Full Length Research Paper

Female Teachers Underrepresentation on Leadership Position in Public Secondary Schools in Musoma District Council Tanzania

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ABSTRACT: The study assessed the causes for female teachers' underrepresentation in public secondary school leadership position in Musoma district council in Tanzania. The objective of the study was to inspect on the causes that affect female teachers' representation in public secondary school leadership position and to propose measures for female teacher's underrepresentation in school leadership in public secondary schools. The study employed a mixed research approach specifically convergent parallel design. A sample of 139 participants was involved to produce data using questionnaire and interview methods. A correlation coefficient of 0.81 indicated high reliability of research instruments. Quantitative data were descriptively analysed with the support of SPSS version 20 and qualitative data was analysed using thematic method. The findings revealed that lack of confidence, number of female teachers, negative perception towards women, inferiority complex, gender stereotyping, chance and environmental factors were the causes of female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership. The study recommended that there should be provision of education to the community about the importance of female teachers' representation in school leadership. Moreover, seminars and workshop should be provided to female teachers to equip them with school leadership skills.

Keywords: Female school head, school leadership, underrepresentation

INTRODUCTION

Historically, women were basically seen as weak individuals compared to male, in which they have to engage with daily activities such as cooking, cultivating, looking after children and staying at home as a household (Landrum, 2018). However, as the time goes on, the widening of educational opportunities has come to positively contribute to the entrance of women into the education activities including teaching activities and school leadership position (Ombati, 2016). However, despite the increase of women in education sector, very few of them are on the leadership positions (Kandusi and Waiganjo, 2015). For instance, report show that in East Asia women hold 14% of school management position specifically in Korea and 13% of Chinese management position and the majority of senior school management in Singapore (Kellogg 2013).

In Africa, some African countries have been implementing the policy of balanced school management to ensure female teachers are represented in school leadership position. For instance, country like Zambia has been practicing this policy in appointing heads of school to include female teachers in leading the schools (Education Sector Development Program (ESDP, 2010). In Ethiopia, the government has established a strategy to raise the sum of model woman as well as employing those able females at management position in directive to attract a greater number of female teachers in school management position so as to balance the number of males and females' leaders in schools (MOE, 2006).

In Tanzania, many school's leadership positions are always taken by men.

This suggests that gender categorize is interruption to females to undertake management roles (Ndimbo, 2018). For example, evidence from Musoma district council also shows that out of twenty-one school heads only two female teachers are appointed as heads of school. Efforts to involve women in school leadership and management position have been done by government and organizations with little effect. Example, over the past three decades, the international communal has made plentiful assurances to encouraging gender equivalence and eradicating discrimination against females (UNESCO 2017). Knowing the hindrance for women participation in school leadership and management is necessary for effective and immediate action to bring about equality in education sector.

To address the issue of female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership, the main objective of the study was to find out the causes that affect female teachers' representation in public secondary school leadership position. Trait theory was used as guiding to achieve the aim of this study.

Literature review

Trait theory which was advanced by Mann 1959 assumes that a leader is inborn or by nature rather than being established from education as being innate, rather than developed through learning. This theory was crucial to the study because it provide the benchmarks levels for the necessities of being appointed as a head of school. Furthermore, this theory insists on that on the situation to be of great important for successful leadership. In conducting empirical review, Gobena (2014) found that higher officials make gender bias while selecting school leader; lack of special support to females to win competition for leadership position in the education system caused majority of women not to engage in school leadership. Beinomugisha et al. (2014) revealed that negative perceptions that exist in the society about women involvement in management undermine the efforts of women to be involved in leading schools, female teachers are perceived as they are unstable workers, and they cannot afford leading the schools. On the other hand, Gobena (2014) looked on what should be done to ensure equal representation in school leadership position proposed that, women should be provided training to make them more awareness and skilled in school leadership which could help them to be more confident to participate in leadership. Apart from that, (Manzia 2017) identified that the government should implement new constitution on the gender policy to give equal priorities to all gender. There should be well stated policy about gender in school leadership that could be addressing how female teachers will be representing in leading the school. Notwithstanding, Mwanache (2019) recommends that, education officers should ensure that

procedures and qualification in appointing head of schools are considered and remove all kind of bias that leads to undermine female teachers during appointing school leaders. That means by following all procedure majority of female teachers would be able to get involved in school leadership.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed concurrent mixed research approach to facilitate a comprehensive analysis of study unit where data were collected concurrently (Creswell, 2014). The sample size comprised 139 respondents where 45 were teachers, 88 were students 5 were head of schools and 1 district secondary education officer in Musoma District. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview methods. Content and face validity were observed to verify the appropriateness instruments to the purpose of the study and content area through research experts (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). A correlation coefficient of 0.81 proved the usability of the instrument. The trustworthiness of qualitative tools involved credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of research tools of data collection (Tracy, 2013). The study focused on method of collecting qualitative data in order to get in-depth information. Participants were free to give out their views by avoiding interference. Data were collected concurrently starting with quantitative data soon after completion interview guide followed for recording qualitative data. Quantitative data were analyzed statistically with help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 20 and the findings were presented in percentage, tables and frequencies. Qualitative were analyzed using thematic method to determine the main themes. Finally, quantitative and qualitative data were merged to generate a general conclusion about female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership position.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the reasons for female teachers' underrepresentation in public secondary school leadership position and measures to curb the problem. Respondents were asked to explain why female teachers are underrepresented in school leadership and what should be done to increase the number of female teachers in leading schools. The findings show that there are number of factors that contribute to underrepresentation of female teachers in school leadership.

Data in (Table 1) indicate the response from teachers and students on the causes of female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership: lack of

Table 1: Causes for female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership.

Causes	Teachers		Students	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of confidence	6	14	16	18.3
Low number of female teachers	9	20.9	17	19.3
Negative perception	12	27.9	11	12.5
Environment	11	25.6	18	20.5
Family roles	5	11.6	16	18.2
Chance			10	11.4
Total	43	100	88	100

confidence 6(14%) for teachers and 16(18.3%) for students, low number of female teachers 9(20.9%) for teacher and 17(19.3%), negative perception 12(27.9) for teachers and 11(12.5%), environment 11(25.6%) foe teachers and 18(20.5%) for students, family roles 5(11.6%) for teacher and 16(18.2%) for students and chance pointed by 10(11.4%) for students. This implies that a number of factors contribute to undermine female teachers to participate in school leadership. The finding from questionnaire concurred with one of the interviewees noted that:

Some of the female teachers who are appointed to be heads of school they lack confidence as results they reject the appointed position of being heads of school. I think it is greatly contributed by the environment of Musoma district as most of them are afraid of being harassed in work place that why they do not like to be appointed as heads of schools.

Also, another interviewee says;

In our district female teachers in most public secondary schools are few compared to male teachers. Most of female teachers have been moving to other district and region due to challenges they encounter in their working place. Thus, making it impossible to establish gender balance in appointing heads of schools.

These findings imply that in Musoma district most female teacher who are appointed to be school leaders they are not trusted themselves as they could do better in leading the schools as a result most of them are not included in leading schools. The findings contradict with Mann (1959) Trait theory that insist on self-confidence as a catalyst for effective leadership. One with confidence can be able direct and guide the followers. Furthermore, the results indicate that the number of female teachers is inadequate but they are not given priority in leading the school. Another interviewee described the causes that undermine female teachers to participate in school leadership as follows;

Family responsibilities for female teachers such as maternity leave, childcare, breastfeeding and other household chores contribute significantly to us female teachers not to be considered in the opportunity to become heads of school. Since there is a time as a head of school you are required to perform office duties but also, at the same time you are required home. This contributes greatly too many female teachers not being given priority in appointing heads of school.

The findings implied that family role contributed much to female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership. The findings lined with Gobena (2014) who found that among the cause's underrepresentation of female teachers in leadership include home responsibilities like cooking, faring family limit their participation in leading the schools. Also, the results entail that family responsibilities continue to make female teachers not to be considered in school leadership position in most areas in developing countries.

On the issue of chance, the findings show that male teachers are more considered in school leadership than female teachers and this has caused most of the female teachers to miss the chance of being involved in school leadership. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2011) found that one of the reasons for underrepresentation of women in school leadership is that female teachers are not much considered in appointment though they meet the qualification. Giving chance to women to practice leadership is crucial since they could be able to learn their mistake in leading schools and hence improve their leadership. Looking at environment the finding from interview shows that;

In fact, the environment is difficult for most female teachers to tolerate school leadership that is why most of them are quitting the area if you appoint them in school leadership it is a challenge and you would have doubled the burden to them, that is why we prefer most male teachers as they can withstand the pressure of our environment.

The findings imply that working environment may be the obstacle for female women to participate in leadership. Environment is crucial factor for female teachers to get involved in leading schools the issue of resources, economic, political and culture can affect the participation

Table 2: Measures to be taken for female teachers' representation in school leadership.

Measures	Teachers		Students	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Build leadership capacity	8	18.5	20	22.7
Prioritize female teachers	6	14	15	17
Provision of education to the community	6	14	17	19.3
Employ more female teachers	7	16.3	17	19.3
Improve working environment	9	20.9	19	21.7
Provision of education to female teachers	7	16.3		
Total	43	100	88	100

of women in school leadership.

Measures to be taken for Female Teachers Representation in School Leadership

Table 2 presents the response from teachers and students' participants on measures that can be taken to enhance women representation in school leadership position. Data in (Table 2) show the distribution of respondents by frequency and percentage on the measures for female teachers to represent in school leadership. The results indicate build leadership capacity presented by 8(18.5%) for teachers and 20(22.7%) for students, prioritization of female teachers 6(14%) for teachers and 15(17%) for students, provision of education to the community 6(14%) for teachers and 17(19.3%) for students, employing more female teachers 7(16.3%) for teachers and 17(19.3%) for students, improve working environment teachers were presented by 9(20.9%) and students by 19(21.7%) and provision of education to female teachers by 7(16.3%) from teachers. The findings from questionnaire were concurred with the findings from interview. Participants proposed procedures that can help women to get involved in school leadership in advance. For instance, during the interview one of interviewee narrated that;

Female teachers should be empowered in terms of school leadership so that they can be more confident in carrying out leadership responsibilities especially they get a chance of being a head of school. In doing so it will help to increase the number of female teachers who get involved in leading public secondary schools and hence reduce the problem of underrepresentation.

To succeed this, the government should be conducting in-service training for female teachers on school administrative issues. The findings were supported with Gobena (2014) suggested that women should be mentored to have adequate skills and to encourage them to get participated in school leadership. Furthermore, Skrletal (2000) insist on leadership development for female teachers to improve their confidence in school

leadership. Likewise, Shimelis (2017) insists on provision of training to female teachers as a solution to underrepresentation in school leadership since by providing training they will be equipped with leading skill. Building capacity to female teachers is important as it will help them to become more confident after being appointed as heads of schools. Another interviewee said;

In my opinion to increase the number of female teachers in school's leadership priority can play a virtual role for women participation in leadership, when there are chances for heads of schools, then female teachers who meet the criteria of being appointed as heads of school should be granted first priority. This can increase the number of female heads of school and bring competition in leading secondary schools.

This can be achieved through recognizing first all-female teachers who qualified to be head of schools thereafter, prioritizing them during appointment. The finding linked with Gobena (2014) proposed that there should be gender fairness in the appointment of heads of school to increase female teachers' involvement in school leadership. Manzia (2017) suggests that women must be given prioritize in the selection of school leaders. This can attract most of female teachers to get involved in leading public secondary schools. Prioritizing female teachers in appointing heads of schools could attract majority of teachers to get involved in leading public secondary schools. Therefore, the government should set policy and strategies in appointing heads of schools by giving first prioritize to all qualified female teachers to school leaders.

One of the interviewees narrated; "on my side, I think the government should be providing education to female teachers on the importance of female teachers' involvement in public secondary schools' leadership, this could inspire and motivate them to in leading secondary schools". The provision of education to female teachers will help to create awareness among female teachers to get involved in school leadership. Gobena (2014) revealed that gender consciousness helps to create determination among female teachers in different matters including their involvement in school leadership.

Furthermore, another interviewee said;

On my side, I think education should be provided to the community to change their negative attitude towards female teachers that they cannot be school leader as what leads the school is not gender but intelligence and female teachers have the minds to lead schools since they have the same academic qualification as men.

Provision of education to community is crucial as it could help the community to support female heads of schools. Lumby and Coleman (2007) insist to provide education to the community to abandon the cultural influences on female school leadership. Moreover, Gobena (2014) added that community should be educated in order to removal negative perception towards female leadership and hence increase the participation of female teachers in leading public secondary schools since negative perception of the society towards women had great impact on women involvement in leadership. This can be achieved through conducting various meeting with the community about women's participation in school leadership and it benefits.

In most areas particularly in rural areas there are few female teachers compared to male teacher, so in order to bring about equal representation in leading public secondary schools the government should hire more female teachers and create attractive environment for them not to consider leaving the working place.

To achieve this, the government, community and all education stakeholders should encourage more girls to get involved in teaching profession. Also, another interviewee said;

In order to balance the representation in school leadership between male and female teachers, the environments must be improved to facilitate leadership work for female teachers because the environments of Tanzania, especially in rural areas is difficulty for female teachers to become leaders.

This finding entails that by improving the working environment it could reduce the problem of female teachers' underrepresentation in school leadership hence creation of equality in leadership.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that; although female teachers found to have qualification of being appointed as head of school still women involvement in school leadership is very low causing gender inequality in education leadership between male and female teachers. This situation is a result of lack of

confidence among female teachers, number of female teachers, negative perception towards women, inferiority complex, gender stereotyping, chance and environmental challenge. The study recommended that there should be provision of education to the community to remove negative attitude towards women participation in school's leadership. Furthermore, there is a need for joint efforts for provision of seminars, workshops and conferences for female teachers to build them with leadership skills.

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