deputy principal positions. The senior teachers could however not state with certainty whether delegation of administrative tasks in their schools was equally done to male and female teachers with fairness, whether principals mentored teachers to take up school management positions and whether most

principals entrusted senior teachers to handle discipline and financial matters fully on their behalf. From the findings, most HODs were in agreement that most principals appointed teachers internally to perform management duties regardless of gender based on their competence and also principals delegated administrative tasks equally to both male and female deputies. HODs on average neither agreed nor disagreed for example, many principals delegated their duties fully to HODs in their departments as a way of mentoring them.

The study further found that in the mentoring of teachers already in public secondary schools' management the least embraced practices were principals often allowing their deputies, senior teachers or HODs run financial and discipline matters on their behalf and principals mentoring teachers to take up management positions. The form of mentorship that was most agreed by all the teachers in Management as highly practiced was allowing competent female teachers to perform management roles based on their capabilities which is confirmed by the mean of 3.818.

The least form of mentorship which contributes to female teachers getting management positions was exposing female teachers to management training conferences as indicated by a mean of 2.705 in Table 1.

The regression analysis confirmed that mentorship had a positive and significant influence on the female progression to management positions in the public secondary schools in Kajiado County. These findings meant that increased mentorship of female teachers in these schools would significantly enhance their progression in to schools' management.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that whereas the number of female teachers who had progressed in to management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County had increased in the past 6 years, male teachers still dominated the management positions in these schools. Mentorship programmes by principals were not adequately done to the female teachers. This study encouraged establishment of more mentorship forums by the principals to have more female teachers progress into the positions of management in public secondary schools.

The study observed that different forms of mentoring female teachers in a bid to empower them to take up management positions in public secondary schools in Kajiado County were adopted but to a varying extent with greater emphasis put on delegation of administrative and management duties to female teachers and allowing competent female teachers to perform managerial roles based on their

capacities. It was also concluded that mentorship had a positive significant influence on female teachers' progression in to management of public secondary schools in this county.

This study concluded that frequent seminars and workshops at all levels by the principals should be organized frequently to educate and equip teachers at all levels with the management skills. Involving female teachers in the day-to-day school management and administrative activities through delegation of more administrative and management would encourage more female teachers to progress into management of public secondary schools. This study concluded that school administrators ought to institute and strengthen mentorship systems for their juniors in order to inspire female teachers to take up management roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made that:-

- (i) The principals should organize for female principals to visit their schools to have a dialogue with the female teachers on the benefits of being in management. Those successful principals motivate the female teachers to have a positive attitude in

applying for these management positions.

(ii) School principals should encourage peer mentoring in their schools. This would provide forum discussions with freedom among peers and as a result learn from one another on the benefits of progressing to management positions. This should involve classroom teachers, HODs, senior teachers and even deputy principals.

(iii) Principals should delegate financial and discipline duties to their deputies, senior teachers, Heads of departments. This should be to both male and female teachers. It would ensure that these teachers become responsible in budgeting, handling discipline matters which would mentor them to take up management roles with exposure from their principals.

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