

## ABSTRACT

Worldwide, women representation in management and leadership positions is marginal. Despite immense academic advancement by women, few of them do advance to management positions. In Kenya, women make up a critical portion of human resource base. However, they are grossly underrepresented at leadership positions. This situation is reflected in school leadership positions as well, including headship of schools. Unless the gender gaps in management and leadership positions are addressed, the talent of high skilled women would be underutilized and there might be a reproduction of gender inequality across generations. The purpose of this study was to examine the factors hindering the deployment of female teachers to headship positions in public primary schools. The objectives of the study were: to establish the extent to which the two thirds gender policy was being applied in deployment of female teachers to headship positions, to establish the relationship between self-esteem of female teachers and their deployment to headship positions, to identify qualifications and deployment practices for teachers to headship positions and how they affect the deployment of female teachers to headship positions and to suggest possible strategies that can be used to enhance the deployment of female teachers to headship positions. This study was conducted in Nambale Sub-county. Descriptive survey design was used in this study. Out of a study population of 519 respondents comprising 45 head teachers, 45 deputy head teachers, 427 teachers drawn from 45 public primary schools in Nambale Sub-County, the DEO and DQASO (Nambale Sub-County), stratified sampling technique was employed to select 35 head teachers, 35 deputy head teachers and 196 teachers. Saturated sampling was used to select the DEO and the DQASO. Therefore, a sample size of 268 respondents, representing 52 % of the study population was used in this study. Questionnaires, interview schedule guide and document analysis guide were used as instruments of data collection. Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. Findings from the study revealed that lack of confidence and fear of failure at leadership positions were the main factors hindering qualified female teachers from ascending to school headship positions. Unclear and absence of documented deployment policies which led to lack of transparency in deployment and few opportunities for female teachers who were found to be adequately qualified and experienced, to serve at deputyship for at least 3 years before deployment to school headship were deterring female teachers from advancing to headship positions. In addition, MOE provided for equal opportunities in terms of deployment but the two-thirds gender policy was not applied in deployment of teachers to school headship. Based on these findings, the study proposed that the TSC should come up with clear and precise deployment policies expressed in writing so that their compliance can easily be checked, MOE should design a mechanism for implementing the two-thirds gender policy in deployment of teachers to headship positions, establish formalized mentoring system to help female teachers develop self-esteem and aggressive managerial personalities of present and future leaders and create suitable female role models in leadership to serve as exhibit of successful and effective female leadership.