



WOMEN LEADERSHIP PARADIGM SHIFT: ADAPTATIONS AND COPING STRATEGIES TO BIASED ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES AND SOCIETAL EXPECTATIONS IN EDUCATION SECTOR IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the adaptations and coping strategies that women employ to counteract the biased organizational practices and societal expectations in education sector in Kenya. The study objectives were: establish the coping strategies that women employ to adapt themselves towards biased organizational practices; assess how women cope with societal expectations of undertaking domestic roles in their formal set ups; determine whether there is significant difference between public and private schools in terms of coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers; and determine whether there is significant difference between male and female principals in the coping strategies adopted to overcome the organizational barriers of intimidating organizational cultures. The study had a target population of 825(N) persons from which a sample of 376(n) respondents was obtained. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect relevant data. The study established that: principals demand for gender equality openly in all school activities and asserted themselves in presenting their qualifications to cushion them against leadership that excluded them, they sought family support before taking up any transfers on promotion in attempt to balance work and family responsibilities, they ensured they met the basic promotion criteria for upward mobility. The study established that there is no significant difference between public and private schools in terms of coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers. Lastly, it was found that; there was no significant statistical difference in the coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers on intimidating organizational cultures by gender. The study recommends that school organizations: should promote promotions not tied to transfers; establish support systems for female teachers which initiate and boost their confidence; flexible support schedules that support female teachers and put in place sustainable training programmes to nurture the positive attitudes so that self esteem and confidence comes out spontaneously for women to take up leadership responsibilities.

Key Words: coping strategies, organizational barriers, societal expectations

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The awareness that women are a vital human resource that can change the quality of society for the better is felt globally but according to the Gender Policy in Education in Kenya (2007:2) there is agreement that girls and women empowerment in general has been affected by inadequate policies and this manifests negatively on women access to management positions. Tlaiss (2010) reveals that female managers perceive their upward mobility in organizations to be affected mainly by organizational practices and community cultures to create impediments which deter them from progressing upwards. Indeed, Cromie and O'Sullivan (2001) observed that women managers have adopted a number of strategies in overcoming difficulties related to organizational practices; they are now as well qualified academically as male counterparts, they pursue training opportunities, sometimes in women-only settings, to focus on the women's unique issues.

1.2 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.2.1 Coping strategies to overcoming organizational barriers

As much as there has been and still are several barriers facing female secondary school principals, there are also measures and strategies that women have embraced to overcome these barriers worldwide as noted in the experience of women in male dominated occupations, Joanna and Lirein, (2011). This study further notes that women in male dominated occupations encounter challenges and therefore use distinct coping strategies which affect their motivation and retention in those organizations. According to Burke and McKeen, (2004), studies on both networking and mentoring suggest that the same can be used to overcome organizational barriers despite being a barrier at the same time. It has become imperative to deliberately create role models in the leadership positions for women to emulate.

Mathipa, (2001) notes that mentors and peer relationships can facilitate career and personal development. Networking can be useful at all stages in career development, while mentors are particularly useful at the early stages of career development (Wentling, 2003). Peer relationships are different from mentoring relationships in that they often last longer, are not hierarchical and involve a two-way helping. Peer relationships have advantages, particularly since a significant number of women may not have had mentors. Chow, (2001) in study on the situation in Hong Kong proposed that women aspiring to positions in management need to adopt some proactive strategies. At the individual level, a career woman must convey a professional image that reflects expertise, competence, good interpersonal skills, authority, commitment and the ability to deal with stress effectively (Joanna and Lirein 2011). Li and Leun (2001) concurs, that one solution for women might be to establish their own networks to overcome their isolation in a male world. Merida, (2013), confirms that women themselves need to create their own social capital by developing their own networks of support, seeking sponsors within their organizations, secure mentors, promoting themselves and communicating the value that they bring to the work place.

Women's networks can serve as a forum for informal communication, support and mentorship, as well as serving as a counterbalance to men's groups and clubs (Merida, 2013). These networks can play crucial roles in helping women's career planning and development as indicated a Catalyst Report,(1994) that outlined characteristics commonly shared by successful career women as: consistently exceeding performance expectations, effective networking, adopting styles of leadership that male managers are comfortable with and seeking high visibility assignments.

Leden (2007) argues that a professional network might organize workshops and establish a mentor programme to help female managers to formulate career goals and develop strategies. These networks help female managers to learn strategies which can help create “power bases” within organizations so that they can enhance the ability to control organizational outcomes. This idea is further put into perspective by Tsoka, (1999) who recommends that networking programmes should be established and monitored to prevent discriminatory behaviour against women. There is also the need for organizations to tackle the unconscious bias which is viewed as a powerful tool for change as it allows organizations to move away from polarised debate about discrimination to a discussion of fairness and inclusion. Many organizations have undergone unconscious bias programmes and training designed to create awareness among individuals of their own bias and the impact of their behaviour.

Indeed Binna Kandola, in his work on eliminating bias in organizations identified the key inclusion competences to be: developing people, valuing individuals, championing diversity and strategy diversity focus. Organizations are expected to create spaces for women to speak about their experiences within the organizations as well as provide women with platforms where they can exercise their skills and competencies so that they can get noticed (Lynch, 2010).

Mentoring is widely used as an empowerment tool for women, not only in educational leadership but in many other organizations. This means that mentoring is an effective strategy that could be used to support female managers. It involves a protégée (mentee) and a mentor (Holloway, 2001; Kilburg, 2007), usually comprising a more experienced colleague and a new principal or an aspirant who learn by observation. There are other models of mentoring that include coaching where upcoming managers are supported all through as they undertake their day to day undertakings Holmes, (2005); Robertson, (2005). According to Robertson (2005), coaching is a professional “reciprocal relationship” between two leaders who help each other to develop their professional skills in leadership.

Holmes (2005) retaliates that mentoring involves coaching the protégé into developing professional skills. Mentors provide support and professional development of skills needed for leadership, causing both the mentee and mentor to reflect on their own skills and behaviour. Although mentoring has been traditionally associated with male protégées and male mentors, whereby men get promoted into management positions, several researchers suggest that mentoring advantages women greatly (Grove and Montgomery, 1999; Holmes, 2005; Mendez-Morse, 2004). For example, Grove and Montgomery (1999) both agree that mentoring is one way to counteract the numerous organizational barriers that women leaders face in educational leadership. Among the advantages that mentoring provides for women include greater access to leadership positions as well as increased salary. Not only does mentoring benefit the woman leader protégé, but also the institution and the mentor. For mentors, the benefits from mentoring a protégé include being able to reflect on one’s own leadership skills, lessening the isolation felt by school principals, and recognition and promotion on the part of the mentor. Institutions, on the other hand, benefit from the constant supply of a pool of women leaders needed by each institution, and their retention. Women protégés feel that they are being cared for and are being supported in their careers (Enomoto et al., 2000; Grove and Montgomery, 1999).

The leaders therefore have an important part to play in finding out and supporting female role models as the lack of role models reflects lack of women at the top although there could also be

reluctance among those who have made it to speak up. Organizational leaders can assist by personally inviting women to play a more active role in gender diversity.

Mathur-Helm, (2002) notes that women reported rapid career growth due to taking advantage of performance appraisal and high staff turnover rates, of which half attributed growth to compassion, hard work and a drive to succeed. The study further found out that a considerable number of women employees achieved rapid career growth by making presentations, by being visible and frequently meeting the board of directors, decision-makers and government. The fora presented to women gave them the confidence they needed to be able to lead their institutions to higher levels.

Schein (2007) asserts that organizations need to work hard to address the barriers that hinder women's advancement to top management roles. The author further underscores that providing of family supports by organizations like flexible scheduling, child and elder care assistance that make it easier for women with family responsibilities to hold managerial positions may increase the proportion of career women who are interested in holding top management positions. These coping strategies have ideally seen many women managers rise to the top. Rosener (1995) notes that though men and women have complementary or differing styles, emerging trends in human resource practices are recognizing that men and women are learning the strengths of each other's approach and adopting a blend of styles. In the same breadth, DeMatteo (2002) notes that complementary styles are not an accurate reflection of what is evolving in the workplace. The author progresses to affirm that we are steadily moving towards a style that increases options for all managers to move beyond the constraints of stereotypical sex-role expectations.

1.2.2 Coping Mechanisms for Bridging the Gender Gap

A study done by Ouston,(1992) advised that getting women into top jobs demands strategic planning for it does not just happen through good will or good intentions. According to Joanna and Lirein, (2011), it is critically important to bring more women into the labour force and fully utilize the skills to enhance productivity. They further observe that it was imperative to create the necessary conditions to unlock the full potential of women and achieve higher economic productivity. In other words more than one approach is needed to arrest the existing inequalities in leadership positions in the education profession. A study sponsored by Bank of America on "What holds Women back" reiterated that achieving a balanced "board" requires a pipeline of women progressing through the organization and for this to happen women need to be equipped with the skills and experiences to make them "Board" ready. Organizations therefore need to develop a culture which recognizes diverse talents and values different styles of leadership. The report further notes the need to seal the leaks in the pipe to have more women on board.

Merida, (2013) when addressing the issue of breaking the glass ceiling for women in leadership notes that government has many tools at its disposal to address the current barriers in the work place that hold women back. The study found out that government can act as a catalyst for promoting gender equality perspectives and practices by increasing the awareness of gender inequality as well as enacting government legislations and policies that can dismantle discriminatory practices. In addition monitoring and enforcement of the legislation against gender discrimination must be real if women have to break through the barriers that hold them back. There is need for organizations to deliberately undertake mechanisms to be able to support the female leaders as notes Merida (2013) who underscore that there is need to establish

comprehensive organizational specific programmes that address breaking down structural, organizational and cultural barriers that impeded upward mobility of women

Wentling (2003) had earlier outlined in a study what career women pointed as a pre-requisite for career advancement as: additional training, communication skills, leadership skills, strategic management and financial planning. Wickham (2007) asserts that in spite of the organizational barriers, women have succeeded in becoming high school principals by asserting themselves amongst the male counterparts. This agrees with the Gender Development Report on Gender Equality (2012) which reveals that women continue to make progress in closing the gender gap that has existed for generations. Burke and Mckeen, (1994) underscores that managerial women who participate in frequent number of educational and training activities are more organizationally committed, job satisfied, more visible and have higher career prospects. The study assumes that these women leaders have utilized successful strategies for attaining the chief executive positions in public high schools. Factors that may advance career opportunities for women were specifically cited in the study of the American School principalship (Glass, et al., 2000) like demonstrating an emphasis on improving instruction, knowledge of instructional process, ability to maintain organizational relationships, interpersonal skills and responsiveness to parents and community groups. These were seen as effective coping mechanisms that would be adopted to bridge the gender gap which would then translate to more women accessing management positions.

Grogan and Brunner, (2005) observes that boards hired teachers to be educational leaders rather than managers. They affirm that as more school boards value administrators with backgrounds in curriculum and instruction, women would become more attractive candidates. Other factors that were commonly reported in their findings were: strong interpersonal skills, ability to maintain organization relationships and responsiveness to parents and community. According to Wickham (2007) these researchers believe that women were strong in parent and community relations due to their typical path via the elementary route although sometimes cited as a disadvantage, familiarity with elementary level experience as a teacher, principal and often central office supervisor for elementary education actually prepares superintendents well. For example, they often are more knowledgeable about the fundamental instructional issues of literacy and numeracy important considerations if principals are expected to be instructional leaders. They also have more experience working with diverse communities of parents and other caretakers who are more involved at the elementary school level than any other level (Wickham, 2007).

This confirms Udegbe, (1997) earlier assertion that some subordinates benefit from working with female superiors because they believe that women have a natural milk of kindness that makes it difficult for them to unleash hardships on the subordinates. This means that enhanced awareness and experience among the leaders could be utilized effectively to assist in overcoming the barriers that they encounter while still in leadership positions.

Vail (1999) believes that as school boards increase their emphasis on student achievement, they are valuing instructional leadership more than finance and business ability. The unofficial traditional route to the school management and administration has been through the school principalship, a position rooted in organizational and financial understanding (Tallerico, 2000). Female administrators who wanted to be candidates for principal position had deliberately served on facilities, finance, and/or construction committees to build up their resumes (Vail, 1999). Boards of education, while emphasizing that the instructional program is important, they also

expressed that they never wanted an inexperienced principal in fiscal management and hence the need for principals to make deliberate efforts (Glass, 2000). These three studies indicate that attitudes are changing and women are gaining more access and recognition in the male preserve domains (Tallerico, 2000).

Boards could also help female candidates by not necessarily using professional search consultants for recruiting qualified candidates. Men are more likely than women to think of professional search firms' in promotion of their candidates (Dana and Bourisaw, 2006). Search consultants may be one of the causes at the root of this gender gap. Until school boards become more interested in seeking a diverse group of candidates, and thus use alternative methods for seeking qualified candidates, the predominately white, male applicant will continue to dominate the pool (Wickham 2007).

All superintendents are more likely to be appointed from outside the district than promoted from within; however, men are twice as likely to be appointed from the outside Grogan and Brunner, (2005). Bell (1988) attributes this to boards' ability to rely upon, to be able to predict, and to trust the principals they hire. Based upon the concept of social homogeneity, male board members continue to find it easier to communicate and therefore to trust male candidates for the principalship. Hiring women more often from the inside suggests a potential shift in social homogeneity should the female candidate be known. More women than men are promoted to principalship from within the organization (Glass, et al., 2000).

There are several other studies that have revealed the coping mechanisms that female managers need to embrace if they have to remain successful in their career. For instance Joanna and Lirein, (2011), pointed that many companies have introduced mechanisms such as parental leaves, part time policies and travel reduction technology to make women to stay on course. They continue to point out that despite there being many barriers that derail women; critical career interventions have increased their numbers considerably. The need for training and accessing additional education have been pointed out to be among the powerful liberators that empower female leaders to stay on course and access management positions Tsoka, (2001). This is given more support as evidenced by the Ministry of Education in Kenya, in the month of September 4th 2011, launching a new Diploma in Education management programme which is currently being delivered through open and distance flexible learning modes. This programme targets all the principals and head teachers of both primary and secondary schools and it is aimed at equipping them with the proper management skills for them to remain successful in their careers as educational managers. There is also the need to have attitude change for both male and female leaders within organizations so that female leaders are easily accepted as capable leaders within the organizations.

Mcshave and Glinaw (2002) noted that embracing a participatory leadership style would make a female leader more acceptable in an organization. This because they hold the view that women are negatively evaluated if they adopt a directive leadership style which is often associated with males. The female leaders are also expected to involve their junior leaders in decision making because the essence of delegation goes a long way in assisting to break the subordinate stereotypes of men leadership. Kariuki, (2007) also asserts that women leaders tend to be more assertive and authoritative and this is supported by the fact leadership in the world over is a male dominated terrain and for women to survive they must assert themselves very strongly.

Study conducted on work and family conflict and coping strategies adopted to overcome the same by female managers in Hong Kong revealed that there was a general ineffectiveness of coping strategies being used by women professionals. The percentage of women who attempted to use the positive coping strategies designed around job changes was low due to the reluctance in negotiating for family friendly organizational policies. Joanna and Lirein, (2011) outlined several coping mechanisms which when embraced by organizations increased their visibility like, removing the structural barriers for women, adopting more flexible working routines and implementing policies that will enable women to survive due to responsibility of family and work conflict. Infact Merida, (2013) suggests ways of eliminating structural barriers within organizations for women who aspire to progress. For instance employees need to establish flexible work arrangements and work life balance policies and create effective pipelines that identify, develop and promote women. There was also the need to develop a leadership development approach that would assist to develop critical leadership skills in women and also assist them to identify and level their strengths and boost their confidence. Similarly, McKinsey, (2012) in his report on “Women making the breakthrough.” shows that organizations are confronting the issue of gender inequality earnestly and are devoting enormous resources towards rectifying the gender imbalance. For example the study established that organizations have instituted training programmes for valuing gender diversity, organizations are changing recruitment patterns to eliminate bias as well as setting specific goals for placing women in senior positions

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of conducting this study was to establish the various adaptations and coping strategies that women employed to counter the existing biased organizational practices and societal expectations as they strive optimize on their upward mobility in the education sector. The main objectives of the study were;

- a) Establish the coping strategies that women employ to adapt themselves on biased organizational practices.
- b) Assess how women cope with societal expectations of women undertaking roles of domestic nature in professional in formal set ups.
- c) Determine whether there is significant difference between public and private schools in terms of coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers.
- d) Determine whether there is significant difference between male and female principals in the coping strategies adopted to overcome the organizational barrier of intimidating organizational cultures.

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study used descriptive survey design and embraced both qualitative and quantitative approaches in data collection, analysis and presentation. The study had a target population of 825(N) persons from which a sample of 376(n) respondents comprising of; 76 female principals, 78 male principals, 178 deputy female principals, 22 sub-county education officers, and 22 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers were obtained. Stratified, purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to identify the specific respondents for the study in the various categories. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to harvest relevant data. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.4.1 Coping Strategies on Biased Organizational Practices

This study sought to find out the coping strategies women employ in regards to leadership training that excludes women. Hence, the principals were required to rank some coping strategies with 1 being the most important, 2 being neutral and 3 being the least important. This is shown in Table 1

Table 1: Principals' views on coping strategies on leadership training that excludes women

Coping Strategy	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I challenge the training practice in the staff meeting	36	27.9	40	31.0	53	41.1
I lobby for female support from senior educational officers	45	34.1	39	29.5	48	36.4
I assert myself in presenting my qualifications	59	49.6	26	21.8	34	28.6

Table 1 shows principals views on coping strategies adopted to overcome the organizational barrier on leadership training that excludes women. It is clear from the table that 59(49.6%) of the principals felt that asserting themselves in presenting their qualifications cushioned them against leadership that excluded them. A similar observation was made by District Education officers and District Quality assurance officers who were of the opinion that female teachers needed to assert themselves strongly if they were to be included in leadership. The study also sought to establish deputy principals' opinion on the same. This is shown in Table 2

Table 2: Deputy Principals' views on coping strategies on leadership training that excludes women

Coping Strategy	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I challenge the training practice in the staff meeting	49	35.5	48	34.8	41	29.7
I lobby for female support from senior educational officers	47	33.8	46	33.1	46	33.1
I assert myself in presenting my qualifications	76	53.9	25	17.7	40	28.4

Table 2 shows a majority, 76(53.9%) of the deputy principals ranked the fact that they asserted themselves in presenting their qualifications as the most important coping strategy that they used

to overcome leadership training that excluded women from rising to senior management positions. This strategy was identified by nearly all District Educational Officers and Quality Assurance Officers as one of the ways through which women would overcome leadership that excluded them. One of DEOs assertively said, “Female teachers have no choice but to assert themselves strongly if they have to be part of mainstream leadership.”

The finding on women asserting themselves to overcome the barrier on leadership that excluded them in organizations supports a study by Chow,(2001)which highlights that at individual level, a career woman must assert herself, convey a professional image that reflects expertise, competence, good interpersonal skills, authority and commitment so as to overcome the isolation in a male world. This means that unless women become adventurous like most successful men, they cannot hope to make a meaningful dent into the leadership positions (Emeka et al, 2004).This further confirms an earlier assertion by Grogan, (1996) that observed that women must make demands and their claims along with others and they must make them powerfully and passionately and only then can they be felt. In addition women must have courage and determination if they have to battle in male dominated establishments and seek effective inclusion.

4.4.2 Promotion tied to transfers as a barrier that hinders female teachers upward mobility

One of the challenges that hinder female teachers from ascending to senior management positions is transfers due to family responsibilities and as such most of them turn down the promotions. Thus, the principals and deputy principals were required to rank the coping strategies given on a rank of; Most important, Neutral and Least Important. The results a captured in Tables 3 and 4

Table 3: Principals Views on Coping Strategies on Promotion Tied to Transfers

Coping strategies	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
	I seek family support to take up transfers	49	41.5	36	30.5	33
I lobby to be retained in the neighboring school	39	31.0	35	27.8	52	41.3
I express my willingness to serve any place	51	41.5	26	21.1	46	37.4

Table 3 shows principals views on coping strategies adopted to overcome the organizational barrier on promotion tied to transfers. It is clear from the table that, 49(41.5%) of the principals ranked highest the need to seek family support before taking up any transfers. This is because there is always need to balance work and family if one has to succeed in leadership.

Table 4: Deputy Principal Views on Promotion Tied to Transfers

Coping strategies	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I seek family support to take up transfers	47	33.8	51	36.7	41	29.5
I lobby to be retained in the neighboring school	31	23.1	43	32.1	60	44.8
I express my willingness to serve my place	83	57.6	23	16.0	38	26.4

When asked to rank the most important coping strategies that they used to overcome promotion tied to transfers 83(57.6%) of the deputy principals expressed their willingness to serve any place as the most important coping strategies. There was also the need to seek family support to be able to overcome the same barrier. Similarly, 60(44.8% (deputy principals) ranked the fact that they lobbied to be retained in the neighboring schools as the least coping strategies which they used to overcome promotion tied to transfers that deterred them from rising to senior management position.

The fact that most principals and deputy principals appreciated seeking family support to take up transfers as an important coping strategy to overcome the barrier on promotion tied to transfers recognizes the value of family support to female teachers aspiring to rise to principalship. This agrees with Schein (2007) who underscores that provision of family support by organizations like flexible working schedules, child care assistance etc, made it easier for women with family responsibilities to hold managerial positions and not to decline transfers whenever they were promoted. This is further consistent with the fact that spousal support has been highlighted as one of the aspects that have a positive effect on career growth and aspirations of female teachers (Blout, 1998 and Grogan, 1999). The aspect of principals ranking least the fact that they lobbied to be retained in the neighborhoods as a strategy to overcome promotions tied to transfers agrees with Watley, (1996) whose work observed that it is inherent in human nature to seek security of living and working in a known environment, but in order to achieve success today you simply cannot remain in your carefully constructed comfort zone. This is consistent with an observation made by one of the District Education Officers, who noted that,

Some principals would go to any length to lobby to be retained in a school of their preference. In fact they go as far as seeking support from politicians who sometimes interfere with my work as I end up ceding ground because they are more powerful.

4.4.3 Promotion based on long experience as a barrier that hinders upward mobility

The study sought to establish from principals and deputy principals how they coped with the challenge of missing out on promotion due to lack of experience as a hindrance to their upward mobility in management positions.

To achieve this, the principals and deputy principals were asked to rank the coping strategies given with: 1, most important; 2, neutral; and 3, least important. The results are presented in table 5 and 6

Table 5: Principals Views on Coping Strategies on Promotion Based on Experience

Coping strategies	Most important		Neutral		Least important	
	1		2		3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I ensure I meet the basic promotion criteria.	83	70.9	15	12.8	19	16.2
I lobby for support from immediate boss	39	21.5	63	48.5	28	30.0
I bribe way through	14	11.9	17	14.4	87	73.7

Table 5 shows principals' views on how to overcome the barrier related to missing a promotion due to lack of experience. It is explicit that majority, 83(70.9%) indicated that in order to overcome the issue of lack of experience as a hindrance to upward mobility of female teachers, it was imperative that the promotion criteria be met to the later. The study also sought the deputy principals on the same. This is shown in Table 6

Table 6: Deputy Principal Views on Coping Strategies on Promotion Based on Experience

Coping strategies	Most important		Neutral		Least important	
	1		2		3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I ensure I meet the basic promotion criteria	134	89.3	13	8.7	3	2.0
I lobby for support from immediate boss	19	14.4	91	68.9	22	16.7
I bribe way through	6	4.7	9.3	12	111	86.0

On promotion based on long experiences that deterred female teachers from rising to management positions a vast majority, 134(89.3%) deputy principals ranked the fact that they ensured they met the basic promotion criteria as the most important coping strategy that they used to overcome this. Bribery was ranked as the least important coping strategy that was used to overcome the promotion based on long experience that deterred female teachers from rising to senior management position as reported by 111(86.0%) of the deputy principals.

The finding on the fact that most principals and deputy principals ranked highly the strategy of meeting the basic promotion criteria as the most important to overcome the barrier on promotion tied to long experiences agrees with (Cromie and O "Sullian, 2001) who note that women managers are now as qualified as their male counterparts and hence can pursue careers without biasness. This was supported by nearly all Quality Assurance Officers in the three counties who observed that in all schools where female principals were in charge, performance was guaranteed because they run schools as homes where they exhibited total commitment.

The study sought to test the null hypothesis that stated that: There is no significant difference between public and private schools in terms of coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers. The hypothesis was tested using independent Samples Test as indicated in Table 7

Table 7: Independent Samples Test on coping strategies on recruitment practices by school categories

	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	P-value
I challenge the training practice in the staff meeting	.242	124	.809
I lobby for female support from senior educational officers	1.151	126	.252
I assert myself in presenting my qualifications	-.980	113	.329
I seek family support to take up transfers	1.053	113	.295
I lobby to be trained in the neighboring school	.031	120	.975
I express my willingness to serve my place	-.809	117	.420
I ensure I meet the basic promotion criteria accidentally and professionally	-	112	.134
I lobby for support from immediate boss	1.510		
I bribery way through	-.091	124	.928
	1.190	112	.237

Table 7 shows coping strategies adopted by female principals to overcome the organizational barriers by school category. Independent Samples Test indicates that all p-values, 0.809, 0.252, 0.329, 0.295, 0.975, 0.420, 0.134, 0.928 and 0.237 were greater than 0.05. This means that the study fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no statistical basis to claim that there is a difference in means in the coping strategies adopted by principals to overcome the organizational barriers.

How to cope with societal expectation of women undertaking roles of domestic nature in professional fora

The study sought to establish how the principals and deputy principals coped with the fact they were expected to offer services of domestic nature in formal set ups. To achieve this, both were required to rank the coping strategies provided on a rank of 1 being most important, 2 being neutral and 3 being the least important. The results are presented in Table 8 and 9.

Table 8: Principals Views on Coping Strategies on Societal Expectation to Undertake Domestic Roles

Coping strategies	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I resist the practice	43	38.7	20	18.0	48	43.2
I demand gender equality openly in all school activities	71	55.5	36	28.1	21	16.4
I encourage males to serve both men and women	41	35.0	32	27.4	44	37.7

Table 8 shows principals views on the coping strategies adopted by female teachers to overcome the barrier on societal expectation of them to undertake domestic roles in formal set ups. Majority, 71(55.5%) of the principals ranked highest the fact that they would demand for gender equality openly in all school activities. As one DEO noted that "within the school environment, what matter is not the gender but the competences and the skills which an officer possesses".

The study also sought to establish the opinions of deputy principals on how female teachers coped with the barrier of women being expected to undertake domestic roles in formal set ups. This is shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Deputy Principal Views on Coping Strategies on Women Undertake Domestic Roles.

Coping strategies	Most important 1		Neutral 2		Least important 3	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
I resist the practice	51	37.0	37	26.8	50	36.2
I demand gender equality openly in all school activities	79	56.8	46	33.1	14	10.1
I encourage males to serve both men and women	46	33.3	38	27.5	54	39.1

The coping strategy that was ranked as the most important to overcome the fact that women were expected to undertake domestic roles in formal set up was the demand for gender equality openly in all school activities as accounted for by 79(56.8%) of the deputy principals. On the contrary, 46(33.3% of the deputy principals rated encouraging males to serve both men and women as the most important strategy to overcome the expectation of women being expected to perform domestic roles. The focus on equality was critical because either gender could serve and this confirms an assertion by Burnham and Mintzberg (1991) which observed that leaders were alike and genderless and what counted was their drive and vision. This is consistent with one observation made by one of the DQASOs, who said that,

Leadership is not about serving any gender or being what gender. What matters as a principal is your ability to focus and drive the school forward.

The study also sought to test the hypothesis that there is no significant difference between male and female principals in the coping strategies adopted to overcome the organizational barrier on intimidating organizational cultures encountered. The hypothesis was tested using ANOVA as indicated in Table 10

Table 10: ANOVA on Coping Strategies on Intimidating Organizational Cultures by Gender

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
I ensure I meet promotion criteria	.393	1	.393	.723	.397
I assert myself in the position	.538	1	.538	.971	.326
I lobby for male support	.224	1	.224	.379	.539
I meet the criteria promotion	1.146	1	1.146	1.786	.184
I offer myself for leadership position	.074	1	.074	.117	.733
I lobby for female leadership	.401	1	.401	.550	.460
I resist the practice	.057	1	.057	.069	.794
I demand gender equality openly in all school activities	1.269	1	1.269	2.245	.137
I encourage males to serve both men and women	.001	1	.001	.001	.974

Table 10 shows that, there was no significant statistical difference in the coping strategies embraced by female principals to overcome the organizational barrier on intimidating organizational cultures by gender. When the coping strategies were compared between male and female principals to indicate the difference in means, all the P-values were greater than the level of significance of 0.05. That is .397, .326, .539, .184, .733, .460, .794, .137, and .974. This therefore means the study fails to reject the null hypothesis and established that gender did not influence how female teachers coped with intimidating organizational cultures.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusions

On leadership that excluded women from management position, the study concludes that the most effective coping strategy was female teachers being more assertive especially when presenting their qualifications. The study also concludes that the most effective strategy to overcome the barrier on promotions tied to transfers was seeking family support so that the female principals are able to balance work and family. Lastly on promotion based on lack of experience the study concludes that the most effective coping strategy was the female teachers ensuring that they met the basic promotion criteria.

On women leadership being looked down upon, the study concludes that the most effective way to overcome male dominance within organizations was ensuring that they met the basic promotion criteria. Finally on overcoming the barrier on women expected to serve male colleagues, the most effective coping strategy was demanding for equality in all school activities.

On how female teachers coped with lack of female mentorship within organizations, the study concludes that to deal with lack of women professional fora, creating professional networks to support the female teachers played a pivotal in overcoming the same. In order to deal with the presence of boy's network within organizations, the study concludes that creating girls networks within organizations to empower female teachers enabled them to overcome the same. Finally on

the barrier of the unwillingness of female principals to mentor female teachers, the study concludes that female teachers needed to work in close collaboration with female principals.

5.2 Recommendations

On the adaptations and coping strategies specifically when dealing with leadership that excluded women, the study recommends that:

- i). Promotions should not be tied to transfers.
- ii). School organizations should establish support systems for female teachers which initiate and boost their confidence.
- iii). School organizations should have flexible support schedules that support female teachers.
- iv). School organizations should put in place sustainable training programmes to nurture the positive attitudes so that self esteem and confidence comes out spontaneously for women to take up leadership responsibilities.

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