

**FACTORS INFLUENCING GENDER IMBALANCE IN
APPOINTMENT OF HEAD TEACHERS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY
SCHOOLS, THIKA MUNICIPALITY, KIAMBU COUNTY,
KENYA**

BY

NANCY WANGU KARIUKI



**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONFERMENT OF MASTER OF
EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT DEGREE,
OF KENYA METHODIST UNIVERSITY.**

JUNE 2014

ABSTRACT

Gender balance in leadership has long been a concern to the educators and policy makers. Despite the growing awareness of gender imbalance in leadership positions, gender gaps in school management in public primary schools still exist. The appointment of head teachers tends to favour male teachers. Studies on gender and leadership have revealed that there are a number of barriers which prevent women from seeking positions of educational leadership. These barriers include social-cultural factors; expectations of the society; women's perceptions of themselves and leadership; criteria used in appointment of the head teachers; academic background and lack of role models. The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that contribute to gender imbalance in appointment of head teachers in public primary schools in Thika Municipality, Kiambu County. The research used descriptive survey research design. All the head teachers (23), teachers (365), standard seven pupils from 23 public primary schools (1610) and officers (6) from the Municipal Education Office constituted the target population. A sample size composed of 7 (30%) head teachers, 110 (30%) teachers from the seven sampled schools, 483 (30%) standard seven pupils and 2 (30%) Municipal Education Officers was drawn. All the subjects were sampled randomly except for the officers in the MEO's office who were purposively selected. The study mainly employed qualitative approach as this enabled the researcher to obtain data needed for clarification, and explain the factors that led to gender imbalance in appointment of head teachers in public primary schools in Thika Municipality. Data collection was by use of questionnaires, focus group discussions, face to face interviews and document analysis. A pilot study was done in two schools in one of the zones in the neighbouring district to facilitate assessment of validity and reliability of the research instruments. The collected data was checked for completeness, categorized and coded. It was then analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software. Quantitative and qualitative methods were used in the data analysis and interpretation. Frequency, tables and percentages were used in data presentation. The study found that most women lacked confidence in leadership and this made most of them not to apply for leadership positions. Lack of gender policy on appointment of head teachers also contributed to gender imbalance in appointment of the head teachers in public primary schools. Therefore, the study recommends that the Ministry of Education should scrutinize the criteria used to promote teachers into headship positions and sensitize female teachers to contest for leadership positions with their male counterparts. The study also recommends that female teachers should ignore cultural beliefs, values and practices of the community and build up confidence when seeking for leadership positions.