Social Cultural Factors Influencing Appointment of Headteachers in Primary Schools in Eldoret East Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract
Headteachers' position is at the critical point of which all the mechanism of Education system: planning, delivery and management rest. The purpose of the study was to investigate social cultural factors influencing appointment of headteachers in primary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County. The target population comprised of 275 respondents who were: head teachers, deputy head teachers, members of appointment committee in the Sub-County Education office noted as the DEO, DQASO, QASOS, AEOS, DSO, DHRO and KNUT Executive official. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules as tools of data collection. Findings of the research showed that males dominate headship positions in primary schools in the sub county where even the constitutional threshold of 30% has not been attained. It was found out that female leadership is devalued the study area. Respondents indicated that stereotypes associated with social cultural factors had significant influence on the appointment of heads of schools in Eldoret East Sub County. Women teachers not given equal chances to apply for headship position due to cultural beliefs that the society has towards them. There is need for selection panels not to focus on socio-cultural issues that may affect women ascendancy to school leadership. The selection panels need to forego socio-cultural factors that may affect women teachers' promotion to school headship.
Keywords: social, cultural, factors, appointment and head teachers

1.1 Introduction
Head teachers' visionary role, dedication, and leadership skills have proved to be essential on successful management of the school. Head teachers are often the role models that directly influences school environment, inspire people in the community, and give new height to the school (Mulwa, 2005). According to Noddings (2005), the head teacher is the leading professional in the school, working with the governing body, the head teacher must provide visionary leadership and direction for the school and ensure that it is managed and organized to meet its aims. Statistics shows that there is a gender gap in educational administration globally (Wangari & Kyalo, 2015). For example an investigation by United Nations Educational, Scientific and cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2000) showed that although the number of women employed in the education sector is relatively high, they are under-represented in educational management in most countries of the world. Women remain under-represented in educational leadership in most developing countries, of which the Republic of Uganda in East Africa is one. Uganda has an excellent record of promoting gender equity in all aspects of life (Kwesiga, 1997). In Kenya Women are still underrepresented in leadership positions (Parsaloi, 2012). Bias against women in school leadership still exists, having experienced sexism or discrimination during the promotion period to headship in primary schools. The problem of underrepresentation of women in education leadership does not only happen in Kenya.

Teacher Service Commission selection criteria for recruitment, selection and subsequent appointment of head teachers is clearly focused on qualification, experiences and merit and it results squarely on male dominance being persistent against one third minimum gender requirement in all public positions. The participation of women in higher education is very insignificant in Kenya (Nyaigoti-Chacha 2004). Statistics from Eldoret East Sub County Education office shows that there were sixteen females and one hundred and ten male headteachers in the Sub-County despite gender policy and affirmative action. This shows that disparity exist in headship positions in public primary schools. It became necessary therefore to examine social cultural factors influencing appointment head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East Sub-County, Uasin Gishu County.

1.2 Problem Statement
The government of Kenya has committed itself to the elimination of gender inequalities in educational institutions through the constitution and even affirmative action (RoK, 2010). Despite all these efforts, there still exist gaps between the male and female headteachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East Sub County. Data from Sub County Director of Education shows that out of 126 public primary schools, 110 (87.3%) schools are male headed with only 16 (12.69%) being headed by females. The study observed that though research studies have been done on gender disparities in school leadership different areas of the country, inadequate research on social cultural factors influencing this trend has been conducted Eldoret East, Uasin Gishu County. It is against

this backdrop that the study investigated factors influencing the appointment of head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East.

1.3 Purpose of the study
The study assessed social cultural factors influencing appointment of headteachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East, Uasin Gishu County.

2.1 Review of Literature
Women are under-represented in school headship in many parts of the world. Social-cultural reasons have been used to explain this discrepancy. Coleman (2002) and Sperandio and Kagoda (2010) have cited that for some women, it is absolutely wrong and unacceptable for a woman to be at the helm of leadership. Hence, they adopt a resentful attitude towards them and attempt to instigate others. Paradoxically, the women (mostly elderly) in the family are culture-driven to transmit the superior status of men as a legacy from one generation to the next. From as early as a girl's infancy, the notion that men are superior begins to resound. This continues throughout adolescence until marriage that establishes and reinforces that legitimate authority lies with men (Sperandio & Kagoda, 2010).

According to Suda (2002), men are commonly rated higher than women on traits associated with competence and instrumentality such as leadership. Organizations tend to be patriarchal by nature thus leaders lead in the way they were led and so men continue to collude with fellow males and exacerbate male entitlement (Nostrand, 1993). In UK, a survey (Fiona, 1995) showed that the majority of men responsible for recruitment and hiring employees held the view that a women is likely to be inferior to a man as an employee. Hanekom (2001) study entitled " Organizational barriers facing women school principals in Wynberg region of South Africa" found out that school organizations still preferred male candidates for senior positions and in addition women were to be unusually qualified and work twice as hard as male aspirants to have the same promotional opportunities. Political interference, influence by interested parties and patronage had denied schools the best managers. There had been also rampant practices of extending services for retiring head teachers due to lack of effective successors (Kihumba, 2008; Silsil, 2008).

Influence of social-cultural factors on gender imbalance in appointment of head teachers in mixed secondary schools in Vihiga district, Kenya. It was believed that some communities believed in male leadership and even those interviewing still believed some big mixed schools should be lead by males who will be able to handle the boys than females (Ingasia, 2010). Spouse attitude influenced gender imbalance. In-depth interviews revealed some family squabbles had made some head teachers not to perform their duties effectively as school administrators thus dropped out voluntarily or demoted by the office. This had affected more females than males. According to Chege and Sifuna (2006), women's productive activities are often hampered by the unofficial and private domestic responsibilities that compete for women's labour in terms of time and energy, not to mention the increase in workload and long working hours. The issue of children and/or family is one that deters many women when they have to make the decision to take up a leadership position. The responsibility that comes with a family is a significant barrier to women attaining top jobs. Many mothers feel exhausted and overwhelmed trying to balance paid work commitments with the commitments of being a parent, thus, they feel psychologically, intellectually and emotionally drained (Knowles, et al. 2009 in Ingasia, 2010).

Cornwall and Legerski (2010) noted that women's gender identities were embedded in responsibilities for care that extended beyond mothering young children, and included the care of husbands, adult children and grandchildren. In some cases, women intentionally avoided work outside the home to have time to maintain family relationships. Some of the women in the study who had started college did not finish, usually dropping out on getting married, or with the birth of their first child. Seelinger (2000) studied Central Appalachian women in school leadership, where the majority of the women interviewed acknowledged that choosing to become administrators necessitated difficult personal accommodations along the way. She reported that they spoke eloquently and sometimes regretfully of the borders they had to negotiate to maintain their primary personal relationships, while doing what was necessary for career advancement. Among the women in her study, three were divorced and had no intent to remarry, and two had not borne any children, and did not regret the decision.

Wangari and Kyalo (2005) study investigated gender bias in the recommendation and appointment of teachers to administrative positions in mixed secondary schools in Nyandarua Central District, Kenya. From the findings on the gender of the respondents, the study found that 75% of the respondents were male while 25% of the respondents were female. This shows that majority of teachers in the capacity of principal in the Sub county were male. Male principals had the likelihood of recommending male teachers for administrative positions so female teachers were left out in the administrative positions in the sub county (Wangari & Kyalo, 2015).

Malombe (2011) study focussed on the factors that determine women participation in the leadership of public primary schools in Kitui West District, Kenya, found that the major obstacles to the appointment of women in school leadership positions were that most communities devalued women leadership (92.6%), women

were too busy with domestic chores (87.8%) while most of them never bothered to apply for school leadership positions (80.5%). From the review of conceptual and empirical literature, studies on the influence in the appointment of head teachers in Eldoret East Sub County public primary schools. The above review of literature shows that social – cultural factors are critical factors to the selection and appointment of head teachers to school leadership based on gender. Women still face certain barriers on their journey to leadership. From the review, it is evident hat inadequate research had been conducted to determine the social cultural factors influencing appointment of head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East Sub County, Kenya.

3.1 Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Eldoret East, Uasin Gishu County; the Sub-County is divided into three Divisions namely; Ainabkoi, Kaptagat and Moiben Divisions. The study used descriptive survey design which allows collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The target population for this study comprised of the headteacher appointment panels, all school head teachers and all deputy head teachers of the primary schools in the Sub-County. Out of the 126 schools, 13 schools were selected through stratified sampling technique to participate in the study. For appointment panel, census method was used to select them (appointment panel) since their population was not large, 26 head teachers and their deputies were selected through proportionate stratified random sampling from 13 schools in the three divisions. The study used questionnaires and interviews to collect data. Data analysis was done using descriptive statistics; frequencies and percentage.

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers Demographic Data

Table 1 shows the general characteristics of head teachers and deputy head teachers in terms of gender, highest education qualification and the number of years they have been in teaching profession.

Table 1 Head teachers and Deputy Head teachers Education Level

Qualification for H/T & D/HT	Frequency	Percentage
P 1 Teacher	16	61.54
Diploma holder	8	30.77
Bachelor degree	2	7.96
Masters' degree	0	0
Total	26	100

The results of the study showed that 8 (30.77%) of the respondents had diploma level of education, 16 (61.54%) had P1 teacher education, and the remaining 2(7.96%) had bachelor's education level. This results show that most of the respondents had P1 education level. The study findings coincides with Wangari and Kyalo (2015) who established that respondents were all graduates from University and hence have managerial skills required to manage human resources including female teachers The study aimed at determining the gender ratio of heads and deputy head teachers in public primary schools. The results obtained are represented in the Table 2.

Table 2 Gender of respondents

Gender of respondents	Frequency	Percentage
Male	18	69.2
Female	8	30.8
Total	26	100.0

According to the findings of the study, 8 (30.8%) of the respondents in the category of head teachers and deputy heads were female and 18 (69.2%) were male. This implies that majority of the heads and deputy head teachers were male.

The research found it necessary to know the teaching experience of respondents and the number of years the head teachers had served in that position. The study thought these could have had an influence on the responses elicited. The results on teaching experience are given in Table 3.

Table 3 Teaching Experience and Years served as Head teacher

		Frequency	Percentage
Teaching Experience	1 - 5 Years	0	0
	6- 10 Years	2	7.69
	11 - 15 Years	10	38.46
	Over 15 Years	14	53.85
	Total	26	100
Years served as Head teacher	Below 5 years	4	15.39
	5-15 years	12	46.15
	Above 15 years	10	38.46
	Total	26	100

The research also sought to identify the working experiences of the respondents the results showed that there were no heads and deputy head teachers who had served for 1-5 years, 7.69% of the respondents had a working experience of between 6-10 years, 38.46% had teaching experience of over 15 years. These results of the study show that it takes over 5 years of teaching experience for a teacher to be appointed as head or deputy head teacher. The study finding coincides with Wangari and Kyalo (015) study that showed that most respondents had been working for long in administrative positions. This long period of service as school heads gives the respondents' time to work with both gender and hence they are able to access whether female teachers are able to perform administrative duties and so they can give them a chance to perform administrative duties and might even recommend them to TSC for promotion into administrative posts. However, this could not be the case in Eldoret East Sub County.

The study sought to determine the number of years the respondents in this category had served in the position they hold. It was found out that 15.39% of the respondents had served below 5 years, 46.51% had served between 5-15 years, and 38.46% had served for over 15 years. These results show that there were few numbers of heads and deputy head teachers who had served in the positions for up to five years. Also, according to the study majority of the respondents had served for more than five years. This implies that there have been few new appointments to the positions of heads and deputy head teachers in public primary in the past five years.

4.1.2 Demographic Characteristics of Appointment Panel
The study also sought to find the gender, highest education level and the position held by the appointment panel in order to understand if the characteristics influence the appointment of the deputy heads and head teachers in public schools. The results are presented in the Table 4.

Table 4 Demographic Characteristics of Appointment Panel

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	8	61.54
	Female	5	38.46
	Total	**13**	**100**
Highest Education	Diploma holder	4	30.77
	Bachelor degree	6	46.15
	Master degree	2	15.38
	Doctoral degree	1	7.69
	Total	**13**	**100**
Qualification	DEO-chair person	1	7.69
	DSO-member	3	23.08
	DQA-member	3	23.08
	A.E.O-member	3	23.08
	DHRO-member	1	7.69
	KEPSHA-member	1	7.69
	KNUT (secretary)-member	1	7.69
	Total	**13**	**100.00**

From the study findings in Table 3, 61.54% of the appointment panel was male and 38.46% female, 30.77% of the appointment panel had diploma education level, 46.15% had bachelor degree, 15.38% had master degree and 7.69% had doctorate degree. The results show that the panel had the required education level to undertake the duties of interviewing head teachers for appointments. On the positions held by the appointment panel, 23.08% were members of SCSO, and 23.08% were members of SCDQA and four representative personnel; one from SCHRO, one from KEPSHA, one from SCEO and one from KNUT. It is evident that the appointment panel is well constituted to carry out the appointment of heads and deputy head teachers in a manner that is professional and satisfactory.

Influence of Socio-Cultural Factors on the Appointment of Head teachers

The study sought to establish the effects of socio-cultural factors on the appointment of head teachers in public primary schools in Eldoret East Sub County. At first, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed with the statements relating to the gender factors and their responses were indicated in a Likert scale, which was used to code the responses from the respondents. The research findings are given in Table 5.

Table 5 Head teachers' perception on Social Cultural Factors influencing Appointment of Head teachers

Respondents		SA	A	UD	D	SD	T	M	%
Gender socialization creates a cycle of discrimination	F	3	6	9	5	3	26	3.04	60.8
	%	11.54	23.08	34.62	19.23	11.54	100		
Busy domestic chores	F	9	6	1	5	3	26	3.27	65.4
	%	34.62	23.08	3.85	19.23	11.54	100		
Employment discrimination practices	F	5	9	6	3	3	26	3.38	67.6
	%	19.23	34.62	23.08	11.54	11.54	100		
Devalue of female leadership by communities	F	4	9	7	5	1	26	3.38	67.6
	%	15.38	34.62	26.92	19.23	3.85	100		
Lack of self confidence	F	10	7	2	4	3	26	3.65	73
	%	38.46	26.92	7.69	15.38	11.54	100		

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, UD-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree, and Std. D=Standard Deviation, T-total, M- mean, %-percentage

According to the findings on the response of head teachers on socio-cultural factors in the study, 73%, means=3.65 of heads of school said that women have not been appointed to the position of leadership because they lack self-confidence, 67.6% (means=3.38) agreed that female leadership is devalued in the society, it was also agreed by 67.6% (means=3.38) of the thought that employment discrimination practices has influence the appointment of heads of schools, 65.4%, means=3.27 were of the view that busy domestic chores that women get involved in at home hinders them from taking administrative positions in schools, and 60.8% (means=3.04) said that gender socialization creates a cycle of discrimination.

The study also sought information from members of the selection panel on the extent to which socio-cultural factors affected the appointment of head teachers in Eldoret East Sub County public primary schools. The results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6 Social-cultural factors influencing appointment of head teachers

Respondents		SA	A	UD	D	SD	T	M	%
Gender socialization creates a cycle of discrimination	F	1	2	5	4	1	13	3.62	72.4
	%	7.69	15.38	38.46	30.77	7.69	100		
Busy domestic chores	F	4	3	5	2	1	13	4	80
	%	7.69	15.38	38.46	30.77	7.69	100		
Employment discrimination practices	F	2	3	4	4	1	13	3.31	66.2
	%	15.38	23.08	30.77	30.77	7.69	100		
Devalue of female leadership by communities	F	2	3	2	3	2	13	2.77	55.4
	%	15.38	23.08	15.38	23.08	15.38	100		
Lack of self confidence	F	3	4	1	1	4	13	3.08	61.6
	%	23.08	30.77	7.69	7.69	30.77	100		

Key: SA-Strongly Agree, A-Agree, UD-Undecided, D-Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree, and Std. D=Standard Deviation, T-total, M- mean, %-percentage

On the part of the appointment panel only 80% (means=4) agreed that women are not appointed into the position of leadership in school because of the domestic chores that are associated with women, 72.4%, means=3.62, of the respondents were on the opinion that gender socialization creates a cycle of discrimination, 66.2% (mean=3.31) of the respondents were of the view that there are employment discrimination practices against women, 61.6% (means=3.08) of the respondents asserted that women have not been appointed to the position of leadership because they lack self-confidence, and 55.4%%, means=2.77 reported that female leadership is devalued in the society.

From this finding we can conclude that most women have not been selected to be the heads and deputy head teachers of schools because they do not have confidence in themselves, also employment discrimination practices has influence the appointment of heads of schools, and busy domestic chores that women get involved in at home hinders them from taking administrative positions in schools. This result is consistent with the findings of Normore, (2004) who found out that gender socialization has created a barrier that has blocked women from being appointed to hold positions of leadership. Brown, (1996) indicates that has been widespread discrimination against women in the appointment into leadership positions over the last decade and this has invited various stakeholders to push for women's rights. Obonyo *et al.,* (2005) points out that bodies that have

been mandated to carry out the appointment of school heads have failed to appoint women even though they may be qualified to take over leadership roles. The reasons employers discriminate against women is the thought that women do not concentrate on their jobs because of family responsibilities and could not take leadership roles (Obonyo *et al.,* 2005).

Women have been perceived as caretakers and thus should only be involved in teaching and not administrative work. This finding is in consonance with the finding of Blount, (1999) who argues that teaching has become feminized while leadership has been masculinised. These results are considered relevant and consistent with the findings of Fiona, (1995) who says that stereotyping of men has led to them being seen as better and more effective leaders than women. Fiona, (1995) adds that women are evaluated less favourably than men and thus women have not succeeded to be appointed as leaders.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

The study has found out that social cultural factors play a significant role in the appointment of head teachers to school headship in Eldoret East Sub County. For instance, the appointment panel discriminated women as they consider them as home makers and might not deliver on administrative duties once given. In the appointment of head teachers in Kenya there are limitations which make the process not to be complete due to family responsibilities associated with women make them not to go for leadership position, women can do better in teaching than in leadership and women feel inferior to men. The study recommends that there is need for selection panels not to focus on socio-cultural issues that may affect women ascendancy to school leadership. The selection panels need to forego socio-cultural factors that may affect women teachers' promotion to school headship.

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