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Influence of Family-Work Balance Conflict on Female Principals' Managerial Duties in Public Secondary Schools in Machakos County, Kenya

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Abstract:
The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of family-work balance conflicts on female principals' willingness to take up managerial duties in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County in Machakos County. The target population for the study consisted of all the female principals, female deputy principals, and female teachers from public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County. The sample size was 127 respondents of the target population. Descriptive survey design was employed in order to address the study objectives via the specified hypotheses. The study found that family responsibilities prevent female teachers from applying for principalship. In addition, the study found that doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning. However, the study also found that with proper time management there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals. Hence, effective ways of managing stress reduces the pressure from both domestic and professional roles. The study recommends that female teachers, deputy principals and principals need to be trained on proper time management to ensure there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals.

Keywords: Family-work balance, conflicts, female principals, managerial duties

1. Introduction

Women in education management face numerous barriers which are multi-faceted, highly complex in nature and deeply interwoven in cultural norms and values (Bunyi, 2008; Onderi & Makori, 2013). Specifically, women who aspire to be school managers often face barriers of administration in hiring and promotion that often limit their upward movement(Onderi &Makori, 2013). Pirouznia (2013) adds that in the United States of America (USA); women who aspire to be principals might encounter obstacles such as: lack of encouragement; myths about women's work; gender stereotyping; lack of aspiration; role conflict; low self-esteem; family responsibilities; lack of mobility; hiring and promoting practices.

Rehman and Roomi (2012)argue that the situation becomes more complicated in patriarchal societies such as Pakistan due to women's stereotypical domestic roles, religious prescriptions as well as cultural norms and values. Women's centrality to child rearing and family is not greatly challenged in practice and forms part of women's identity, values and needs (Rao, Stuart, & Kelleher, 1999) and is simply based on the experiences of women who have chiseled through the glass ceiling (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Hall, 1996) and accessed the principal positions. Mahlase (1997)singled out marriage and child-rearing as factors that continue to have a negative impact on women's progress in their management career. Many woman principals continue to face obstacles in performing the management function even after they have been appointed. Barriers from the home and the way women are perceived, culturally and historically, are also regarded as barriers to women's advancement(Chisholm, 2001).

Women managers have additional difficulty performing their management role because of the conflicting attitudes and the stereotypes regarding what it means to be a woman and what it means to be a manager. The problem is compounded by employers' assumption that women, unlike men, are not able to devote their full time and energy to paid work because of their family responsibilities (Alston, 2014). It is further argued that women who are managers and have children therefore straddle the dual worlds (Wattis, Standing, & Yerkes, 2013) of parenting and working, and are usually not successful in balancing the two. According to surveys carried out by Davidson and Burke (2012) in Japan and Switzerland, it is evident that female managers' capabilities are perceived differently compared to those of male counterparts. In China, a survey of attitudes towards women as managers revealed that barriers relating to women's traditional family responsibilities are difficult to dismantle (Van der Boon, 2003).

Moorosi (2007)adds that, after their appointment as principals, some South African women face difficulties in striking the balance between work and family. The balancing of private and public life for working women with families can be taxing especially for married women (Emslie & Hunt, 2009; Watts, 2009). Reasons for this include the cultural expectation, which suggests that women, regardless of whether they are in employment or not; or whether they employ a domestic helper or not; should still perform family chores in the home.

Bunyi (2008) notes that virtually in all societies', socio-cultural factors such as beliefs, norms, values, attitudes and practices are hostile to the education of women. These include: low valuing of the education of women; low expectations of women's performance; gender specific roles and domestic obligations that cause women to be overburdened. In virtually all Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) societies there is unequal gender power relations (Agarwal, 2003; Hassim, 1999) and gender insensitive institutional environments that perpetuate women's disempowerment. For some women, moving into management brings an additional stress, since they associate management work with inflexibility and restrictiveness as compared to what teaching in the classroom offers them in terms of meeting the demands on their family. This is arguably because according to Al-Khalifa and Bennett (1992) women's personal priorities and responsibilities outside their work roles can be seen to vie with professional commitments once they are in management, and the balancing of these different roles and responsibilities can be a source of pressure. Even for those who get promotion, balancing these responsibilities becomes a problem as pressure on the family domain is not reduced for them. This suggests that the problems women experience after being appointed into principal positions, add to the already existing pressure they have as women in negotiating a balance between the home and work (Kim & Ling, 2001).

Wango, Musomi, and Akinyi (2012)argue that the Government of Kenya is committed to develop, nurture and promote the participation of all persons especially women in national development. The education system accentuates access, equity and quality that align reward with reliable outcomes(Wango et al., 2012). The government in partnership with other stakeholders, has put in place several targeted interventions, aimed at promoting girls and women attendance, participation and retention in schools and in education. Moreover, the Government of Kenya (2007) in its Gender Policy on Education addresses gender concerns in education such as gender parity-based recruitment and deployment in management positions.

Data on school headship in Kathiani Sub-County in Machakos shows that the number of schools headed by male principals exceeds the female headed schools over the period 2009 to 2013. For example, in 2009 there were 3 female principals against 20 male principals, while in 2010 there were 5 female principals against 21 male principals. In 2011 the number of female principals was 10 and the male principals were 17. In the years 2012 and 2013 the number of female principals and male principals were 11 and 18respectively. Studies show that some teacher's especially female teachers are unwilling to take up the posts of heads of departments and also of senior teachers (Hedlin & Åberg, 2013). Onyango, Simatwa, and Ondigi (2011) argue that quite often women are reluctant to be transferred on promotion. This unwillingness affects the appointments of the female teachers to school principals and eventually this may affect the number of females who qualify for the post of a principal, hence widening the gender gap.

The objective of the study was to ascertain the influence of family-work balance conflict on willingness of female principals to take up managerial duties in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County, Machakos County.

2. Literature Review

Pirouznia (2013)in a USA study established that some women who obtained their principalship indicated family responsibilities had prevented them from applying for the position of a principal earlier especially when they had small children. The combination of ideas about family responsibility and male dominance of the institutional framework make career paths uncertain and even treacherous for women.

Pirouznia (2013) in another USA study argued that there are considerable difficulties faced by employed mothers of young children in the management of job and family responsibilities. Combining a career and family seemed problematic for women especially the younger ones who are still expected to prove themselves as good mothers and good wives. These women are under pressure to perform well in their career as school principals while the cultural expectations of motherhood and marriage are not necessarily in line with organizational expectations of a good manager. He further asserts that women principals suffer the guilt of being good principals at the expense of their families. For more economically advantaged women, combining career and family is a choice they could afford to postpone until circumstances for child bearing and rearing are in their favour.

Williams (1999) noted that the absence of children among unmarried participants' families also increase the likelihood that woman principals would work professionally, since without husbands and children they tended to give the work their undivided attention without suffering the guilt of not doing well as mothers and wives. Moorosi (2006) conducted a study in South Africa and established that married and women who are still in their reproductive ages complained bitterly about their neglect of the family due to their work commitments. Women who seem to have a bigger problem and more concerned about the lack of time left for the family are those with smaller children of school-going age. Women who are managers and have children therefore straddle the dual worlds of parenting and working and are usually not successful in balancing the two.

Analysis from another study in South Africa by Moorosi (2007) suggested that woman principals' marital status was significant in fulfilling their duties between the home and the school. For single women, particularly those with grown-up, or no, children, most of their time was spent on work-related responsibilities. As such, for women in this category, their family status did not negatively impact on their responsibilities as principals. According to the study, these women principals believed that their circumstances worked to their advantage as compared to married women because they did not have husbands and young children. This status allows unmarried participants with no children more time to attend to school matters without feeling the pressure of not leaving sufficient time for family.

Caleo and Heilman (2013) argue that the tendency to sacrifice family life for work life by women principals can be interpreted as an attempt on their part to avoid being perceived as less committed to their work. This would ultimately portray them as unsuitable for the demanding leadership positions, thereby perpetuating the stereotype that women are less task-oriented than men, and are therefore unsuitable for management positions in schools. A study carried out in Ethiopia by Endale (2014), showed that the major factors that hinder women's participation in public leadership and decision making positions include overburdening by domestic responsibilities. Kitele (2013) in a study in Kangundo sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya, found that half of the head teachers felt that there is a conflict between domestic and professional roles and while the other half felt that there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles. The reasons for indicating there is conflict between domestic and professional roles was because the head teachers felt that for a female head teacher, school work is so involving and interferes with domestic issues and therefore conflict arises. The professional role is tasking hence much time is dedicated to the students and little time to the family; and doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning. There was need therefore to carry out this study to establish whether these were the same feelings among women teachers and principals in Kathiani Sub-County as pertains to the effect of family-work balance conflict on female principals' willingness to take up managerial duties in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County, Machakos County.

3. Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The target population for the study consisted of 31public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County with 14 female principals, 13 deputy female principals and 133 female teachers. The number of female principals and female deputy principals was determined by full census, hence all the female principals and female deputy principals were purposively selected to participate in the study. Using the Slovin's formula in equation 1, a sample size of 100 female teachers was determined and the selection of the female teachers in each of the school categories (strata)was based on equation 2 and the results are as shown in Table 1.

Target Population	No.	Sample Size
Female Principals from Boys' boarding schools	0	0
Female Principals from Girls, boarding schools	3	3
Female Principals from Mixed day schools	8	8
Female Principals from Mixed day & boarding	3	3
Total number of Female Principals	*14*	*14*
Female Deputy Principals from Boys' boarding	0	0
Female Deputy Principals from Girls' boarding	3	3
Female Deputy Principals from Mixed day	4	4
Female Deputy Principals from Mixed day & boarding	6	6
Total number of Female deputy principals	*13*	*13*
Female Teachers from Boys' boarding	11	8
Female Teachers from Girls' boarding	22	17
Female Teachers from Mixed day	45	34
Female Teachers from Mixed day & boarding	55	41
Total number of Female teachers	*133*	*100*
Total	**160**	**127**

Table 1: Sample Size
Source: Kathiani Sub-County Directors' Office (2015)
Slovin's Formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N\,(e)^2} \dots equation\ 1 \qquad\qquad n_h = \left(\frac{N_h}{N}\right) * n \dots equation\ 2$$

Where   n = total sample Size of female teachers; N = target population of female teachers and e = margin of error desired (0.05); n_h = sample size of female teachers for stratum h; N_h = population size of female teachers for stratum h

In order to facilitate the collection of data, the researcher used structured questionnaires and also key informant guide. The key informant guide facilitated face-to-face interviews to be carried out with the staffing officer and Kathiani sub-county director of education.

After collecting the data from the respondents, quantitative data was organized into manageable form and coded to necessitate entry into the computer. Data was entered into the computer and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was analyzed to generate frequencies and percentages which were presented in form of tables. Qualitative data was summarized and sorted out into themes and categories, and then interpreted to give meaning.

4. Results and Discussion

The main objective of the study was to ascertain the effect of family-work balance conflict on willingness of female principals to take up managerial duties in public secondary schools in Kathiani Sub-County. Table 2 presents the family-work balance conflict according to female principal's willingness to take up managerial, as reported by teachers, deputy principals and principals.

Statement		Teachers		Deputy Principals		Principals	
		No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Female principals willingness to take up managerial	ƒ	34	52	5	8	2	12
duties is influenced by family-work balance conflict	%	39.53	60.47	38.46	61.54	14.29	85.71

Table 2: Family-work Balance Conflict

Table 2 illustrates that female principal's willingness to take up managerial duties is influenced by family-work balance conflict, with 52 (60.47%) of the teachers, 8 (61.54%) and 12 (85.71%) of the deputy principals and principals respectively supporting this assertion. These sentiments were in agreement with the findings by Moorosi (2006) in South Africa that women who are managers and have children straddle the dual worlds of parenting and working and are usually not successful in balancing the two. Caleo and Heilman (2013) added that the tendency to sacrifice family life for work life by women principals can be interpreted as an attempt on their part to avoid being perceived as less committed to their work. Endale (2014) in an Ethiopian study showed that overburdening due to domestic responsibilities is the major factor that hinders women's participation in public leadership and decision making positions. Kitele (2013) in a study in Kangundo sub-County, Machakos County, Kenya, found that half of the head teachers indicated that there is conflict between domestic and professional roles which concurs with this study.

Statement		S. D	D	U	A	S. A
Family responsibilities prevent female teachers when they have small children from applying for principalship	ƒ	7	16	8	32	23
	%	8.14	18.6	9.3	37.21	26.74
	Mean	=3.56	Std deviation	=1.29		
Taking maternity breaks complicates the plight for female teacher's advancement in the management of schools	ƒ	18	31	10	18	9
	%	20.93	36.05	11.63	20.93	10.47
	Mean	=2.64	Std deviation	=1.31		
The absence of children among unmarried women families increases the likelihood that female principals would work professionally	ƒ	32	28	5	11	10
	%	37.21	32.56	5.81	12.79	11.63
	Mean	=2.29	Std deviation	=1.39		
Women who are managers and have children overlap the dual worlds of parenting and working	ƒ	8	12	13	33	20
	%	9.3	13.95	15.12	38.37	23.26
	Mean	=3.52	Std deviation	=1.25		
Single women (particularly those with grown-up, or no, children) spent most of their time on work-related responsibilities	ƒ	19	23	10	20	14
	%	22.09	26.74	11.63	23.26	16.28
	Mean	=2.85	Std deviation	=1.43		
Doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning	ƒ	9	12	2	34	29
	%	10.47	13.95	2.33	39.53	33.72
	Mean	=3.72	Std deviation	=1.34		
With proper time management there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals	ƒ	2	6	3	41	34
	%	2.33	6.98	3.49	47.67	39.53
	Mean	=4.15	Std deviation	=0.95		
Effective ways of managing stress reduces the pressure from both domestic and professional roles	ƒ		2		41	43
	%		2.33		47.67	50
	Mean	=4.45	Std deviation	=0.63		

Table 3: Teachers' Perceptions on Family-Work Balance Conflict

Looking at the mean values provided in Table 3, the mean value of less than 2.5 indicates the respondents disagreed, between 2.5 and 3.4 indicates uncertain and above 3.5 indicates respondents agreed with the measure provided. Hence by focusing on the mean values above 3.5, we deduce that family responsibilities prevent female teachers when they have small children from applying for principalship which had a mean value of 3.56. This was associated with 55 (63.95%) of the teachers who agreed with this proposition. The findings concur with those by Pirouznia (2013) in a USA study which found that there are considerable difficulties faced by employed mothers of young children in the management of job and family responsibilities.

According to the female teachers responses, doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning as shown Table 3. The mean value of 3.72 was associated with 63 (73.25%) of the teachers who agreed with this statement. The teachers who reported that with proper time management there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals which had a mean value of 4.15 and this was supported by 75 (87.2%) of the teachers.

Effective ways of managing stress reduces the pressure from both domestic and professional roles which had a mean value of 4.45 with 84 (97.67%) of the teachers agreeing with this statement. This findings are similar to those by Rao et al. (1999) that dual responsibility disadvantages women and produces conditions that make it impossible for them to do both family and reproductive activities.

Family responsibilities prevent female teachers when they have small children from applying for principalship according to most of the respondents, in particular 55 (63.95%) of the teachers, 10 (76.93%) of the deputy principals, and 11 (78.58%) of the principals who agreed to this statement. Similar sentiments were expressed by the Sub-County Director of Education through an interview who stated that female managers face the challenge of "*pressure from family responsibilities since they are expected to take care of children and spouse as well as the managerial duties*".

Majority of the respondents, specifically 63 (73.25%) of the teachers, 12 (92.31%) of the deputy principals, and 10 (71.43%) of the principals agreed doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning. The Sub-County Director of Education also noted that "*female principals fear losing the husband when away from home at schools where they manage*".

With proper time management there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals based on 75 (87.2%) of the teachers, 13 (100%) of the deputy principals and13 (92.85%) of the principals who concurred with the statement. Effective ways of managing stress reduces the pressure from both domestic and professional roles according to 84 (97.67%) of the teachers, 13 (100%) of the deputy principals and14 (100%) of the principals who consented.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that female principal's willingness to take up managerial duties is influenced by family-work balance conflict as reported by the teachers, deputy principals and principals. In particular, family responsibilities prevent female teachers when they have small children from applying for principalship according to most of the respondents. Majority of the respondents agreed that doubling as a mother and a career woman is not easy and especially when one has to be in school very early in the morning and stay until late in the day. The study therefore recommends that the Ministry of Education should come up with more effective ways of managing stress among female principals to reduce the pressure from both domestic and professional roles so as become better school managers.

Emanating from the aforementioned conclusions the study recommends that all female teachers, deputy principals and principals need to be trained on proper time management to ensure there is no conflict between domestic and professional roles for female principals. The study also recommends that County Government and Education official should encourage female teachers should apply for leadership posts when advertised by the teachers' Service Commission and motivate them to take up leadership positions, in addition to adhering to one third policy of women in leadership in Kenya.

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