Factors accounting for the under-representation of females in headship positions in public basic schools in Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District: Implications for staff development

Cosmos Kwame Dzikunu

Institute of Educational Research and Innovation Studies, University of Education, Winneba

Author Email: cosmosdzikunu@gmail.com

***Author**

Cosmos Kwame Dzikunu

Institute of Educational Research and Innovation Studies, University of Education, Winneba

Author Email: cosmosdzikunu@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors accounting for the under-representation of females in accessing headship positions in the Twifo-Hemang Lower denkyira District (THLDD). Descriptive survey design was adopted. One hundred and four (104) female teachers were selected using multistage sampling procedure comprising stratified and simple random sampling techniques in the respondents selection. Data analysis involved the used of measures of central tendencies such as frequency counts, mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that the major factors that affected female teachers' under-represenation in headship positions in public basic schools in THLDD were manifested in organizational and personal factors such as job recruitment and hiring practices that did not attract females. Female teachers were minority as both heads and assistants, females were reluctant to accept responsibility of school leadership and females had lack of confidence in their capabilities, qualification and experience than males. The social-cultural factors were aspiration related i.e. females did not have plan in setting their promotion goals to be school leaders and both females and males did not want to work under female leaders. The study recommends that females teachers should develop mechanisms such as lobby groups that would provide them avenue for women representation in the hierarchy of educational management. Educational leaders in Ghana and the THLDD in particular need to ensure that all applicable guidelines for recruitment are fully implemented and that they appoint and support coordinators as one of their strategies to institutionalized and monitor gender fairness in their schools.

Key words: under-representation, headship positions, public basic schools, staff development

Background Literature and Problem Context

Worldwide, there is growing awareness that more women than ever before are entering the labour force, but majority of the top leadership positions in almost all countries are primarily held by men. Female managers tend to be concentrated in lower leadership positions and have less authority than men (Adams & Ferreira, 2009; Abagi, 2000). In spite of the significant advances women have made in many areas of public life in the last two decades, they remain severely underrepresented and are still a long way from participating on the same footing as men in leadership of public educational institutions. In the year 2012, the global female labour force was estimated at 1.3

billion, about 39.9 percent of the total labour force, but was greatly under-represented in decision-making and leadership in all areas. The consequence of this gender gap in leadership is that women do not participate fully in decisions that shape their lives and therefore, the countries are not capitalizing on the full potential of almost one half of world's human resource available (ILO, 2012; Adema, 2012; World Bank, 2012).

The leadership roles that females play in school had drawn the attention of scholars to investigate their roles in school leadership and in more economically developed countries such as Costa Rica, Hong Kong , Singapore ,the Philippines, China and South Korea. There are high rate of females in various educational sub-sectors such as primary, secondary and higher education that precipitated females to take part in educational administration (Abagi, 2000). In China, socially and economically, it can be expected that more women will assume leadership positions as China strives to modernize its educational and economic system in the Twenty-first century although the process can be slow and gradual because of strong emphasis on male dominance in their traditional culture. Similar feminization trends have been documented in some educational systems such as Ghana, Nigeral, Liberia and Kenya within developing countries (Abagi, 2000).

In East Asia, the need for women in school leadership position is regarded as important issue to ensure sensitivity within schools for the wellbeing of adolescent girls to enable girls beginning to consider career choices with role models to stimulate women to participate in decision-making and to address issues of social justice by providing gender equality between adults within educational systems (Merger, 2009). Relative to the success story of women in administration, women hold 14 percent of school leadership position in Korea, 13 percent in China and are the majority in senior school management in Singapore (Merger, 2009). This, compared to males 86% in Korea and 87% in China is low.

In Ethiopia, school administration has been male-dominated. Consequently, the government has set a plan to increase the number of model female students and teachers in school as well as appointing those able women in leadership position (Adema, 2012). In line with this, some sectors have seen increased in the proportion of female school leaders such as principals, vice principals, unit leaders, department heads and clubs heads (Adema, 2012). For instance, in Harare there were 13 primary school female teachers in the Principal position, all dominated by males. In Ghana, female administrators are found in all sectors of the economy and at all levels of the education sub-sector. There are relatively fewer women school managers and administrators in the Central Region compared to other parts of the country. Female administrators have been given opportunities to manage the education sector in different capacities. In Ghana, the requirement for occupying headship position is selection interview of those of the rank of Assistan Director I or II. However, there are number of challenges facing them. This scenario finds expression in Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District (Onuma, 2021).

Women who aspire to senior positions, particularly headship, are still likely to face gender-related barriers as they seek promotion. Wanjiku and Wasamba (1998) noted that African societies largely continue to discourage women with ambition in politics and other sectors of life such as education, and from aspiring to leadership positions.

Traditionally, women are expected to perform household duties relating to child rearing and other domestic functions. Men, on the other hand, are expected to leave the home to work, with the primary responsibility of supporting the family economically and protecting its members. This traditional arrangement has been brought into question by the entrance of women often as primary bread winners in significant numbers of mainstream society in recent decades (Merger, 2009).

This traditional arrangement of assigning females to the background cannot continue to hold sway. A lot of females have the capacity to excel, and where they are limited, staff development activities can be initiated for them just as it is done for males in workpalces. One stands to argue that no one, male or female, has all the reservoir of knowledge and through continuous professional development, a person can reach the peak of his profession and perform well.

School leadership has been an area of focus in research over the last several decades, and one segment of that research is related specifically to gender. Despite the progress made so far in both developing and developed countries, women continue to be under-represented in decision-making in school leadership. The consequence of this gender gap is that women do not participate fully in decisions that shape their lives and their communities, and countries are not capitalizing on the full potential of one-half of their societies (Merger, 2009).

Theoretically, the leadership theory which is applied to this study is the Trait Theory propounded in the early 1900s. This theory is based on the unique exceptional abilities and traits of certain individuals. Some of these traits are self- confidence, need for achievement, the ability to have motives to carry out an action and self-monitoring skills. These traits were said to be inborn and unique to leaders, especially males. On the contrary females also possess these traits (Northouse, 2013), and it can be emphasized that some women aspiring to be leaders possess the motivation and the need to achieve, they are self- confident and have self- monitoring skills.

In the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District (THLDD) the pattern of headship positions among female teachers reveals under-representation of women as they account for a small percentage of heads of institutions. There are 63 public schools in the district and the number of female head teachers are 9 whereas, their male counterparts are 54. This is a huge disparity of gender and inequality despite the fact that female teachers in the district are 300, comprising 39% of the entire teaching workforce while the males comprise 61% totaling 407(GES, THLDD Office, 2020). In Ghana, many females occupy leadership positions as heads in basic schools, but it appears this has not reflected at the THLDD. Despites the efforts being made by the Government of Ghana and international agencies to narrow the gap between men and women in decision-making and in terms of school leadership positions in the THLDD, as of 2021, women still have low representation in public schools headship in the district.

However, much is yet to be known about the factors responsible for the situation. This study therefore investigates the under-representation of females in ascending headship positions in public schools in Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

Purpose of the Study

The study sought to examine factors accounting for under-representation of females in accessing headship positions in public schools in Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District.

Objectives of the Study

The study is geared towards achieving the following objectives:

1. To identify the organizational factors responsible for the under-representation of women in school headship positions in THLDD.
2. To ascertain the socio-cultural factors responsible for the under-representation of females in headship positions in THLDD.
3. To determine various strategies that can be put in place to improve the opportunity for women to access headship positions in THLDD.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

1. What organizational factors account for the under-representation of women in school headship positions in THLDD?
2. What socio-cultural factors are responsible for the under-representation of women in headship positions in THLDD?
3. What strategies are needed to improve women in accessing headship position in THLDD?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in diverse ways. Firstly, the findings of the study would create awareness among education authorities in the THLDD, and for female heads in particular, on the factors responsible for the low representation of women in headship positions. Secondly, the findings would form the basis for local policy formulation on women's representation in school leadership in the THLDD.

Delimitation of the Study

The study focuses on the factors accounting for the under-representation of females in accessing headship positions in public basic schools in Twifo-Hemang Lower Denkyira District. It covers only female teachers and female headteachers in the district. The study was confined to all the sixty-three public schools in the district. Contxtually, the phrase "leadership in public basic schools" connotes headship positions in these public schools.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design used in this research was the descriptive survey. Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) described the descriptive survey as a research that attempts to describe existing situations without necessarily analyzing relationships among variables. The situation analysed in this research is under-representation of females in headship positions in public basic schools in THLDD. The descriptive survey was employed to enable the researchers to collect enough data to determine the nature of the group (female teachers and head teachers) studied as it existed at the time of the study. Quantitative approach to collecting data was adopted to allow meaningful generalization with respect to the numerical findings

Population

All female teachers in the THLD District constituted the target population. The accessible population comprised all female headteachers and female teachers who have worked for at least three years within the district. This was because they were considered reasonably experienced enough to provide approapriate information needed for the study. In all, there were 63 schools, 300 female teachers and 9 female headteachers in the district.

Sample and sampling techniques

Table 1: Sample distribution of female teachers in each circuit

Name of Circuit	Population	Sample
Jukwa North	35	12
Jukwa South	62	22
Mfuom	60	21
Wawase	52	18
Hemang West	48	16
Hemang East	43	15
Total	**300**	**104**

Source: Field data 2020

In selecting the sample as indicated in Table 1, the female teachers including head teachers, were the unit of

sampling. A total number of 104 female teachers, including 9 female headteachers, were selected. This was

141

based on Sarantakos' (1988) suggestion that a sample size of 30% is adequate enough for an investigation. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used. This consisted of stratified random sampling, purposive sampling, and simple random sampling techniques. The schools were stratified into 6 circuits depending on their locations within the district. The circuits did not have the same number of female teachers. Some had more teachers than the others. The proportional sampling method was then used to select the number of female teachers that represented each circuit. In order to obtain the proportion of female teachers for each circuit, the total number of female teachers in each circuit was divided by the total number of female teachers in the entire district (300) and multiplied by the sample size of female teachers (104) selected. For example, Mfuom Circuit had 60 female teachers, divided by 300 (the total number of female teachers in the district) and multiplied by 104 female teachers sampled. This gave 21 female teachers selected for this circuit.The lottery method of randomization was used for the selection of each female teacher in the six education circuits. The lottery method was used due to the fact that it afforded all members of the sample an equal chance of being selected. The 9 female headteachers were purposively sampled, because they were thought to be relevant to the research topic in terms of the depth of information they had (Sarantakos, 2008).

Instrumentation

The instrument used for the study was a set of structured questionnaire for the selected female teachers because of its efficiency in collecting data in educational research and because it was effective for securing factual information about practices and conditions of which the respondents are presumed to have knowledge. The questionnaire was administered to the female teachers because they could read, understand and respond to the items. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A consisted of items structured to identify the organizational factors responsible for the under-representation of women in school headship in THLDD. Section (B) was made up of items that sought to find out the socio-cultural factors responsible for the under-representation of females in headship positions in THLDD while Section C sought to determine the various strategies needed to improve women's access to headship positions.

The basic structure of the questionnaire was based on the Likert-type scale format. Respondents indicated the extent to which each statement best described their response on the occurrence of each of them on a 5-point Likert-type scale. The respective weights for the responses were as follows: 5 Indicates 'strongly agree', 4 Indicates 'agree', 3 Indicates 'undecided', 2 Indicates 'disagree', 1 indicates 'strongly disagree'.

Face and Content Validities

Regarding content validity, the instruments for the data collection were constructed with the behaviour domains that were stated in the research questions. Face validity of the instrument was determined through judgment which involved discussing the items in the instruments with colleague research fellows.

Pre-testing and Reliability of Questionnaire

The research instrument was pre-tested in the Twifo-Atti Morkwa District in the Central Region. The selected district had comparable characteristics as the research area. Ten female teachers, including head teachers, were selected from five different circuits within the district. Two female teachers, each from the selected circuits, responded to the questionnaire. To establish the reliability of the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha, a measure of internal consistency, was used and the reliability coefficient score was 0.7. This was deemed appropriate since the items in the questionnaire were multiple scored on a Likert-type scale.

Data Analysis Procedures

The first step of data analysis in this study was to serially number the questionnaires after which they were edited. The edited responses were then coded and scored. The Statistical Package for Service Solution (version 24.0) as well as percent, mean and standard deviation were used for the analysis.

Ethical considerations

The researcher was concerned about the welfare of the respondents, including their mental and physical health and safety, and took all possible precautions to avoid incidental injury and disclosure of respondents' identities. The researcher also maintained the confidentiality of respondents.

Results and Discussions

Research Question 1: What organizational factors are responsible for the under-representation of women in school headship in THLDD?

Research question 1 looks at how organizational factors account for under-representation of women in basic school leadership. The question specifically sought to address issues such as whether appointment panels prefer men to women in recruitment; female teachers' unwillingness to accept headship positions, female teachers' competency and lack of social support for females. The data are in Table 2.

Table 2: Organizational factors accounting for the under-representation of women in school headship (n=104)

Statement- Organizational Factors	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1.Panel Members preference for men to women	19(18.3)	25(24.0)	27(26.0)	20(19.2)	13(12.5)	2.84	1.29
2. female teachers unwillingness	8(7.7)	25(24.0)	31(29.8)	34(32.7)	6(5.8)	3.05	1.06
3. The female teachers competency	27(26.0)	32(30.8)	11(10.6)	26(25.0)	8(7.7)	2.58	1.32
4. Lack of social support for females	11(10.5)	22(21.9)	29(27.9)	36(34.6)	6(5.8)	3.04	1.11
5. Delegation of authority.	14(13.5)	25(24.0)	14(13.5)	37(35.6)	14(13.5)	3.12	1.30
6. Appointment guidelines	20(19.2)	37(35.6)	16(15.4)	11(10.6)	20(19.2)	2.75	1.40
7. Reluctance to work under	29(27.9)	26(25.0)	23(22.1	16(15.4)	10(9.6)	2.54	1.31
8. Leadership qualities	15(14.4)	24(23.1)	17(16.3	38(36.5)	10(9.6)	3.04	1.25
9. Lack of confidence	30(28.8)	23(22,1)	17(16.3)	23(22.1)	11(10.6)	2.63	1.38
10. Gender bias	25(24.0)	26(25.0)	19(18.3)	20(19.2)	14(13.5)	2.73	1.37

Key: 5-Strongly Agree; 4- 'Agree; 3- Undecided; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree. Source: Field data, 2020

Table 2 reveals that respondents were divided over the construct 'panel members preference for men over women in appointment to headship positions within the Twifo (THLDD)'. The sharp difference (M=2.84; SD= 1.29) among respondents could mean that respondents did not think that panel members altogether had special preference for men over women when considering staff for headship positions. This appears so because the GES has laid down guidelines that specify how appointment of heads of schools are made. Analytically, the guidelines possessed by the Ghana Education Service is non discriminatory, meaning that the GES believes all persons, (males and female), in adherence to the trait theories, have abilities and traits that they can applied as leaders in the Service. Indeed, the recruitment of educational leaders should be based on their individual characteristics (traits) such as qualifications, capabilities and competencies. Equally and implicitly, the GES often holds training workshops for its managers to the effect that such leadership staff development programme strengthen the managers in performing their tasks of empowering others, creating and sustaining competive schools, and empowering others and making significant decisions.

The data in Table 2 further show that respondents affirmed that female teachers were unwilling to accept headship responsibility. The data reveal that 40(38.5%) agreed to this construct while 33(31.7%) respondents disagreed. The data recorded a M= 3.05; SD=1.06 in support of the position that women were not willing to accept headship positions. This finding is similar to Brown and Irby (2003) and Oplatka's (2006) studies,which note that women do not apply to be heads, even when they are well qualified as the male applicants, at least in part, because they have negative self-perceptions and lack confidence in their capabilities, qualifications and experienc**e.**

Also, analysis of the data in Table 2 indicates that 59(56.8%) respondents disagreed that low representation of women in headship positions was as a result of 'the female teachers' lack of competence' (M=2.58; SD=1.32). This implies that female teachers had capability to lead

primary schools if they were given positions. This position was emphasized by Deventer (2000) that empowering women and enabling them to actively participate and contribute to social, economic and political activities is important for sustainable development. The Education for All (EFA) policy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscore the importance of achieving gender equality in education by 2030, with specific focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to, and achievement in quality basic education (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization– UNESCO, 2003). To achieve these targets, countries have to develop feasible and informed strategies to improve participation of both male and female citizens in various socio-economic activities, including education (Wamahiu, 2005). This means further education and staff development for countries and institutions that lack leadership skills.

The data as indicated in Table 3 reveal that 41(40.4%) respondents thought that low representation of women in headship positions in THLDD was due to 'lack of special support for females' (M=3.04; SD=1.11). Regarding this, the need for an affirmative action to enhance support for women in educational leadership cannot be over-emphasized. According to Nzomo (2005), there is the urgent need to establish programs combining gender sensitization, legal awarenessand civic education of both women and men, with the intent to eradicating retrogressive socio-cultural attitudes and values, as well as democratizing the society. The study underscored the importance of women's self-empowerment through their own organizations and through more effective networking that cut across class, political and socio-economic divide.

Analysis of the results from Table 2 further indicates that 51(49.1%) respondents agreed that non delegation of authority to women accounted for low representation of women in headship positions in the THLDD of the GES (M=3.12; SD=1.30). This implies that institutional arrangement does not adequately promote delegation of authority to women as expected. In most cases masculine is conterminous with authority. Congruent to this position, Zellinsky (2008) lamented that the hierarchy of the

143

bureaucratic structure of educational organizations is considered a restriction to women in educational leadership. While there are lots of opportunities for women at lower levels, there are relatively few at the upper hiring positions of greater power.

As regards the issue of lack of confidence as a factor responsible for representation of women in headship positions, the data in Table 2 reveal that 53(50.9%) of respondents disagreed with the construct (M= 2.63; SD= 1.38). The data suggest that majority of respondents did not think that women lack self-confident. Perhaps, the demeanor of women as calm, supportive and unassertive could be misconstrued as lacked of confidence. A study on women and development in Kenya emphasized the crucial role of women in school leadership. Abagi (2000) observed that, schools headed by women teachers are better organized and more stable than those headed by male teachers. Women are likely to take a sympathetic team approach to management and they may end up being more effective bosses than men who have been conditioned and socialized to be rigid and power-greed.

Table 2 again shows that 51(49%) respondents disagreed with the item that 'gender bias constitutes an organizational factor responsible for under-representation of women in headship positions in basic schools in THLDD (M=2.73; SD 1.37). However, the data show that 34

(32.7%) respondents agreed with the construct. This implies that gender bias was not a contributing factor to low representation of women in accessing headship positions within the GES. This finding agrees with advocates such as Ng and Burke (2005), who argue for opportunity for women leadership. The advocates argued that women leaders bring distinct personality and motivational strengths to their roles and are more conducive to today's diverse workplace (Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005). The most compelling reason for more attention to the issues of women in leadership relates to the need to attract talented leadership. Merger (2009) has stressed that it is economically disadvantageous for the society to underutilize the talent of more than half of its workforce (women).

Research Question 2: What socio-cultural factors are responsible for the under-representation of women in headship positions in THLDD?

Research question 2 sought information on how socio-cultural factors account for the under-representation of women in headship positions. Some of the issues of analysis included: women as caregivers; female socialization; cultural belief; leadership is male dominated etc. Table 3 has the data.

Table 3: Socio-cultural factors accounting for the under-representation of women in headship position

Statement- Socio-cultural factors	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1. Women as caregivers	13(12.5)	22(21.2)	26(25.0)	32(30.8)	11(10.6)	3.06	1.21
2. Traditional Roles	19(18.3)	29(27.9)	20(19.2)	24(23.1)	12(11.5)	2.82	1.30
3.Lack of aspiration	18(17.3)	18(17.3)	21(20.2)	39(37.5)	8(7.7)	3.01	1.25
4. Female socialization.	33(31.7)	24(32.1)	14(13.5)	23(22.1)	10(9.6)	2.55	1.39
5. Cultural believe	24(23.1)	32(30.8)	17(16.3)	21(20.2)	10(9.6)	2.63	1.30
6. Leadership is o male dominated	48(46.2)	21(20.2)	14(13.5)	12(11.5)	9(8.7)	2.16	1.35
7. Religious beliefs	34(32.7)	28(26.9)	17(16.3)	19(18.3)	6(5.8)	2.38	1.271
8. Social Taboos in some communities that Married women	23(22.1)	35(33.7)	20(19.2)	21(20.2)	5(4.8)	2.52	1.18
9. Single women anticipate marriage rather than careers	17(16.3)	28(26.9)	19(18.3)	27(26.0)	13(12.5)	2,91	1.30
10. There is a social prejudice against women in management.	25(24.0)	23(22.1)	16(15.4)	32(30.8)	8(7.7)	2.76	1.33

Key: 5-Strongly Agree; 4- 'Agree; 3- Undecided; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree. Source: Field data, 2020.

The data reveal that respondents agreed with the construct that 'women were considered as caregivers and mothers as they grow to become adults, hence, their inability to advance to headship positions' (M=3.06; SD=1.21). However, some respondents 26 (25%) were undecided. Socio-cultural beliefs, attitudes and practices dominant in our society have gender- differentiated effects on boys and girls education. Deventer (2000) articulates that the girl-child is socialized to be a self-sacrificing person destined for biological reproduction and service to others, especially her family. Akin to Deventer's articulation is the present day belief that there is a new awakening among females since the Beijin Conference

which has shattered the proverbial "glass ceiling". Rightfully so, women have been able to ascend the leaqdership ladders as Presidents, Vice Presudents, Vice Chancellors, deans and heads of department. These females, given further staff development training, are providing instructional guidance, supporting, evaluating and developing teacher quality, managing the financial and human resources of basic schools and collaborating with other schools for the optimal advancement of education in Ghana

Also, the results shown in Table 3 indicate that respondents support the notion that most of the female teachers had no headship aspirations and they seemed to

144

be satisfied with teaching jobs (M=3.01; SD=1.30). But, some of the respondents disagreed to the assertion. Abagi (2000) is of the view that our social image of the differences between women and men is projection of our cultural environment in which we live. This image is a self-fulfilling prophecy. Thus, some female teachers may not ever have the zeal to advance to positiosn of responsibility with the notion that such are the preserved for men. But, this seeming lack of aspirations among females is not true. Every year, hundreds of females teachers sit promotion and heaship interview in the GES (Mensah et.al., 2014).

Analysis of data from Table 3 reveal that majority of respondents 58(59.6%) disagreed with the statement that religious beliefs ensure or dictate that men should lead and women should be in the background to support (M=2.38; SD=1.27). But, other respondents 25(24.1%) disagreed with the statement. It is a truism that some religious organizations desire for women to be at the background to support. But, in modern contemporary days such notions are changing rapidly as a lot of women tend to climb the educational ladder just like their male counterparts. This finding is debatable in that while there have been a number of studies on this subject, there is still the need for more in-depth studies in order to understand fully and reveal whether religious belief is a factor accounting for underrepresentation of women in headship position in the THLD.

Furthermore, Table 3 indicates that 58 (55.8%) of respondents disagreed with the statement that social taboos in some communities marred women's job interest and women should therefore must be subservient to their husbands (2.52; SD= 1.18). A significant number of respondents, 20 (19.2%) were undecided on this issue. It is in place to argue that some of these practices are fast eroding because of modernization and the fact that economic conditions of the time require that women should contribute to support the home. Therefore a lot of women have moved beyond the restrictions of taboos and social norms. Again, with regards to the construct that 'single women anticipate marriage rather than careers', the results in Table 3 indicate that respondents were divided on the issue. Respondents, 45 (43.2%) disagreed while 30 (38.5%) agreed with the construct. According to Fagenson (1993), extensive family responsibility, especially those involving marriage, childcare and household activities, can affect female career achievement. Today, it is generally believed that marriage constitutes an advantage for men who want to make career a real handicap for women who have the same ambition (Adler & Israeli, 1983).

Research Question 3: What are the various strategies that can improve women in accessing headship position in THLDD?

Research question three addresses issues on ways of improving women in accessing headship positions. The question covers issues relating to formal mentoring of female teachers; females as role models; provision of opportunities for females to aspire to headship, enforcement of affirmative actions and capacity building training for teachers.

Table 4: Various ways that can improve women in accessing headship position **(n=104)**

Statement- Ways of Improving Women accessing Headship Position	1	2	3	4	5	M	SD
1. Formal mentoring of female teachers to headship position.	3(2.9)	13(12.5)	12(11.5)	36(34.6)	40(38.5)	3.93	1.13
2. Female role models	-	5(4.8)	12(11.5)	54(51.9)	33(31.7)	4.11	.787
3.Provision of opportunities.		3(2.9)	10(9.6)	51(49.0)	40(38.5)	4.23	.740
4.Enforcement of affirmative action in THLD.	1(0.1)	9(8.7)	12(11.5)	48(46.2)	34(32.7)	4.01	.940
5. Capacity building training for female teachers	2(1.9)	3(2.9)	13(12.5)	40(38.5)	46(44.2)	4.20	.907

Key: 5-Strongly Agree; 4- 'Agree; 3- Undecided; 2-Disagree; 1-Strongly Disagree. Source: Field data, 2020

The analysis according to Table 4 indicates that there are many statements that direct and give women courage to soldier on and there are beliefs and statements that do not "hold any water" in terms of challenging women in school leadership in THLD. The analysis according to Table 4 indicates that 76(72.5%) respondents agreed that one of the ways of improving women's access to headship was through formal mentoring of female teachers to access headship positions (M=3.93; DS=1.13). This finding is congruent with Mensah, Odei-Tettey and Osaebo (2014) who highlighted some strategies that can be employed to increase women's participation in school leadership positions. They noted the following:

Gender-based organisations, traditional institutions and the media in Ghana should campaign and work towards a cultural shift to encourage women to aspire for leadership positions. The Ghana Education Service and gender-based organisations should periodically organize leadership programmes for women to prepare them professionally for leadership positions.

Women in leadership positions in Ghana, including female school heads, should institute mentorship schemes or programmes for school girls and a debriefing programme on male dominance for school boys. Such programmes will propel women to attain leadership positions, and at the same time change males' attitudes towards female leadership over time (p.71). These advocacies by Mensah et al. (2014), are rife in the public domain and the duty of the GES and the MOE is to bring them into reality.

145

Again, Table 4 reveals that majority, 87 (83.6%) respondents agreed that there should be the presence of role models for female teachers to aspire for headship as a way of improving access to leadership positions (M=4.11; SD=.787). In life, emulation is a process of learning and this learning experience is practical and direct. Such role models whose performance or behaviours are sustained over the years have become towering figures for aspiring teachers to emulate.

The data in Table 4 further reveal that majority, 91 (87%) of respondents confirmed that provision of opportunities exists for female teachers to demonstrate their ability in assigned duties in their respective schools as a way of improving women's access to headship positions (M=4.23; SD=.740). Again, the data reveal that majority 82 (78.9%) of respondents agreed that another way of improving female teachers' access to headship positions was through enforcement of affirmative action in THLDD (M=4.10; SD=.940). Furthermore, the data show that respondents were unanimous, 86 (82.7%) agreed that THLDD of the GES should provide capacity building training to promote female teachers to access leadership positions in schools (M=4.20; SD=.907).

According to Kwegyir-Aggrey (2012), staff development is understood to be the process of strengthening the ability of an individual, organizations/ institutions to perform task more effectively and efficiently than before. Signicant in the results from Table 4 was the revelation of stratgeies such as formal mentoring of females and capacity building. These are all expressions of staff development formats that stand to strengthen the traits of female leaders in the District. When the leadership traits are developed they will go a long way of equipping the females in headship positions to demonstrate effective and efficient leadership abilities that centre around building relationships within and outside the basic schools, articulate, advocate and cultivate the core values that define the culture of basic schools.

Conclusions

The study found that women representation in school leadership was one of the major challenges that has down trodden the female head for very long time. It is believed that men have taken it as a right that women should not be in the top most level of management in school leadership. The major factors that affect female teachers' under-represenation in headship positions in public basic schools in THLDD were manifested in organizational and personal factors such as job recruitment and hiring practices which do not attract females; female teachers were minority as both heads and assistants. Also, females were reluctant to accept responsibility of school leadership and females lack confidence in their capabilities, qualifications and experiences, and were less involved in staff development than males.

Social-cultural factors have been a big contributor and driver of any successes and challenges in different organizations and in individual development. The success of women representation in the management of education to work on equal terms with men depends on these factors. It was indicated that females did not have plan in setting their promotion goals to be school leaders.

Barring all barriers blocking women from accessing leadership positions, there should be strategies to unlock their potential. The women should therefore develop mechanisms, such as lobby groups and other strategies that would provide an avenue to women representation in the top education management. The study also found that for women to have equal management position with men, image perceived by themselves and by the community, including cultural practices, should be dealt with from the community level.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations based on the findings:

1. The MOE and GES should ensure that woman are given opportunities to manage education in various educational institutions without discrimination. Different organizational officials (School leaders, Education Officials and Ministry of Women and Children Affairs) need to give greater recognition to female teachers and place them in functional areas or job assignments that lead to accomplishment of critical school tasks, and strengthen them to hold higher levels of position.

2. Female teachers should realize that gender equality is a constitutional right and thus, fight for their opportunities as opposed to waiting to be supported or given the leadership positions as a favour.

3. Females in managerial positions should not overstretch their abilities just to show people that they can also make it as managers, but they should comfortably use their strength to manage the education institutions effectively and efficiently.

4. Females teachers should learn to motivate others; especially females in the managerial positions should encourage others through different forums to ensure other ladies identify and know that women can hold any managerial positions, anywhere, and anytime, either in the education system or in other public domains.

5. Educational leaders such as directors of educators and managers need to ensure that all applicable guidelines are fully implemented and that they appoint and support team coordinators as one of their strategies to institutionalized and monitor gender fairness in their schools. Hence, female teachers should separate themselves from traditions that demean them and bar them from managerial positions.

6. Women managers should develop different strategies depending on the field in which they are working, job circumstances, and the environment and people they are dealing with. The education industry needs to accept potential females" contributions in leadership activities to attain developmental goals of the country, and they need to encourage rather than discourage them.

146

References

Abagi, O. (2000). The Impact of politicised Education Reform on Quality of Primary Education: Experience from Kenya.*" In Watson. K. et al. Educational Dilemmas: Debate and Diversity*. London: CASSE

Adams, R.B. and D. Ferreira (2009), "Women in the Boardroom and their Impact on Governance and Performance", *Journal of Financial Economics*, 94 (2), 291-309.

Adema, W. (2012), "Setting the Scene: The Mix of Family Policy Objectives and Packages Across the OECD", Children and Youth Services Review, *Elsevier,* 34, 487-498.

Adler, N. and Israeli, D. (1988).*Women in Management Worldwide*. New York: M.E. Sharpe *Inc.*

Blackmore, G. (2005). *Indikator Sosial Wanita Indonesia (Social Indicatior of Indonesian Women)*. Jakarta: Biro PusatStatistik

Brown, G. & Irby.B.J. (2005). *Increasing Gender Equity in Educational Leadership*. Paper Presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association Montreal, Canada.

Deventer V. (2000). *The Role of Higher Education in Empowering women in Eastern Africa*. Paper Presented at the Workshop On Woman and Management In Higher Education Regional Trainers, Catholic University of Easter Africa, Nairobi.

Fagenson, U. (1993). *Women in Management: Trends, Issues and Challenges in Managerial Diversity.* New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Fraenkel, R. J., & Wallen, E. N. (2000). How to design and evaluate research in education (4th ed.). San Francisco: McGraw-Hill.

GES (2020). THLDD Annual Teachers' Census. Twifo Hemang, GES.

Greenberg, H. & Sweeney, P (2005). Leadership: qualities that distinguish women; Results from a recent survey provide evidence that women bring distinct personality and motivational strengths to leadership roles--and do so in a style that is more conducive to today's diverse workplace. *The Financial Executive, 21 (6),32-51.*

ILO (2012). *Hard to see, harder to count: survey guidelines to estimate forced labour of adults and children,* Geneva, ILO.

Kwegyire-Aggrey, P. (2012) Capacity building. *In District education operational planning and performance review*. Accra: MOE.

Mensah, D. K. D., Odei-Tettey, K., & Osaebo, A. O. N. (2014). Mainstreaming the functional concerns of female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem south municipality of Ghana: Aspect of performance and challenges in a male dominated culture. *British Journal of Education, 2 (7),* 65-79.

Merger, M.N. (2009). *Social inequality: Patterns & process*. NY: Mayfield publishing company.

Ng, E. S.W. & Burk, R. J. (2005).Croup Person-organization fit and the war for ntalent: does diversity management makea difference?. *Int.of Human Resource Management* 16:7 1195-1210.

Northouse, P. (2013). *Leadership: Theory and Practice.* Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publications.

Nzomo, M. (1995). *Women in top management in Kenya*. African Association for Public Administration and Management, Nairobi.

Onumah, A. (2021). *Challenges confronting female educational administrators in basic and secondary schools in Ekumfi District*. Unpublished M.Ed Dissertation, University of Education, Winneba.

Oplatka, I (2006). Going Beyond Role Expectations: Toward an Understanding of the Determinants and Components of Teacher Organizational Citizenship Behavior *Educational Administration Quarterly* 42 (3), 385-423.

Sarantakos, S. (2008). *Social research* (2nded.) New York: Palgrave Publishers Ltd.

UNESCO, (2012). *Meeting the Global Challenge of Community Participation in Ecotourism: Case Studies and Lessons from Ecuador*. U S A I D: The Nature Conservancy

Wamahiu, M. (2005). The Female Sport Experience. *Journal of Sport Psycholog,* 3 (2), 36-51.

Wanjiku M. K., & Wasamba, P. (1998). *Reclaiming women's space in politics. The Collaborative centre for gender and development*. Nairobi: Kenya.

World Bank. (2012). *World Development Report 2012 : Gender Equality and Development*. World Bank. © World Bank. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/4391 License: CC BY 3.0 IGO."

Zellinsky, H. (2008). Women and the Leadership Paradigm: Bridging The Gender Gap. *National Forum of Education Administration and Supervision Journal*, 1(Ed). Retrieved from htpp://www.nationalforum.com/pdf.