

Gender Bias in the Headship of Educational Institutions within the Tamale Metropolis

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Abstract

A descriptive survey was conducted in 2013/2014 academic year to assess gender disparity in the Headship of educational institutions within the Tamale Metropolis. The purpose of the study was to examine the factors responsible for the gender disparity against women in the headship of educational institutions within the metropolis. The target population for the study comprised all female teachers, female school heads and female educational administrators in the Metropolis. The sample size for the study was made up of 200 teachers and 50 administrators from Basic, Senior High Schools and Colleges of Education within the Metropolis. In order to give a true representation of views of both sexes, there was a purposive sampling of schools to obtain a representative sample of institutions headed by males and females. Information was obtained through the administration of questionnaires on factors responsible for the gender disparity against women in the headship of educational institutions within the Metropolis. The Likert scale format was used for most of the questions. A few close-ended and open-ended items were also used. The research revealed that males out-numbered females in terms of high academic and professional qualifications. More men had at least first degrees than females and hence better academic and professional qualifications than their female counterparts. Thus, men stand the chance of occupying headship positions more than women. This poses a challenge to women in competition for leadership in the educational institutions within the Tamale Metropolis. Additionally, the cultural and traditional milieu of the people has adversely influenced the perception of teachers and educational administrators regarding the appointment of female heads within the metropolis. In the view of the respondents, top management positions are for men only; women may thus occupy supportive positions in society. The survey therefore recommends that gender awareness in curriculum development and Material Production Units should be created through the mass media. This type of awareness is necessary to project the image of women in educational textbooks and not always men, which has the tendency of psychologically preparing women for only subordinate positions. This awareness, if created, could enable the curriculum developers and Material Production Units to develop gender neutral learning materials.

Key words: Gender disparity, Headship, Educational administrators, enhanced gender equity, awareness.

Introduction

Leadership has been defined in various ways by different writers. According to Bennis and Nanus, (1985), Leadership is the process of providing direction, energizing others and obtaining their commitment to the leader's cause. Stogdill (as cited in Kreitner & Kinicki, 1995) considers leadership "as the process of providing direction and influencing individuals or groups toward goal-setting and goal achievement". Schriesheim, Tolliver and Behling (as cited in Kreitner & Kinicki, 1995) consider leadership as "a social influence process in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of subordinates in an effort to reach organizational objectives". According to Okumbe (1998), leadership is seen as a process whereby one person influences others to do something of their own volition, neither because it is required nor because of fear of consequences of non-compliance. To him, leadership is a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically toward objectives. He maintains that leadership is the human factor that brings together and motivates a group towards goals by transforming the group's potentials into reality. In other words, it is the willingness of the people to follow that makes a leader. He shows that leadership comes by appointment, through election, or by popular choice.

Leadership is of great importance in educational administration. The quality of leadership determines the accomplishment of school programmes, objectives as well as the attainment of educational goals. Myriads of research findings point to challenges confronted by women in leadership. According to research carried out by a research team from Institute of Statistical Social and Economic Research (ISSER) and Development Project Planning Centre (DPPC) in 1998, domestic responsibilities including childcare constitute major challenges for women in public life because it is believed that it affects their concentration and output. Expectant career breaks of women in nursing babies also make them accept subordinate positions in their work places. Anamuah-Mensah (1995) identified education as an important leverage for pushing women into public office. He noted, however, that several attitudes in the society tend to discourage higher educational attainment among females. As women climb the academic ladder, their participation continues to dwindle.

People behave according to societal expectations about their gender role and the expectation that women will be more caring and relationship oriented than men largely accounts for different approaches to leadership based on gender. From a female perspective, the downside of this process is that the view of women as nurturing may lead to a justification of

women holding supportive roles, leaving men typically to play leadership roles. Dolphyne (1991) maintained that women's literacy in Ghana on the whole is so low that the few educated women tend to be concentrated in certain areas specifically, in teaching and nursing. Dirasse (1991) also argued that school curricula, career guidance and counseling services in schools tend to channel girls into traditional fields. In this way, education coupled with women's level of participation tends to legitimize stereotypic role for women. This creates an impression that women are fit for certain occupations and not for others. He also agreed that in recruitment to senior positions and derivation of benefits in the work place, women have been discriminated against because it is assumed that they lack the qualities that are essential for successful managerial careers.

Mongella (1995) disagreed with the assertion that educational opportunities are opened to both men and women but the latter do not take advantage of the opportunity to build up knowledge that will qualify them to participate in leadership duties. Mongella observed that this picture cannot be wholly true because at certain instances educational opportunities exist but accessibility is limited. She argued that the greatest barriers that hinder women advancement to educational leadership are lack of opportunities, lack of education, skills and the devaluation of women's work

Dugbaza (1984) observed that there has always been less percentage of female participating in education than males in Ghana. He stated that the inequality was keenly felt after basic education. Participation rate of women in higher education is generally low and this, he said, accounts for the small number of women in leadership positions. Bayo (1986) supported that the gap between boys and girls get much wider as they enter the highest level of education. He argued that the low numbers of females in comparison with males at all levels undoubtedly hinders a large number of women from occupying leadership positions. He advocated for the closure of the gender gap in educational participation at all levels. Asamoah (1997) and Acheampong (1999) revealed from their studies that low educational attainment of women led to the low participation in educational management.

Gyekye, Aryeetey Bortei-Doku, Tsikata, Mama, & Amos-Wilson (1998) commented on organizations as being gender insensitive. They argued that most organizations if not all, have masculine work environment which affect female representation, organizational expectations of career practices and general institutional culture. They further argued that organizations display subtle informal, and few cases, formal discriminatory practices against women. They cited instances like lack of transparency in task assignment, nomination for further training and promotion and advocated for a campaign against socio-cultural norms, expectations and practices that militate against women contributing effectively to public life. On the contrary, Adu (1999) commented that women are to blame for their low representation in leadership positions. She observed that some women have accepted the fact that they must always play the role of a subordinate. Many women do not even care furthering their studies for promotion but want to be promoted on long service or when their bosses have become intimate with them. She stated that women who are favourites of bosses often become backbiters who undermine all efforts of other ladies at the workplace. Many women themselves have accepted the fact that whether they further their education or not their place is in the kitchen. Women with such thoughts do very little to raise their dignity and status in their workplace. Adu added that women must try and realize their special potentials and make the effort to study and rise genuinely to the top in spite of the challenges. Gyekye et al. (1998) also partially blamed women for their low level of participation in public life and subsequently in leadership position. They argued that women's fear of accusation of sexual impropriety, incidents of sexual harassment and lack of confidence, constrain them from networking, lobbying and competing with men and being assertive in their views and initiatives in organizations. They believe that these have been strong hindrances and women must learn to come out of their shells against all difficulties.

Acheampong (1999) also observed from her study on "problems that adversely affect female participation in management of educational institutions" that women do not strive for educational attainment and this portrays women as accepting the societal attitude of down playing the worthiness of women. She further stated that women are not able to enforce discipline and they often suppress their female subordinates. This negative attitude does not augur well for the promotion and advancement of women to any appreciable heights. Dapaah (1988) stated various reasons why Ghanaian women rarely get to leadership positions. One main challenge was that women who found themselves in management positions found that they are supposed to be in a man's world and are therefore confronted with problems of having to prove themselves as capable. This means that such women felt that they have to put in more efforts than their male counterparts. He also explained that most Ghanaian women lack ambition. To him, "once they have attained a certain level in management where they feel comfortable, they do not want to rock the boat", (p.6). This is because they feel they have already achieved more than enough for a woman. He claimed that lack of interest in females pursuing education to higher levels is another constraint. This was in the past associated with the males. The picture that emerges is that the level of education, training, accessibility, participation and opportunities that exist for women create a vast disparity between males and females in educational participation and attainment. Participation rate of women in higher education is generally low and this accounts

for the small number of women in leadership positions (Anamuah-Mensah, 1995; Bayo, 1986; Gyekye et al. 1998; Awumbila, 2001).

Writers and researchers have given almost similar views on factors that impede the advancement of women to leadership positions. The most prevalent factors identified include traditional practices like early marriage, lack of career plan in education, low levels of educational attainment and gender roles and conflicts. Authors however vary in the way they perceive women's leadership roles. While some writers view women leaders as lacking confidence and interest in pursuing education to the higher levels (Carter, 1988; Asamoah, 1997), others see them as having gone beyond the great divide and taken up leadership positions successfully (Hall, 1996; Dyhouse, 2002). The views expressed here would be of value to the current study because they would serve as the basis for the study of the challenges to women's advancement to educational leadership in the Tamale Metropolis.

Within the Tamale Metropolis, perceptions influenced by traditional and cultural practices are strongly opposed to females occupying positions of authority in most human societies, associations and groups. The questions that come to mind are; could these perceptions be responsible for the gender disparity in the headship of educational institutions within the Metropolis? Do the women decline responsibilities as leaders in educational management? Or are they discriminated against by the appointment committee in the selection of heads for educational institutions?

The purpose of the current study was therefore to examine the factors responsible for the gender disparity against women in the headship of educational institutions within the metropolis. Specifically, the objectives were to:

1. Investigate the mode of selection of Heads of educational institutions within the metropolis
2. Examine teachers and educational administrators' perceptions of female Heads in educational institutions within the metropolis.
3. Propose intervention measures to limit the gender disparity against female headship within the Metropolis

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the mode of selection of Heads of Institutions?
2. What perceptions of teachers and educational administrators affect female headship in educational institutions within the Tamale metropolis?
3. What are intervention measures to limit the gender disparity against female headship within the metropolis?

Methodology

This section describes the various procedures that were followed to obtain information for the study. It also contains a description of the research design, the population, the sample, the method of sample selection, research instrument used, questionnaire administration, collection of information and data analysis plan. The research design adopted for the study was the descriptive survey, a type of qualitative research design. According to Ary, Jacobs and Razavieh (1990) descriptive research studies are designed to obtain information which concerns the current status of phenomena. Descriptive research studies are aimed at determining the nature of a group or a situation as it exists at the time of the study. Best and Kahn (1993) stated that descriptive research limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed and that no conclusions are extended beyond this group. The descriptive research has been chosen because it provides a meaningful picture of events and seeks to explain people's perceptions and behaviour on the basis of information obtained at a point in time. Additionally, in-depth follow up questions can be asked and items that are not clear can be explained depending on how the questionnaire is administered.

Population in educational research refers to all the elements in a well defined collection or set of values. The target population for this study comprised all female teachers, female school heads and female educational administrators in the Tamale Metropolis. According to Ary, Jacob and Razavieh (1990) the accessible group, is the group from which the researcher takes the sample for the study. Thus, the accessible population was made up of all teachers, school heads and educational administrators. The choice of the Tamale Metropolis was based on the researchers' familiarity with most of the educational institutions within the Metropolis. In order to give a true representation of views of both sexes, there was a purposive sampling of schools to obtain a representative sample of institutions headed by males and females.

The sample size was 250 respondents comprising of 200 teachers and 50 administrators. Information was obtained through the administration of questionnaires on factors responsible for the gender disparity against women in the headship of educational institutions within the Tamale metropolis. The Likert scale format was used for most of the questions. A few close-ended and open-ended items were also used. The Statistical Package for Software Solution (SPSS) computer package

(version 16) was used to group the data into frequencies and percentages. The issues emerging and relationships between the variables were described.

Result and Discussion

The study examined the factors responsible for the gender disparity against women in the headship of educational institutions within the metropolis. The aim was to investigate the mode of selection of Heads of educational institutions as well as examine the perception of teachers and educational administrators on female Headship in educational institutions within the metropolis. In carrying out this study, attention was focused on variables such as traditional practices and beliefs, performance of female Heads, method of selecting Heads, leadership performance on the basis of gender, traditional gender roles within the domestic setting among others.

Research Question 1: What is the mode of selection of Heads of Institutions within the Tamale metropolis?

The data examined here includes gender, professional qualification of respondents and the manner in which school administrators become Heads. Table 1 provides information of respondents by gender.

Table 1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Teachers		Administrators	
	No.	%	No.	%
Male	144	72	35	70
Female	56	28	15	30
Total	200	100	50	100

Source: Field data, October 2013

While more than 70% of the teachers were males, less than 30% were female teachers. Table 1 also indicates that only 30% of school administrators at both the basic and the second cycle levels were females. Clearly, male teachers and school administrators out-numbered their female counterparts in the Tamale Metropolis. This is in line with findings by Bayo (1986) that the gap between boys and girls get much wider as they enter the highest level of education. He argued that the low numbers of females in comparison with males at all levels undoubtedly hinders a large number of women from occupying leadership positions. Thus, men stand the chance of occupying headship positions more than women.

The researcher found out how school administrators became Heads of their institutions. The findings are given in Table 2.

Table 2 Mode of Selection of Heads of Institution

Mode	School administrator			
	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Appointment	28	80	14	93.3
Application	0	0	0	0
Others	7	20	1	6.6
Total	35	70	15	30

Source: Field data, October 2013

Table 2 reveals that 80% male and about 93.3% female school administrators were appointed to the leadership positions they occupy. The data seem to indicate that more school administrators were appointed to the leadership positions they occupy. Gender awareness in Curriculum Development and Material Production Units should be created through the mass media by respectable women federations such as The Federation of International Women Lawyers. This type of awareness is necessary to project the image of women and not always men in our educational textbooks. In most cases, lawyers, doctors, headmasters are often portrayed in textbooks as men. This has the tendency of psychologically preparing women for only subordinate positions. This awareness if created could enable the curriculum developers and material production units to develop gender neutral learning materials. The bossy attitude of women as well as their suppression of female subordinates could be checked if incentive packages are offered by School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations to Heads who are noted for subservient attitude or who are prepared to delegate authority to their subordinates.

The researcher also investigated the criteria for selecting and appointing heads of educational institutions. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3 Teachers' Preferred Criteria for Selecting Heads of Institutions

Criteria for selecting leader	Most important		Important		Least important	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Academic qualification	130	65	62	31	8	4
Professional qualification	140	70	54	27	5	2.5
Work experience	95	47.5	83	41.5	23	4.5
Gender	16	8	33	16.5	126	63
Age	22	11	38	19	140	70

Source: Field data, October 2013

Table 3 shows that while 140 (70%) teachers preferred professional qualification for selecting heads of institutions 130 (65%) of them regarded academic qualification as most important in selecting Heads. As stated earlier, more males have better academic and professional qualifications than their female counterparts. Thus, more men stand the chance of occupying leadership positions than women. This poses a challenge to women in competition for leadership in the educational institutions within the Metropolis. In their efforts to compete favourably for such positions, women would therefore seek to attain higher educational levels thus confirming the findings of Anamuah-Mensah (1995) that education is an important leverage for pushing women into public office. The table further shows that teachers feel work experience should also be taken into consideration when selecting heads. From the table 95 (47.5%) teachers viewed work experience as most important with regards to the appointment of educational leaders. The table further shows that as many as 126 (63%) and 140 (70%) respectively, considered gender and age as least important in the selection of heads. This might probably mean that teachers consider professional qualification, academic qualification and work experience rather than gender and age as the requisite requirement for appointment to educational leadership. This implies that gender does not constitute a challenge to women's appointment to headship.

Research Question 2: What are perceptions of teachers and educational administrators of female Heads in educational institutions within the Tamale metropolis?

The study examined respondents' perception about working with either male or female heads. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Teachers' Reasons for Preferring to Work with Male or Female Heads

Reasons	Male		Female	
	No.	%	No.	%
Supervising subordinates effectively	95	47.5	105	52.5
Facing problems courageously	137	68.5	63	31.5
Delegating authority	121	60.5	79	39.5
Demonstration of team spirit	107	53.5	93	46.5
Willing to perform extra duties	131	65.5	69	34.5
Naming vision and plan towards it	115	57.5	85	42.5
Managing finances	49	24.5	151	75.5
Adapting to change	129	64.5	71	35.5
Treating all persons with respect	129	64.5	70	35

Source: Field data, October 2013

Table 4 reveals that 137 (68.5%) teachers were of the view that male Heads have the ability to face problems courageously than their female counterparts. It also shows that 131 (65.5%) teachers thought that male Heads are always willing to perform extra duties than female Heads. Furthermore, the data established that about 151 (75.5%) teachers regarded female Heads as better in financial management. This assertion has earlier been made by Asamoah (1997). He reported that female Heads are better in financial management and scarcely embezzle public funds. In addition 105 (52.5%) respondents regarded women as better in supervision of subordinates. It was also perceived by 129 (64.5%) teachers that male Heads had the ability to adapt to changes better than their female counterparts. Whereas male heads were regarded as better in terms of facing problems courageously, willing to perform extra duties as well as having the ability to adapt to changes, the female teachers on the other hand were noted for good financial management and better supervision of subordinates. It appears these perceptions of the female teachers by their male counterparts could be the underlying cause that gives male

applicants a competitive edge at selection interviews which are mostly dominated by male panelists in the Tamale Metropolis.

The views of the teachers on how traditional gender roles affect women are presented in Table 5

Table 5 Teachers' views on Traditional Gender Roles that Affect Women

Gender role	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
Females are socialized to belong to female groups and they learn to be females.	149	74.5	51	25.5
Expectant career breaks, for instance in nursing babies make women accept subordinate positions in work places	131	65.5	69	34.5
Women who opt for leadership positions experience work-home conflicts	140	70	60	30

Source: Field data, October 2013

About 149 (74.5%) teachers were of the view that females socialize with female groups and hence learn to be females. This is a possible constraint to women's advancement to educational leadership. Furthermore, 140 (70%) teachers felt that women who opted for headship experience work-home conflict. These findings are consistent with that of Dolphyne's (1991) who observed that gender roles of women often conflict with their administrative duties. The study further revealed that 131 (65.5%) teachers regarded expectant career breaks, for instance to nurse babies, hinder women's smooth advancement to leadership positions in education. This is in line with the observation made by ISSER (1998) and DPPC (1998) that domestic responsibilities like childcare constitute a major challenge to women in public life.

The issue of gender socialization that exists in both domestic and school environments that discourages girls from taking up roles regarded as masculine could be addressed by GES through family life education in schools. Such activities, under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Women and Children (MOWAC), could be organized regularly to ensure its sustainability. In addition, women activists could be made to deliver public speeches during festivals and durbars on roles of women within the domestic environments in order to advocate for family life education within their communities. Family life education could disabuse the perception that certain domestic chores are for females. This would reduce the stress that working women often experience.

The views of the administrators on how traditional gender roles affect women's headship ambition are presented in Table 6

Table 6 Administrators' views on traditional gender roles affecting women's headship ambition.

Traditional gender roles/conflicts	Agree		Disagree	
	No.	%	No.	%
Amount of time spent caring for the family, especially the children	49	98	1	2
Having to work late in the night	42	84	8	16
Being married person and having to work	7	14	43	86
Being married person and having to work at different place from where the family lives	27	48	23	46

Source: Field data, October 2013

It was observed that as much as 49 (98%) administrators felt that time spent caring for the family was an impediment to women's headship ambition. According to the data, 42 (84%) administrators considered working late into the night as a hindrance to women's advancement to headship. In addition, 27 (48%) respondents indicated that married women who work at places different from where their family lives find it difficult to build their capacity leading to educational leadership. Ironically, 43 (86%) administrators did not consider the work factor of married women as a challenge to their advancement to educational leadership. From the table it appears that time spent by women in caring for the family members was another obstacle to women's headship ambition. In general, marriage-related responsibilities of women constitute a major setback to headship ambition.

Women in leadership positions within the Metropolis commonly experienced work-home conflict. This could be the case for women who have to work late into the night or travel long distances from family members to their places of work. This observation confirms Dolphyne's (1991) findings that gender roles of women often conflict with their administrative duties. Another observation from the study is that career breaks affect women's management of educational leadership an observation which agrees with DPPC (1998) that domestic duties like child care constitute a challenge to women in public life.

Other causes of gender disparity against women's headship ambition as perceived by teachers within the metropolis are presented in Table 7

Table 7 Teachers' views on Poor participation of Women in Educational leadership

Perceived causes	To a great Extent		To Some Extent		Not at all	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Parents treat their daughters and sons differently	89	44.5	92	46	19	9.5
Teachers give fewer positions of responsibility to girls in school	46	23	113	56.5	41	20.5
Teachers give fewer positions of responsibility to girls in school	46	23	113	56.5	41	20.5
Women's disinterestedness in advancing to headship positions	54	27	123	61.5	23	11.5
Super-ordinates show preference for males when appointing people to administrative positions	69	34.5	112	56	19	9.5
Super-ordinates show preference for male as heads	90	45	94	47	16	8

Source: Field data, October 2013

From Table 7, 90 (45%) teachers preferred males for Headship in educational institutions. Furthermore, about 90 (45%) respondents thought that parents had preferential treatment for their sons, thus enabling them aspire better to higher educational leadership positions. Interestingly, 69 (34.5%) respondents indicated that even super-ordinates showed preference for males in appointing leadership, an observation which appears to be a major constraint to women's headship ambition. Thus, women appear to be the 'cause of their own woes' in terms of educational leadership. Parents' preferential treatment of their sons over their daughters as well as the habit of some Teachers offering fewer leadership responsibilities to girls in schools negatively affect women's progress in leadership in general. For instance, the habit of most parents who invest only on male education is a problem that diminishes the chances of women advancing to leadership position. This is supported by Shakeshaft's (1987) assertion that male-centred cultures invest worth in male values and this often creates the problem of exclusion of girls from education. There was the observation that women are noted for suppressing their female subordinates and are bossy when in leadership positions. This observation is consistent with that of Asamoah (1997) that female Heads are bossy and suppress their subordinates.

As many as 162 respondents representing 81% of teachers and 49 respondents representing 98% of the administrators were of the opinion that family care by women is a serious constraint to their headship ambition.

The views of the respondents on how self-imposed constraints affect women's advancement to educational leadership are presented in Table 8

Table 8 Self-imposed Constraints to women's headship ambition

Self-imposed constraints		Agree		Disagree	
		No.	%	No.	%
Women prefer caring for the family	T*	162	81	38	19
	A**	49	98	1	2
Women generally do not strive hard for educational attainment	T	103	52.5	97	48.5
	A	41	82	9	18
Women do not aspire to take up administrative positions	T	92	46	108	54
	A	28	56	22	44
Women generally lack confidence	T	85	42.5	115	57.5
	A	17	34	33	66
Women become bossy when they get to leadership position	T	130	65	70	35
	A	20	40	30	60.0
Women heads often suppress their female subordinates	T	139	69.5	61	30.5
	A	25	50	25	50
Women generally are not able to enforce discipline	T	52	26	148	74
	A	24	48	26	52

Key :* T = Teachers, **A= Administrators. Source: Field data, October 2013

It appears that family responsibility of women takes precedence over their leadership ambition, a cross-cutting observation that reflects in Tables 6 and 8. According to the respondents 139 (69.5%) teachers and 25 (50%) administrators were of the opinion that female Heads were noted for suppressing their female subordinates, a habit which is likely to be a major constraint to female advancement to educational leadership. This finding is similar to Asamoah's (1997) finding that female Heads often suppress their female subordinates. In the opinion of some respondents [130 (65%) teachers and 20 (40%) administrators], women tend to be bossy when they are in leadership position, an attitude which perhaps limits their chances of being put in leadership positions. The table also indicates that 103 (52.5%) teachers and 41 (82%) administrators noted that women generally do not strive hard for educational attainment. If this weakness is anything to go by, then it is only logical to observe a low trend in women's participation in educational leadership. Paradoxically, 148 (74%) teachers and 26 (52%) administrators indicated their disagreement with the statement that women generally are not able to enforce discipline. Furthermore, 115 (57.5%) teachers and 33 (66%) administrators disagreed with the assertion that women lack confidence. These findings however are contrary to Asamoah's findings that women lack confidence and are not able to enforce discipline. The study therefore suggests that women can enforce discipline and that they also have the confidence to be educational administrators. Both Teachers and Administrators were of the opinion that women generally do not strive hard for educational attainment.

Research Question 3: What are intervention measures to limit the gender disparity against female headship within the metropolis?

Respondents' suggestions on how to minimize gender disparity in educational leadership in the tamale metropolis were solicited. The following are some suggestions made by respondents:

1. Community sensitization on female education: Such sensitization programmes should gear toward highlighting the benefits of female education and targeting girls, their families and the entire community. They called upon stakeholders of education such as District Education Oversight Committee (DEOC) and School Management Committee (SMC) to undertake such as sensitization fora.
2. Institution of scholarship schemes for females: the institution of scholarship scheme for girl child education was regarded by respondents as a positive affirmative action to enhance female education within the metropolis. Agencies such as District Assemblies, Non-governmental organizations and philanthropists could contribute their quota in giving girl children some leverage in their educational pursuit. The respondents also suggested that educational funds be instituted by Central Government in all the regions and that such scholarships by communities and traditional areas should be sponsored from these educational funds.
3. It was also suggested that women who qualified for leadership should be encouraged to accept leadership positions. Government sector ministries such as the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection as well as women associations such as Federation of International female lawyers (FIDA) could be instrumental in promoting girl child education within the metropolis to afford them the opportunity to compete favourably with their male counterparts at all levels of the educational ladder.
4. Workshops, seminars and leadership training for women: The respondents believe that these programmes could help raise the self-image of women, sensitize and empower them to enable them be more assertive and ready to accept and play any leadership roles offered them. The respondents called on agencies such UNICEF, DFID, CRS, Discovering

- Learning Alliance (DLA) to provide financial support in this direction.
5. Showcasing Females as role models: Women with enviable educational achievements could be made to share their experiences on the mass media to serve as role models and also encourage other women to pursue higher education. This would reduce the tension on women who feel that marriage-related practices prevent them from furthering their education.
 6. Respondents further suggested that women who occupy leadership positions should not lord it over their women subordinates as it is claimed. They should rather assist them identify their visions and plan towards achieving them as well as encouraging them to develop themselves professionally.
 7. Lastly, the respondents suggested that board of governors of higher institutions of learning should give more consideration for females by reserving sizeable admissions quotas for women. Most respondents were of the view that this could increase the number of women in places of higher learning (tertiary education) to enable women qualify for headship positions within the metropolis.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study revealed inadequate representation of women in educational leadership within the Tamale Metropolis. This state of affairs does not effectively harmonize the needed efforts of both men and women necessary for national development. There is therefore the need to address the status quo through actions that will result in progress towards enhanced gender equity within the Metropolis.

Challenges confronting women in their pursuit of headship within the Tamale metropolis have been identified in this study to have a bearing on the attitude, actions and inactions of the stakeholders of education within the Metropolis. The cultural and traditional milieu of the people has adversely influenced the perception of teachers and educational administrators regarding the appointment of female heads within the metropolis.

The study showed that there were more males than females in the teaching profession in the Tamale Metropolis with male teachers having better professional and academic qualifications than their female counterparts. Based on GES policies, this observation implies that more males qualify for appointment into headship positions in education. Traditional beliefs and practices have been identified as factors that contributed to the poor participation of women in educational leadership in the Tamale Metropolis.

Gender roles, such as socialization process, domestic duties and expectant career breaks for nursing and child care were also considered contributory factors to the low participation of women in educational leadership in the Tamale Metropolis. Other constraints to female advancement in educational attainment include negative parental attitude towards girl education and women's unwillingness to accept and play leadership roles.

School authorities should consider equal opportunities of student leadership / prefect-ship for both male and female students. This could eventually change the wrong notion among students that leadership roles in schools and at work places are exclusively reserved for men, a notion which does not encourage women to crave for leadership positions.

There should be an increase in female participation at all levels of educational ladder. This could be achieved if District Assemblies and NGOs could sponsor more girls to study at all levels as boys. Also there should be vigorous educational campaign for parents and communities to support female education. Such campaigns could highlight the benefits of female education in order to motivate parents and communities not only to enroll but make all efforts to retain their female children in schools. This intervention could also address the problem of early marriage on the part of females.

Educational campaign through workshops, seminars and symposia could be organized for teachers and educational administrators by the Human Resource and Man-power Division of the Ghana Education Service (GES) on women's education and leadership. Such fora could be specifically designed to emphasize the importance of higher education for women as well as the important roles women could play in development. The campaign should be launched on a regular basis to encourage more women to strive for higher academic and professional qualifications necessary for the attainment of educational leadership.

The issue of gender socialization that exists in both domestic and school environments that discourages girls from taking up roles regarded as masculine could be addressed by GES through family life education in schools. Such activities, under the co-ordination of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social protection could be organized regularly to ensure their sustainability. In addition, women activists could be made to deliver public speeches during festivals and durbars on roles of women within the domestic environments in order to advocate for family life education within their communities.

Family life education could disabuse the perception that certain domestic chores are for females. This would reduce the stress that working women often experience.

Furthermore, gender awareness in curriculum development and material production units should be created through the mass media by respectable women federations such as the Federation of International Women Lawyers (FIDA). This type of awareness is necessary to project the image of women and not always men in our educational textbooks. In most cases, lawyers, doctors, headmasters are often portrayed in textbooks as men. This has the tendency of psychologically preparing women for only subordinate positions. This awareness, if created, could enable the curriculum developers and material production units to develop gender neutral learning materials. The bossy attitude of women as well as their suppression of female subordinates could be checked if incentive packages are offered by School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations to Heads who are noted for subservient attitude or who are prepared to delegate authority to their subordinates.

Given the low level of female education within the metropolis as a challenge to women's advancement to leadership, future researchers should examine the impact of high female education on the socio-economic development of the Metropolis. Also the management of challenges to women's advancement to educational leadership could be investigated in order to verify the credibility of the interventions proposed in the current study.

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