

Teacher Demographic Factors Accounting for Promotion to Headship in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

Teacher promotion to headship has received criticism from the public domain in the wake of poor, ineffective and inefficient administration and management of resources in public primary schools in Kenya. This paper presents the findings of the effect of teacher demographic factors on promotion to headship in public primary schools in Kenya from data collected using a questionnaire from 90 teachers who were interviewed for promotion to headship in 96 public primary schools between 2012 and 2014. The Binomial Logistic Regression analysis results revealed that teacher demographic factors were statistically significant in predicting promotions to headship in public primary schools in Kenya. However, as much as the TSC criterion on teacher promotion to headship is adhered to the gender policy is not observed. The paper recommends that the Teachers Service Commission address gender disparities in teacher promotion to headship in primary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: Teacher demographic factors, promotion to headship

Introduction

Nzuve (1997) defines promotion as a change of assignment from a job of a lower level to another on a higher level within the organization. He postulates that in the event of a promotion, the employee is entrusted with more roles or demanding responsibilities than before and the employee has to make certain decisions regarding work and other operations which were previously made by someone else higher in rank.

Studies have revealed that promotion opportunities in Kenya have remained relatively few for over two decades (Karugu and Kuria, 1991; Oyaro, 2010; Otieno, 2010; Siringi, 2010). A survey conducted by Siringi (2010) on employee satisfaction established that teachers wanted among other things faster promotions and review of methods used to reward hard working teachers. Studies by (Kimengi, 1983; Shymala, 1990; Karugu and Kuria, 1991; Sifuna cited in Kamau, 2003; Ngalyuka, 2003) reveal low promotion opportunities, advancement, recognition and a general difficulty in upward mobility in the teaching profession among Kenyan primary and secondary school teachers. This has resulted to job dissatisfaction among teachers.

A number of studies have discussed the link between teacher demographic factors and promotion to headship in schools. Key among them include: The gender of the teacher, the age of the teacher and the religion of the teacher. The gender of a teacher is an area of concern worldwide. For instance, Horney ford (1982) and Riley (1994) while analyzing gender issues in education management established that under-representation of women in education management in England and Scotland respectively was wanting. Riley (1974) study indicate that Scottish women in education sector gained promotion later than their male counterparts a factor attributed to complexities of making choices of managing a career and a home.

Similarly, Kagoda (2010) study on Determinants of Career Professional Development of Female Teachers in Uganda found out that headship in schools was dominated by the male gender. The study established that the female teacher has to work under this framework of male domination. The study revealed that female teachers in Uganda are normally shy, not assertive and easily intimidated by male head teachers as well as district education officers. This clearly indicates the difficulties that bewilder female teachers in seeking promotion. Kagoda (2010) also argues that

women are not administrators because they do not actively seek administrative jobs since, there are forces in the profession perpetuating a cycle which encourages men and discourages women from seeking administrative positions). By extension, studies have shown that the programming of career development has always been difficult for women. The important years for career building are also those of child bearing and their family responsibilities may hinder their career advancement. Women are often excluded from selection because they are less aware than men of the ‘covert criteria’ for appointments to executive positions (UNESCO, 1993). Other important barriers to women’s participation in decision making include: Family attitudes, alienation from the male culture and continued resistance to women in management position, and inadequate policies and legislation to ensure their participation (UNESCO, 1993). The principal barriers preventing the participation of women in the decision- making arena include: Limited access to education, especially higher education, discriminatory appointment and promotion practices, the stresses of dual family and professional roles, family attitudes, career interruptions, cultural stereotyping and alienation from the male culture and continued resistance to women in management positions. Given these obstacles, solutions to remedy the exclusion of women are to be found, which this study sought to establish.

Oketch (2011), in a study, ‘Factors Contributing to Low Participation of Women in Management of Public Primary Schools in Mandera North District, Kenya.’ concluded that there is low participation of female teachers in the administration of public primary school in Mandera North District. The study revealed the absence of female head teachers in the district which showed how poorly women were represented in the headship of primary schools in the district. The study observed that marital duties and obligations including child bearing were serious impediments in the participation of women in public primary school administrative duties. The study posit that the younger the women, the more likely they may not apply for such positions for fear of entanglement and disruptions of smooth marital life. These findings are shared by Wanjama (2002), who noted that the wife-mother’s responsibilities far outweigh the husband-father’s and is characterized by responsibilities that must be met daily.

While the aforementioned studies revealed cases of discrimination and under-representation of women in education management, Barmao (2013), in a study “Factors Contributing to Under

representation of Female Teachers in Headship Positions in Primary Schools in Eldoret Municipality, Kenya established that women were not discriminated against in headship positions but other obstacles like, unfair promotion procedures, gender stereo – typing and rigid career path ways hinder women most.

On the other side, the age of a teacher has been seen to be an important factor on promotion to headship. Studies have shown that there is a link between age of a teacher and promotion to Headship in schools. For example, a report by Management Consultant Price water house Coopers (2010) on teacher promotion to school leader, found out that it took an average of 18 years to become a head teacher, meaning that even those who join the profession on leaving university are unlikely to take up their first headship much before turning 40. Statistics from the annual census of school staff showed just 2% of head teachers were in the 30 to 34 age bracket, with the number under 30 too small to register. The report concluded that young school leaders find themselves coming under scrutiny from school parents and other teachers especially, much older and experienced teachers, who have age-related preconceptions about them, such that, everyone has got something to say about the young school teacher in terms of what they wear, how they look, what they say, the changes they bring in among other things. All these influence the young Head teacher's effectiveness and efficiency of school administration and management. The same report established that schools are rigidly hierarchical environments that make it difficult for young teachers to rise up the ranks ahead of older colleagues. The report argues that fast-track schemes, such as Future Leaders Programme, allow a teacher to become a head teacher within 4 years, but often the crucial factor is whether a young teacher has a mentor within the school, who will push him to take on the responsibility.

In line with that, London Borough of Red bridge (2007), in a Succession Planning Strategy, which aimed at securing the supply of high quality leaders in the context of an increasing number of senior leader retirements and a shortage of applicants for the same, prioritized the issue of a relatively young age profile of the teaching profession to be considered for promotion to Headship within Redbridge since, 50% of both the Head teachers and Deputy head teachers were over 50 and almost retiring. It was also found out that 43% of the Deputies had no desire to become Head teachers (NCSL National Survey). The strategy was to ensure and promote to

headship younger teachers within the profession to alleviate the aforementioned problem in Redbridge.

Equally the same, religion of a teacher has been seen to play a role in the promotion of a teacher to Headship position in schools. In Britain, Irwin (1995), in a study, 'Church School Staffing,' posit that the development of day to day Christian ethos of the school is a senior management responsibility exercised by the Governing Body that is charged with maintaining the character of the school as set out in the school's Trust Deed and Ethos Statement. Governors consider carefully the way in which this responsibility has a bearing on staff recruitment and promotion to Headship. The Voluntary Aided Schools in Britain prefer appointing, remunerating and promoting to Headship teachers who fall into the following three categories: Teachers whose religious opinions are in accordance with the tenets of the religion or the religious denomination specified in relation to the school under section 69 (4) of the constitution, Teachers who attend religious worship with those tenets or Teachers who give religious education at the school in accordance with those tenets. The more senior the post the more desirable the strong religious connection will be. Schools seek such indication from candidates for Headship and Deputy Headship. The law is very clear here that, 'In connection with the appointment of a person to be head teacher of the school, regard should be to that person's ability and fitness to preserve and develop the religious character of the school(School Standards and Framework Act 1998 pt 2 chapter v 60 (va)'.

Lucy Vickers (2010) in a paper entitled 'Religious Discrimination Against Teachers in Faith Schools' posit that majority of schools in Britain are faith-based schools, meaning that the range of teaching jobs and promotion to headship open to the staff who do not share the faith of the largest faith group is limited. This is because schools tend to be careful to ensure their head teachers share the faith of their schools. ROK (2012) concurs that the main challenge in the promotion of teachers to headship is stakeholder interference based on faith among other things, although Shiundu (2010), disagrees with the foregoing argument and postulates that religion is insignificant in the promotion of a teacher to headship.

In summary, studies on teacher demographic factors in terms of the gender of the teacher, the age of the teacher and teacher's religion have been reviewed here. Studies by (UNESCO, 2004, ILO, 2004; Kagoda, 2010; Oketch, 2011 and Barmao, 2013), call for gender parity in educational administration. Studies by (Pricewaterhouse Coopers, 2006 and London Borough of Redbridge, 2007) call for age consideration while promoting a teacher to headship. Studies by (School Standards and Framework Act, 1998; Shiundu 2010; ROK, 2012 and Lucy Vikers, 2013), established that religion is a consideration in the promotion of a teacher to headship. This paper presents the findings of the effect of demographic factors on promotion of teachers to headship in public primary schools in Kenya.

Methods

We targeted all the teachers who applied for promotion to headship and were interviewed for the position in the 96 public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub- County between 2012 and 2014. We utilized census to include all the 90 teachers who applied to be promoted to headship. Using a structured questionnaire we collected data on teacher demographic factors relating to the teachers gender, denomination, age and academic qualification. We also collected data on the status of the teachers' promotion (promoted or not promoted). We use this data to test the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant effect of teachers' demographic factors on promotion to headship in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County using a Binomial Logistic Regression model. Multiple binomial logistic regression predicts the probability that an observation falls into one of the two categories of a dichotomous dependent variable based on one or more independent variables that can be either continuous or categorical. In this case the outcome variable was promotion to headship which was measured on a dichotomous scale "Promoted" or "Not Promoted". The outcome variable depended on a number of exploratory variables which were categorical.

We first, established the descriptive characteristics of the explanatory variables used in the Multiple Binomial Logistic Regression. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of Categorical Variables used in the Analysis

Variable Label	Category	Frequency	%
Teachers gender	0=Male	63	70.0

Teachers denomination	1=Female	27	30.0
	1=Catholic	38	42.2
	2=Friends	24	26.7
	3=Salvation Army	18	20.0
Teachers age	4=Others	10	11.1
	1=51 to 60	18	20.0
	2=46 to 50	24	26.7
	3=41 to 45	38	42.2
Teachers qualification	4=36 to 40	10	11.1
	1=Certificate	28	31.1
	2=Diploma	44	48.9
	3=Degree	18	20.0

Source: Field Data, 2016

Results in Table 1 on teacher demographic factors revealed that there was gender disparity in teachers who were interviewed for headship in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County with the male dominating the interviews. The results further showed that most of those who were interviewed for headship fell in the age bracket of between 41-45 years. This is a prime age coupled with experience that is necessary in the management of schools as required by TSC. Besides, the results in Table 1 revealed that majority of the teachers interviewed for promotion to headship in public primary schools were Catholics compared to those from other denominations and that a large proportion were educated to diploma level.

We then ran a binomial logistic regression analysis by aid of SPSS version 21 to ascertain the effect of teacher demographic characteristics (gender, denomination, age and academic qualification) on the likelihood of participants being promoted to headship in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Binary Logistic Regression of Demographic Factors Affecting Teacher Promotion to Headship in Kakamega East Sub-County

Classification Table ^a				
Observed	Predicted			Percentage Correct
	Yes	No		
Step 1 Promoted	Yes	8	30	21.1
	No	10	42	80.8

Overall Percentage		55.6					
a. The cut value is 0.500							
		B	S.E	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 ^a	Gender (1)	-0.563	0.466	1.456	1	0.035	0.57
	Denomination	0.018	0.236	0.006	1	0.939	1.018
	Age (3)	-0.12	0.182	0.439	1	0.021	0.887
	Academic qualification	-0.15	0.277	0.294	1	0.587	0.861
	Constant	1.662	1.271	1.71	1	0.04	5.267
Model Summary							
Step	-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square		Nagelkerke R Square			
1	120.414	0.24		0.32			
	$\chi^2 = 27.402$	df=4		Sig=0.005			

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 3 because parameter estimates changed by less than .01.

Source: Field data, 2016

The results of the binomial logistic regression model in Table 2 showed that the constant of regression was significant at $p < 0.05$, an indication that the model captured all the pertinent variables that explained the variations in teacher promotion to headship in Kakamega East Sub-County. The Chi-square statistics ($\chi^2 (4) = 27.402, p = .0005$) indicate that the Nagelkerke R^2 for the model was significantly different from zero at $p = 0.05$. This implied that all the coefficients in the model were significantly different from zero and were important in explaining the variation in teacher promotion to headship in Kakamega East Sub-County. Therefore, we rejected the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant effect of teachers' demographic factors on promotion to headship in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. The results of the binomial logistic regression model showed that indeed teacher demographic characteristics were important in explaining variations in teacher promotion to headship in Kakamega East Sub-County. The variable explained 32.0% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variance in promotion to headship and correctly classified 55.6% of cases.

The results in Table 2 showed that gender ($p = 0.035$) and age ($p = 0.021$) were statistically significant in predicting a teachers promotion to headship in public primary schools in

Kakamega East Sub-County. However, a teacher's denomination ($p=0.939$) and a teacher's academic qualification ($p=0.587$) had no statistically significant effect on a teacher's promotion to headship in Kakamega East Sub-County. The fact that teacher's denomination and academic qualification are not significant factors for consideration in promotion to headship suggests that meritocracy may be the key factor on promotion of teachers to headship in the sub-county.

The results further showed that females were 0.57 times less likely to be promoted to headship than their male counterparts other factors held constant. This finding clearly suggests that there exist gender disparities in promotion to headship in public primary schools in Kakamega East Sub-County. Yet the teachers' service commission criterion on promotion of teachers to headship has an affirmative action clause that clearly articulates gender consideration in all appointments as a way of increasing the participation of women in economic, social and political decision making processes and management (R.O.K, 2007). The finding suggests that the affirmative action requirement has not been fully embraced in teacher promotion to headship in Kakamega East Sub-County. This raises concerns in the implementation of a third gender rule in the appointment of individuals to headship in public primary schools in the sub-county. The findings are in line with Wanjama (2002), Kagoda (2010) and Oketch (2011) that posit that women are under-represented in the management of the education sector. Similarly, the findings of Horney ford (1982) and Riley (1994) revealed that women in education management in England and Scotland were under-represented. The findings of Riley (1994) also showed that in education sector women gained promotion later than their male counterparts. Findings by Kagoda (2010) also revealed that headship in Ugandan schools was dominated by the male gender.

Similarly, increasing age was associated with 0.887 decreased likelihood of being promoted to headship. The results revealed that teachers falling above the age group of 51-60 years were less likely to be promoted compared to those in the age bracket of 41-45 years. The latter is a prime age that is necessary in steering schools to success since the accumulated experience over the years can be tapped. The results resonates with those of price Water- House Coopers (2010) showing that it takes an average of 18 years of teaching experience, to become a head teacher, meaning that even those who join the profession on leaving university, are unlikely to take up

their first headship before turning 40. However, this contradicts the TSC criterion as age is not a factor for consideration for teacher promotion to headship.

Conclusion and Policy Recommendation

The findings clearly indicate that teacher demographic factors had an effect on teacher promotion to headship. The findings also revealed that female teachers were less likely to be promoted to headship than their male counterparts contrary to the TSC requirement on gender consideration. There is need for the adherence of TSC affirmative clause requiring gender consideration in all appointments when appointing teachers to headship. Besides, the findings revealed that older teachers were less likely to be promoted to headship yet age is not a factor for consideration in teacher promotion to headship as stipulated by TSC. There is therefore need to ensure that teachers are promoted on merit rather than their age.

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