

ASSESSING THE CULTURAL FACTORS IMPEDING WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS: A CASE FOR THARAKA SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

Culture, as embedded in the concept of norms has a bearing on leadership. It may develop implicit and explicit biases, negative perceptions and stereotypic social values about women's abilities, management performance and leadership attitude. Gender inequality in leadership and management positions is an issue of concern across the world. The study sought to investigate the cultural factors impeding women accession to leadership in secondary schools in Tharaka South Sub – County, Kenya. The study employed cross sectional survey design utilizing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Data was collected from school principals, women teachers, heads of departments, Boards of Management members, Parents Teachers' Association members, Education trade unionists and religious leaders. Sampling was done through purposive and simple random techniques. Questionnaires, interview guide and focus group discussion guides were used to collect data. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS. 22) as well as NVIVO (V.8) for quantitative and qualitative data analysis respectively. From the study, cultural factors impeding women accession to leadership of mixed public secondary schools included cultural biases, stereotyping, scrutiny, domestic responsibilities of women, culture of harassment and masculine mystique.

Keywords: Gender, leadership, culture, management, inequality.