Assessments of Principals’ Communication Procedures on Female Teachers’ Progression to Management Positions of Public Secondary Schools: Case Study of Kajiado County, Kenya.

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Abstract
Communication is a very important tool in the success of Educational Institutions. The study examined the influence of principals’ communication procedures on Female Teachers’ progression to Management Positions of Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study assessed how communication on availability of management positions influence the number of Female Teachers’ Progression into Management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. The study was guided by Theories of Human Communication. Data was collected using questionnaires administered to 419 public secondary school teachers holding management positions of Heads of departments, senior teachers, deputy and principals managing public secondary schools. Interview schedule was used to collect data from the five TSC sub-county directors of education in Kajiado County. Stratified sampling technique was used in sampling 205 public secondary school teachers in management positions in Kajiado County while 4
TSC Sub-county directors of Education were purposively sampled. The qualitative data collected from the interviews was analyzed using content analysis, presented in a narrative form and the findings of quantitative data were presented by use of tables and charts. The study used Pearsons correlation analysis to test if there is a linear association between independent variables and the dependent variable where null hypothesis was tested. The data analysis software used was statistical package for social sciences. The study assessed on the principals communication procedures on female teachers' progression into management of public secondary schools. Some of the communication procedures used included circulars, staff briefs by principals, use of newspapers, reports from higher education offices and recreation facilities interactions. From the study, it was established that staff briefs by principals was the main channel of communication to teachers which updates them on when to prepare for promotional interviews which are often delayed before teachers get the invitations. The study suggested that principals should communicate the available management vacancies to female teachers in good time so that the teachers can prepare adequately for the promotional interviews. Through personal emails and direct messages, principals should directly communicate the available management vacancies to the teachers other than waiting for forums like staff briefs which may take long especially when the principals are away on other school activities.

Key words: Communication, procedures, progression to school management.

Introduction

Communication is currently a very important tool in relaying message from principals to teachers in schools management (Arlestig, 2018). Communication refers to the networking between principals and teachers under them both male and female which appeared to affect female teachers’ progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya (Ministry of Education, Kajiado County, 2022). The principals are the main link between Teachers Service Commission which employs teachers and principals. Communication with TSC determines progression of female teachers from classroom to Heads of departments, Senior Teachers, deputy principals and even principals of schools.

Principals’ communication channels with female teachers were stressed as a barrier to female teachers’ progression into the positions of management. Wairimu (2016) carried out a study on the effectiveness of communication between principals and teaching staff in Gatanga County in Gatanga sub-county which established that lack of proper communication affected progression of female teachers into management positions in high schools not only in Kenya but worldwide. Mbalikali and Onyango (2021) in their study assessed the factors contributing to female underrepresentation in Sumbawanga in Tanzania. The study established that female teachers lacked information of promotion interviews due to poor communication channels used by the principals. A big number of female teachers have the relevant qualifications required but very few are available for the promotional interviews because they are unaware or get the communication late (Mbalikali and Onyango, 2021, Moyo, 2022, and Kanai, 2022).

In their study on the recruitment procedures into management positions, Mwaniki and Quantai established that female underrepresentation into management positions was caused by lack of information whenever the vacancies were available (Mwaniki and Quantai, 2018 & Muvicheli, 2018).
Gopper (2020) carried out a study to establish on the procedure used in promoting female teachers into management of public secondary schools in South Africa. The study established that a general lack of communication from senior management about promotion vacancies was among the several reasons for underrepresentation of female teachers into school management positions where the principals were blamed for lack of timely communication.

Mvicheli (2018), Arlestig (2018), Hajar and Kamal (2019) carried out a study on communication skills used by principals and other higher authorities in communicating to teachers on career mobility. The outcome revealed that higher ministry officials had limited information reaching female teachers on the promotional interviews. It is the information from the principals which should update female teachers on the availability of management vacancies so that they can make their applications.

In their assessment of school leadership and gender in Africa, Tonny, Kireshi and Ashford (2022) assert that female teachers enter the workforce in similar number to men which means that at the lower levels in the classroom teaching there is gender balance. The number hence become lower for female teachers in the management positions which indicate a management gap. Formal and informal communication determines employee effectiveness, commitment continuance and progression at the place of work (Daniel, 2021). The school principals as school superintendents have a major role to communicate on the available management vacancies to female teachers which leads to teacher job satisfaction (Mvicheli 2018, Daniel, 2021 & Aionaaka, 2017).

Arlestig (2018) opined that communication between principals and teachers in successful schools promote female teachers’ progression into management. Communication breakdown and principals who do not communicate with their teachers once management opportunities are available affect female teachers’ progression. Mwanache (2019) and Moyo (2022) carried out studies in Tanzania and Zambia on causes of female low representation in educational management. Both studies established that female underrepresentation is caused by communication breakdown from the principals. The above findings necessitated this study to establish on principals’ communication procedures and their impact on female teachers’ progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County.

**Statement of the problem**

In their studies, Daniel (2021) and Artestig (2018) established that progression of female teachers in the management of public secondary schools is still a challenge in many countries. The communication procedures used by principals are disproportionately skewed in favour of men with minority of the management positions of public secondary schools given to female teachers.

Pacuto (2020) asserts that communication competence in management of schools is paramount in the progressions of both male and female teachers at the work place. A study conducted by Victoria and Jaime (2023) in Paris on the presentation of women in academia and Higher Education Management positions revealed that communication procedures used by school principals disadvantage female teachers in getting management positions. In Kenya gender equity
in management of schools lacks with female teachers getting a small share in the management of secondary schools (Ngilu, 2019). Kajiado County appeared to be highly disadvantaged in the share of management positions to female teachers. This is attested from the study conducted from the five Kajiado Sub-Counties which include: Mashuuru, Kajiado North, isinya, Kajiado Central and Loitokitok. Low female inclusion in management of public secondary schools was revealed from the findings (Kajiado MOE and TSC records, 2022). The study sought to assess the principals’ communication procedures and its effect on female teachers’ progression to management positions of public secondary schools.

There are limited studies addressing female teachers’ progression in Kenya despite the low numbers of female teachers being witnessed in the management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County. Principals’ internal communication in the management of public secondary schools is found to be a major contributor to the low number of female managers in Kajiado County. Communication from the TSC through the secondary schools’ principals to teachers has not been equally implemented to male and female teachers in the management of Kajiado public secondary schools. This has resulted to low female teachers’ progression to secondary school management in favour of the male teachers.

Based on this management disparity, the researcher felt that failure to address the gap would bring more damage by encouraging male dominance in educational management positions and disadvantaging female teachers from accessing to these positions due to the communication procedures used by the principals in Kajiado County. From the gap of knowledge realized, there was need to investigate on the principals’ communication procedures with a view to initiating balanced gender participation in the management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Purpose of the study
The purpose of the study was to assess the principals’ communication procedures on female teachers’ progression to management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Objective of the study
The study sought to determine the influence of principals’ communication procedures on the female teachers’ progression to management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado County.

HO1: There is no statistically significant relationship between the principals’ communication procedures and female teachers’ progression into management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

Review of Related Literature
Female teachers’ progression to top management positions of public secondary schools is an unsolved problem in many parts of the world (Maiyo, Kalai and Kingi, 2018). Communication competence determines staff performance and motivation at the place of work which either encourages or discourages employees to take up management positions depending on the management procedures used by a school principal (Kanai, 2022, Karie & Kavale, 2019). In their study in Somalia, karie
and Kavale found that the communication timeliness by school principals determine the number of female teachers who acquire management positions of the HODs, Senior teachers, deputy and even principals of secondary schools. Beg et al (2021) & Bergman et. al carried studies whose findings assert that gender bias is common to male administrators in teaching management in many countries while female teachers lag behind in their progression into public secondary school management.

Mvicheli (2018), Hajah and Kamal (2019) carried out a study on communication skills used by principals and other higher authorities in communicating to teachers on career mobility. The outcome revealed that those techniques used had limited information reaching teachers especially females on availability of management vacancies when they are available. Lack of communication to female teachers on the emergence of management opportunities means they do not apply and miss the forum to do the competitive interviews which disadvantage them from progressing to management positions.

Moyo (2022) carried out a study on gender inequalities in the education management in Zimbabwe. The outcome revealed that very few female teachers had progressed to the positions of management due to lack of awareness while most male teachers had information from the principals and other sources. A study done in Latin America and the Carribean alluded that the participation of female teachers into management positions was less than 20 percent (Adelman &Lemos, 2021). A similar study was done through a global leaders’ survey for India, Indonesia, Kenya and Malaysia, where results indicated that most of the school managers were male against few females in management which was due to poor communication updates to the female teachers from the school principals.

Sanina (2018) carried a study on the effectiveness of school principals in their communication on the teacher job progression in the United Arab Emirates. Communication breakthrough from the principals was highly commented as a motivation to both genders on their pursuit for the positions of the principal, deputy principal, senior teachers and Heads of Departments. Pacuto and Ayebeale (2020) carried out research on communication competence to examine the relationship between communication and staff performance in Muui University. The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey with a sample size of 109 drawn from the council members, academic staff and administrative support staff. The findings indicated that clear, correct and concrete communication correlates positively with staff performance. This clearly explains that communication procedures when well utilized can encourage both gender to take up management positions. A similar study was undertaken on the channels of communication used by principals in relaying information to teachers and evaluated the effectiveness of every method. The results indicated that the communication channel used matters a lot to the recipients.

Ayebeale (2020), Copper (2020), Maiyo, Kalai and Kingi (2018) in their studies established that communication of promotional vacancies in most countries is politically motivated, nepotism and attached to corruption. As a result many female teachers shy away from the management positions and remain as classroom teachers. The phenomenon from the study appears global where principals’ communication networks to their teachers seem to scare many female teachers from taking up management positions in the public secondary schools.
Bailey and Gibson (2020) have in their study addressed the international schools’ principals, the key challenges they undergo in communicating with their seniors and the teachers under them. They further addressed on the poor networking with the female teachers, who show disinterest in the management positions and as a result very few are found in management positions. This article relates to what has been done by previous scholars by unearthing the gaps in female teachers’ progression to management of public secondary schools. The study recommends that there is need for principals to improve on their communication procedures so as to motivate female teachers to advance into management of public secondary schools.

White (2023) conducted a study in America on public secondary schools’ communication. He concluded that the principals’ communication to the female teachers had gaps in encouraging them to take up management roles. This study sought to assess the principals’ communication procedures on the female teachers progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado county.

Methodology

The study used mixed methods research design as advised by Dawadi, Shrestha and Giri (2021). This research design used both qualitative and quantitative methods concurrently where equal priority to each method was considered but the data obtained from each method was analyzed separately. The target population was 424 respondents distributed by the different management positions held in the public secondary schools and the TSC Sub County directors in Kajiado. They composed of 419 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado County who included 81 principals, 83 deputy principals, 93 senior teachers, 162 Heads of Departments and 5 TSC Sub County directors of education. The sample size of the study was 205 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado County. Stratified sampling techniques was used to select the 205 public secondary school teachers holding management positions in Kajiado County.

The research instruments used were semi-structured questionnaires and interview schedules. The questionnaires were used to collect data from Heads of Departments, Senior teachers, Deputy Principals and Principals from the sampled schools. Interview schedule collected data from the TSC Sub County Directors of Education, in Kajiado County. Pilot testing was done which consisted 10% of the sample as advised by Hazi and Maldon (2015). Pilot test aimed at refining the research instruments to ensure they were well understood by the respondents when answering the questions. To maintain instrument validity, the supervisors scrutinized the relevance of the content in the questionnaires. The necessary adjustments were done in readiness for the main data collection exercise. To address construct validity, the questionnaires were sub-divided into several sections where each section assessed information linked to a specific objective. The results obtained from the pilot study were coded using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and the reliability co-efficient for all the constructs in the questionnaires generated. Coefficients = 0.7 were deemed as sufficient and a measure of construct reliability as asserted by Heo, Kim and Faith (2015).

The study used Pearson’s correlation analysis. This was because it is the one used in testing if there is a linear association between an independent variable and a dependent variable. This is
a key assumption when conducting a linear regression analysis. The study focused on only one independent variable being the reason why it did not bivariate Pearson’s correlation analysis.

Results

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of principal’s communication procedures on the female teachers’ progression to management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

To achieve this, the hypothesis of this article was:-

**HO1**: There is no statistically significant relationship between principals’ communication procedures and female teachers’ progression into management positions of public secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya.

The responses of Heads of Departments, Senior teachers and Heads Deputy Principals regarding the frequency of use of various forms of communication in accessing promotion information are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1**: Summary of teachers in Management opinions on different forms of communication by principals in accessing promotion information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of communication</th>
<th>Not a source</th>
<th>A rare source</th>
<th>Fairly common source</th>
<th>Common source</th>
<th>Most common source</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulors</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>14.00%</td>
<td>57.50%</td>
<td>28.50%</td>
<td>4.125</td>
<td>0.648</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff briefs by principals</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>7.50%</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
<td>37.50%</td>
<td>32.50%</td>
<td>3.950</td>
<td>0.932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC website</td>
<td>4.40%</td>
<td>14.70%</td>
<td>20.60%</td>
<td>35.30%</td>
<td>3.721</td>
<td>3.721</td>
<td>1.220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media</td>
<td>7.40%</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
<td>20.60%</td>
<td>30.90%</td>
<td>3.500</td>
<td>3.500</td>
<td>1.344</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education officers</td>
<td>1.50%</td>
<td>27.90%</td>
<td>38.20%</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>3.118</td>
<td>3.118</td>
<td>0.985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleagues from within the school</td>
<td>5.00%</td>
<td>22.50%</td>
<td>30.00%</td>
<td>12.50%</td>
<td>3.225</td>
<td>3.225</td>
<td>1.097</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newspapers</td>
<td>10.30%</td>
<td>23.50%</td>
<td>20.60%</td>
<td>36.80%</td>
<td>8.80%</td>
<td>3.103</td>
<td>1.174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation facilities (Hotels, pubs )</td>
<td>48.80%</td>
<td>26.80%</td>
<td>19.50%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>2.40%</td>
<td>1.829</td>
<td>0.998</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 1, the study established that on average, the teachers agreed that use of circulars was the main source used by Principals in communicating to teachers when management positions were available. Circulars having been given by principals, female teachers can access them with the information which they use to progress to management positions in Kajiado Public Secondary schools. This is attested by the highest mean of 4.125 of the teachers in management categories of the Heads of Departments, Senior Teachers, Deputy Principals and the Principals.

From the study findings, it was established that other forms of communication highly used included staff briefs by principals, TSC websites and the social media as confirmed by the means of 3.950, 3.721 and 3.500. According to the principals, on average other forms of communication used were
education officers, colleagues from the schools and newspapers. The study found that education officers visited teachers in public secondary schools and encouraged both male and female teachers to apply for the management positions by citing the benefits of being school managers. The deputies, senior teachers and Heads of Departments were in consensus that Education officers and colleagues from within the school were a fairly common source of information to female teachers whenever vacancies for applying for the management positions were advertised as revealed by 38.20% and 30.00%.

The least form of communication considered as a rare one was the use of recreation facilities or visitation of social places like hotels, pubs and so on as indicated by a mean of 1.829 agreed by all teachers in the management positions of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Senior Teachers and Heads of Departments.

Table 2: Summary of Sub-county TSC Directors’ opinions on different forms of communication procedures used in the promotion of teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of communication</th>
<th>To male teachers</th>
<th>To female teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Circulars</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSC website portals</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone calls and SMS</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principals Emails</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WhatsApp groups</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the interviews conducted to the TSC Sub-county Directors, the study observed that all the sub-county directors relayed information on the availability of management positions with fairness 100% to both male and female teachers. This would provide opportunity for both gender for progression into management positions. They used circulars through principals, phone calls and SMS, principal emails and WhatsApp platforms 100%. The TSC Website portals for all teachers such as Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) was always available to all teachers. The findings supported Maiyo, Kalai and Kingi (2018) observation that lack of access to information on promotion to school management positions was a hindrance for progression into positions of management. It was also in tandem with Gopper (2020) and Kanai (2022) that failure to be informed on time and when school management vacancies and promotions were available adversely affected female teachers’ upward mobility to school management positions. The findings are in concurrence with the study of Victoria, Mathias and Jaimes (2023) carried out in Paris which established that female teachers are poorly represented in higher educational management positions. These findings meant that proper communication by principals on the availability of management positions would significantly enhance female teachers’ progression into schools’ management positions.

Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the study concluded that while Principals in Kajiado County used different channels to communicate to female teachers on the available vacancies in public secondary schools, staff briefs by principals and use of circulars was the main procedure. Circulars from the TSC were passed to teachers by the principals because principals are the representatives of TSC which employs and promotes teachers. The least channel of communicating to teachers were recreational
facilities like hotels and pub. This study concluded that fairness and timing of communicating available promotion vacancies to both male and female teachers and the effectiveness of the communication channels used were key aspects that impacted female teachers’ progression into management of public secondary schools in Kajiado County. The study concluded that principals’ procedures used in communication of management vacancies had a positive significant influence on the progression of female teachers into management of these schools.

Communication procedures of the principals in communicating to teachers highly influenced female teachers’ progression into management of public secondary schools. This study concluded that school principals ought to institute and strengthen communication systems for their juniors in order to inspire female teachers to take up management roles.

**Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, communication procedures used by the principals can be improved to enhance motivation of many more female teachers participate in the management of public secondary schools. To be able to breach the gap, the study recommends on measures which can be employed to encourage this uptake of management positions by female teachers:

Principals should communicate the available management vacancies to female teachers in good time so that the teachers can prepare adequately for the promotional interviews. It means they relay the message to teachers immediately they receive it from TSC offices. The study recommends that principals should exploit diverse and inclusive channels of communicating available schools management vacancies. The channels commonly used and accessed by teachers such as social media should be applied for greater reach.

Through personal emails and direct messages, principals should directly communicate the available school management vacancies to the teachers other than waiting for forums like staff briefs which may take long especially when the principals are away on other school activities. Use of teachers personal emails and direct messages enable the female teachers prepare in good time for the promotional interview which is the main route to progress into management positions.

Principals should frequently, send female teachers to education offices to take school reports on their behalf, collect school learning materials. The female teachers by exposure to education offices and interaction with the officers act as motivation forums where they are able to get the latest information on promotion of teachers.

Through sub county directors of education, principals should organize seminars and conferences specifically meant to sensitize female teachers of the need to apply for management positions and the benefits of progressing for their professional growth.
References


Kajiado Education County Statistics (MOE, 2022 and TSC).


