

ABSTRACT

Despite a growing body of literature on women in Educational management and leadership, studies have shown women's under-representation in senior leadership positions globally. It was against this background that the current study was set to investigate the possible obstacles to women's access to top management positions in Educational organisation in Kisumu County. The objectives of this study were to determine the cultural practices in Kenya that influence women's access to top management positions in Kenya's Education System, establish the possible obstacles to women's access to the top management position in Education, the gender biases and misrecognition in labour divisions in Kenya's Ministry of Education, and in addition, the mitigating factors that will address the management and masculinity in Kenya. The concurrent triangulation research design, which is one of the Mixed Methods Approach models, was used in the current study.

The saturated sampling was used to establish sample size for the study. The target population in this study consisted of a total of thirty six participants. These included six Sub County Directors of Education (SCDE), Six Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASO), six Assistant Deputy Directors (Teacher Management), and six District Examination Officers (DXO) who responded to the structured questionnaires. The interviews were carried out with a separate group of six senior Education Officials from both Kisumu County Director of Education and Kisumu County Director of Teacher Management. The content validity was assured by expert judgement by lecturers of the Jaramogi Oginga Odinga university of Science and Technology (JOOUST), while the reliability was ensured by split half method and a coefficient of $r = 0.845$ was reported. The quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics while the qualitative data was analysed using thematic framework. The significance of the study is its ability to determine the actual obstacles to women's access to top management positions in education system in Kenya. The findings would lead to new orientation in formulation and implementation of new Affirmative Action and policies that could enhance women's career advancement to top management positions and the ability to highlight the policy on gender sensitization, equity and equality in the education sector in Kenya for the benefit of all and sundry.

The study findings were that the social cultural factors were major obstacles to women's access to top managerial positions. Other factors included the patriarchal nature of the society, the labor policies in the Ministry of Education that are not sensitive to women's traditional multiple roles as a wife, mother and a worker, the male domination of managerial positions and negative attitude on women as managers. The findings also indicated that the structural conditions such as the high qualification standards and the undemocratic organisational culture that favors ethnic appointments impeded women's effort as managers. Furthermore, it was established that the desire to uplift women to managerial positions has not been successful because of the socio-cultural attitude towards women in the society. The study established that effective policies to ensure gender equality and equity have not been put into place so that things have continued to work in favor of men. The study recommends implementation of new Affirmative Action policies that could enhance women's participation in decision making as top managers and policy makers on equal footing with their male counterparts in education sector in Kenya.