Full Length Research Paper

Representation of Women in Top Educational Management and Leadership Positions in Kenya

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The purpose of the study was to investigate factors causing under representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Kenya. Descriptive survey design, utilizing quantitative and qualitative approach was used in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to categorize the target population of 161 educational personnel by level of management and gender. Simple random sampling was then used to get a study sample of 76 officers. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to gather information from the respondents. Analysis of staff returns documents was done to get the numerical representation of the personnel by gender. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency distribution, mean scores, and standard deviations. The findings showed that 33.3 percent and 32.1 percent of top and middle management positions respectively were held by women. In terms of professional qualifications, 55 percent and 51.5 percent of M.Ed and B.Ed holders respectively, were women. Both male and female genders were rated 'high' in possession of skills and personality characteristics the respondents considered important for top educational management and leadership positions. Organizational factors were the strongest barriers for women in ascending to top educational management and leadership positions. This was followed by socio-cultural and the least were individual factors. Strategies to improve the representation of women in top educational management and leadership therefore focused on the girl child in school, women themselves, society, government policies, the Education Act and the country's constitution.

Key words: top educational management and leadership, women, barriers, representation, skills, personality characteristics

Introduction

Under-representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions has had negative implications on government policies and general educational curriculum which has lacked gender mainstreaming. Girl child has also lagged behind in education due to lack of positive female role models (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Working women teachers have also lacked mentors and the scenario has tended to be cyclic (Gachukia, 2002; Growe & Montgomery, 1999; Otieno, 2001). The question one asks is "do women have what it takes to occupy top educational management and leadership positions, and if they do, what is keeping them out of this female dominated carrier?"

In this article, I present the findings of a study I conducted which examined the perceived connection between possession of skills necessary for top educational management and leadership positions and gender representation in the positions as described by various educational officers at the Ministry of Education headquarters in Kenya. Located at the capital city of Kenya, the Ministry of Education headquarters is mandated by the government to promote education in the country and constitutes the top and middle management in the education hierarchy. Following a brief description of the Ministry headquarters, I will present an over view of the literature on women and leadership which both prompted and under-girded this study. The perceptions of educational managers on abilities of women for educational management and leadership positions will then be presented. The intersection of leadership and women is then examined as it applies to Ministry of Education headquarters. Finally, implications for further study are examined.

History, Organizational Structure and Functions of the Ministry of Education

In this section the history, organizational structure and functions of the Ministry of Education are outlined. The historical outline spells out gender issues in education in Kenya from colonial period up to the time of the study. The establishment and growth of the Ministry of Education from colonial period to date is also outlined. Suffice to note that the changes in the organizational structure of the Ministry of Education would modify its functions accordingly.

History of the Ministry of Education and the Gender Trail

As with any government institution, the Ministry of Education is a dynamic entity, changing along with political, civic and intellectual movements and changes over time. At this point (June, 2009), in Kenya's history, the Ministry of Education is experiencing a period of change and restructure, and the number of directorates is currently under discussion for one or more changes (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Christian missionaries are largely acknowledged as the founders of western education in Kenya (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994). Early missionary schools were established without sanctions or help from the government. The efficiency of such schools depended on the resources and initiative of a particular mission which formulated its own policy, trained, employed and dismissed it own teachers. Each mission set its own curriculum and determined what would be examined, resulting in unbalanced education development (Ngaroga, 1996).
Chege and Sifuna (2006) outlined that in 1908, J. Nelson Frazer, a man who had education experiences from India, was invited by the colonial government to survey the education system and recommend ways of organizing it in such a way that both the government and the missionaries could hold stakes in education. He recommended that department of education be established and director of education be appointed to head it. In 1910, the recommendations were effected. The development of education continued to be controlled by the director throughout the colonial period. In 1963, when Kenya gained independence, the Ministry of Education was established, and mandated to manage education in the country, headed by the Minister for Education.

Throughout the colonial period, education of girls lagged behind. It was not until 1925 that the government openly decried the low status of women and girls' education, describing it as lagging behind that of men and boys. The government started to advocate for the improvement of girls' education, arguing for the first time that educated wives and mothers would contribute to the general welfare of the home and community (Kenya National Archives annual report as cited in Chege & Sifuna, 2006). However, it is clear that even as it attracted support for girls' education, the colonial administration failed to interpret the value of girls' education in terms of their personal development and well being (Chege & Sifuna, 2006); much less did it prepare them for leadership. The

curriculum for girls was described as three Bs, representing *baby, bath, and broom*. According to Assie-Lumumba (as cited in Chege & Sifuna, 2006), a new tradition was established for transmitting values of humility, low ambition and systematic underestimation of girls' and women's ability in cognitive achievement, social attainment and capacity to work in the public sphere.

Soon after independence in 1963, the government published Sessional Paper No. 10 of 1965, *African Socialism and its Application to Planning in Kenya*, which emphasized the country's commitment to the objectives of individual freedom, social justice and human dignity (Republic of Kenya as cited in Chege & Sifuna, 2006). This paper hardly mentioned, let alone addressing the gender dimension as a crucial defining factor in the existing inequalities between men and women, and between girls and boys in all sections of the society. The first and the second National Development Plans, 1965-70 and 1970-73 respectively, which mainly addressed the need to translate political independence into economic and social realities, did not mention women at all, giving the impression that women did not have a role to play in national development besides their traditional reproduction obligations. The first direct mention of women in government documents since independence was in the third National Development Plan (1974-1978), and subsequent development plans re-emphasized this trend (Chege & Sifuna, 2006).

Other government documents that have addressed gender issues in education are the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2001), Economic Recovery Strategy (2003-2007), National Development Plan (2002-2008), Sessional Paper No.1 (2005), Kenya Education Sector Structural Program (2005), Ministry of Education Strategic Plan (2006-2011) and the Kenya Vision 2030 (2007). Kenya is also a signatory to international protocols relating to education and human rights of women and girls, including the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (1948), Convention on the Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women (1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Jomtiem World Conference (1990), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), Dakar Framework of Action of Education for All (2000), Millennium Development Goals as well as Goals of the African Union (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

In the past, the government has had a number of on-going initiatives to address gender gap at all levels of education including management such as: appointment of qualified female educational managers; gender balanced intake of pre-service teacher trainees; gender responsive deployment of teachers; engendering the curriculum; capacity building for school managers, teachers and quality assurance officers on gender issues; and the Ministry of Education has also established a National Task Force for Gender and Education, a Ministerial Task Force on Girl's Education and a Gender Desk (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Since the gender gap continued to be glaring, especially in key governance and management

positions, both in the wider society and in the education sector in particular (Republic of Kenya, 2007), the Ministry of Education, in one of its strategies to implement its ten year Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research outlined in the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, developed a Gender Policy in 2007. Among its specific objectives were to: increase participation of women in governance and management of education; mainstream gender at all educational levels, institutions, policies, programs and activities, planning, implementation and budgeting; ensure institutional work environments are gender responsive; and to empower girls and boys, women and men on gender issues (Republic of Kenya, 2007).

The handicap to the realization of gender equality in education in the country is neither lack of knowledge nor of the necessary policy options, but rather the challenge seems to be one of bringing the necessary political commitment, expertise and resources together in order to respond to the task (Sifuna and Otiende, 2006). However, Professor George Saitoti, the Minister for Education at the time of development of the Ministry of Education gender policy, showed his support and assurance of the government's commitment in his foreword message when he said:

> There is consensus that girls' and women's empowerment in general has been seriously impeded by several factors, such as cultural and religious practices, inadequate policy guidelines, poverty, and lack of community awareness. These have impacted negatively on women's access, participation and performance in education... this now policy provides a framework for planning and programming of gender responsive education at all levels of education and this is a clear indication that the government is committed to pursuing gender equality in all spheres of development, and in establishing mechanisms to re-dress the existing inequalities. (Republic of Kenya, 2007, pg. 4)

Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education Headquarters
The Ministry of Education is headed by the Minister for Education, the chief policy maker, who guides and directs the development of education in the country. The Minister is assisted by an Assistant Minister. The ministry is further divided into administrative and professional wings. The Permanent Secretary is the executive head, the chief accounting officer and heads the administrative arm of the ministry. The professional wing is headed by the Education Secretary who is answerable to the Permanent Secretary (Ministry of Education, 2009). The current structure of the professional wing is as shown in Appendix A. The professional wing is made up of four directorates namely: Secondary and Tertiary Education (S&TE); Quality Assurance and Standards (QASS); Policy and Planning (P&P); and Basic Education (BED). Each directorate

is headed by a Director (D), assisted by Senior Deputy Directors (SDDs), who are assisted by Deputy Directors (DDs). Under the DDs are the Senior Assistant Directors (SADs), assisted by Assistant Directors (ADs). The Senior Education Officers (SEOs) follow and lowest in the rank are the Education Officers (EOs).

As at the time of data collection in 2005 the Ministry's professional wing was made up of five directorates namely: Basic Education; Higher Education; Technical Education; Quality Assurance and Standards; and Policy and Planning. There were also parastatals and Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies (SAGAS) which had roles and reported to the permanent secretary. They included Kenya Institute of Education, Jomo Kenyatta Foundation, Kenya Literature Bureau, Kenya Institute of Special Education, Kenya Education Staff Institute, Commission for Higher Education, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Higher Education Loans Board, Kenya National Examinations Council, Teachers Service Commission and Centre for Mathematics and Science and Technology in Africa (CEMASTEA) (Ministry of Education, 2006).

Functions of the Ministry of Education
Functions of the Ministry of Education include: (a) formulation, dissemination and implementation of education policies; (b) administration and management of education programs; (c) planning and implementation of education and training programs; (d) curriculum development and implementation; (e) provision of curriculum support materials; (f) quality assurance in education and training; (g) examination and certification; (h) registration of education and training institutions; (i) promotion of educational research; (j) supervision of Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies under the Ministry; and (k) actualization of the national goals of education (Ministry of Education, 2009). These functions are condensed in the MOE vision and mission. The Vision of MOE is "To have a globally competitive quality education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development." The Mission of MOE is "To provide, promote, co-ordinate quality education, training and research for empowerment of individuals to become caring, competent and responsible citizens who value education as a life-long process" (Ministry of Education, 2007)

Relationship to the Literature on Female Leadership
Much of the research on women and leadership has concentrated on what women are capable of bringing to management and leadership and what keeps women off management and leadership positions. These two themes became apparent when examining the literature on this topic. The barriers have been categorized into individual, organizational and socio-cultural factors.

Women and the Leadership Paradigm
Under-representation of women in positions of senior management within Educational Institutions continue to be a matter of concern, particularly as the teaching force is largely dominated, by women (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). For instance, despite variations in the pattern of representation of women in positions of educational leadership across Europe, what is common is that educational leaders are predominantly male, and women seem to be under-represented at managerial levels in virtually all countries (Riley, 1994). This is despite the fact that women have shown themselves to be extremely capable educational leaders (Cubillo, 1999), and there is little doubt that many women have a great deal to contribute to the changing practice of educational management in response to the radical global restructuring of education (Cubillo & Brown, 2003).

A study to identify professional and personal characteristics, and styles of leadership in order to develop profiles of six outstanding female superintendents in Texas by Funk in 2004 established that leadership characteristics of outstanding superintendents included being brave, caring, creative, courageous, committed, confident, energetic, healthy, honest, industrious, introspective, intuitive, knowledgeable, open-minded, passionate, pragmatic, reflective, responsible, risk-taking, trustworthy, and being well-informed. Qualities needed by successful superintendents included character, integrity, vision, courage, and passion. Critical skills for female superintendents were visioning, determining the real needs for their districts, communicating, hiring the right people, delegating, developing team support, working effectively with people, and producing meaningful and lasting change (Funk, 2004).

Female attributes of nurturing, being sensitive, empathetic, intuitive, compromising, caring, cooperative, and accommodative are increasingly associated with effective administration. While these characteristics are innate and valuable, women possessing the qualities of a good leader still face higher attrition and slower career mobility (Growe and Montgomery, 1999). Rosener (as cited in Wood, 1997) adds that women will succeed to executive levels because of – not in spite of certain characteristics generally considered to be feminine and inappropriate in leaders.

Theoretical Framework
Cultural feminism theory was applied as a theoretical framework in the study. Cultural feminism can be traced back to Jane Addams in the 1890s. It later on emerged in 1970s becoming a strong voice in 1980s (Schemerhorn, 2001). Repeatedly, Addams advanced the argument that women were more humanitarian, caring, and "down to earth" than men. By restricting women's freedom to the home, the larger society was corrupt and unjust. Everyday life functioned poorly because it was based on male values and ethics only (Jane Addams and the Men of the Chicago School, 1892-1918, 1986).

Cultural feminism argues that there are fundamental biological and personality differences between men and women and those women differences should be celebrated as a source of personal strength and pride. Culturalists acknowledge the existence but not the inferiority of the difference and on this platform enunciates an equality of quality, not of sameness to men. One such difference is that women raise children while men do not. This makes women 'connected' and 'intimate' beings. The consequences of a woman's potential for connection makes women value intimacy and develop a capacity for nurturance, and an ethic of care for the 'other' with which they are connected, creating interdependence with and in the community (Schemerhorn, 2001).

In educational management and leadership women have been noted to exhibit characteristics such as empathy, intuition, sensitivity, caring, supporting, compassion, patience, organization, attention to detail and ability to integrate people, to listen to them and to motivate them through non monetary incentives (Cubillo, 1999; Funk, 2004; Growe and Montgomery, 1999). This is because, according to cultural feminism, women tend to value ideas such as interdependence, co-operation, relationship, community, sharing, joy, trust and peace, while men tend to value ideas such as independence, hierarchy, competition and domination.
According to cultural feminism society should facilitate, by its laws and respectful attitudes, the full participation of women in all sectors, while neither denying their distinct nature nor discriminating against them for their differences (Schemerhorn, 2001).

Barriers to Women's Sufficient Representation in Management and Leadership
Absence of women in decision-making positions stems from variety of factors. According to Neidhart and Carlin (2003), barriers to women's leadership can be categorized into: barriers stemming from socialization and stereotyping; individual; and organizational barriers. Women have also lagged behind men in education (UNESCO, 2000). Ernest (2003) adds that "glass ceiling" is the most important reason for women's under-representation in leadership positions.

Level of Education
There is adequate evidence that educating women is beneficial at the national, community, family and individual level. With even basic education, individual women effectively engage in economic activities and thus contribute to greater national productivity. At family level, educated women have reduced fertility rates, brought up healthier, better educated children, and reduced infant and maternal mortality rates. At the society level, educated women participate more in development activities as well as in political and economic decision making processes (Republic of Kenya, 2007). However for one to occupy top management and leadership positions one needs higher education. One fact that is evident from various research findings is that the higher the level of education, the wider the

gender gap. In Kenya, studies by Otieno (2001), Ngome (2003), and Bunyi (2004) all agreed that the higher the level of education, the wider the gender gap in favor of males.

Individual Barriers
Individual barrier looks to women as the cause of their under-representation because it argues that women are not assertive enough, don't want power, lack self confidence, are unwilling to play the game or work the system, don't apply for jobs and even when in a job, they don't apply for line positions (Tallerico & Burstyn as cited in Growe and Montgomery, 1999). However research by Ruderman (as cited in Neidhart & Carlin ,2003), suggested that some women in management carefully assess career decisions in the light of their own values and beliefs. For these women the barrier was not lack of confidence, but rather an informed choice based on knowledge of what is important to them personally and the extent to which they are authentic. Another individual barrier is *other directedness*. Women are generally more concerned than are men about how they are perceived by others in their group. Other individual barriers according to Cubillo (1999) include: the tendency among women to avoid where they risk facing criticism or receiving negative feedback; fear of failure and hence a reluctance to voice their opinions; excess responsibilities and fear of conflict and loneliness; self-doubting; and a different (feminine) style of management.

Organizational Barriers
Organizational barriers include: entrenched cultures and norms; the way power is defined and exercised; selection procedures; lack of appropriate mentor schemes; exclusion from informal networks; failure of senior leaders to assume accountability for women's advancement; job requirements; facilities; organizational climate; and placement (Livinstone, 2004; Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). The cultures of organizations have been shaped by men (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). According to Shakeshaft (as cited in Tripses, 2004), while there are differences among societies and culture, in all cultures men and women divide labor on the basis of their sex and male tasks are more valued than female tasks. This male world view, called androcentrism, elevates masculine pursuits to ideal while female values, experiences and behaviors are viewed as inferior. The resultant is that men are considered to be experts while women have to prove that they are (Ernest, 2003). The way power and authority are defined and exercised in organizations are related to the andocentric world.

Socio-Cultural Barriers
Women's identities and roles have traditionally been associated with parenting and caring, while men's have been associated with paid employment as well as becoming public and industrial managers (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). The socialization process therefore structures and equips men and women to enact their respective and different roles. According to Livingstone (2004), domestic duties that women are still expected to do for their families take significantly more time

and energy than those that most men expect and want to do. He adds that this inequity is the chief persistent disadvantage that women suffer in seeking opportunities for advanced education and career advancement. None the less, socialization process results in boys and girls conforming to the socially determined behavior (Otieno, 2001). Girls learn to be feminine while boys learn to be masculine. While femininity is associated with submissiveness, gentleness, emotional dependence and not quite good at decision making and tactfulness, masculine characteristics are dominance, aggressiveness, not emotional, blunt, independence, very good at decision making etc (UNESCO, 2000). Women who get into leadership are … *trouble*. In particular, strong women are labeled difficult and dangerous because they trouble dominant masculinities and modes of management by being different (Blackmore as cited in Cubillo & Brown, 2003). This 'masculine woman' is described as a 'monster' with gender problems and a risk to assumed stable identities, social roles and positions in the hierarchy of professions. The fear of losing femininity therefore becomes widespread and real (Ernest, 2003).

Glass Ceiling
This term refers to many barriers that can exist to thwart a qualified woman's rise to the top management of an organization. These barriers are artificial and invisible, providing a view to the top, but also providing a ceiling on how far a woman can go. When a glass ceiling exists, men occupy a disproportionately high percentage of the higher ranks in a career field, while women tend to be overrepresented in its lower ranks (Sincoff, et al., 2006). Therefore the 'Glass-Ceiling' is the most important reason for women's under-representation in leadership-positions (Ernest, 2003). Glass ceiling is therefore an effect of individual, organizational and socialization barriers and exists in its strongest forms denying women opportunities to gain access into top management positions. While it is true that more women, now than ever before, are slowly chiseling through the glass barrier to take on leadership positions, one can hardly claim to hear glass ceilings shattering around us (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). The question one asks is whether it is possible to shatter the *glass* without hearing it break!

Methodology
This study utilized instrumental, single-site, descriptive survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The site was the MOE headquarters. Data were collected over a period of two weeks using questionnaire and interview guide and analysis of documents on staff returns.

Participants
Out of a target population of 161 officers, stratified sampling was used to group the educational managers at the headquarters into top and middle management as shown in Appendix B. The top management in the study was composed of one Education Secretary, five Directors, five Senior Deputy Directors and 13 Deputy Directors. This totaled 24 officers. Middle management

was composed of 19 Senior Assistant Directors, 23 Assistant Directors, 44 Senior Education Officers and 51 Education Officers. Giving a total of 137 educational officers.

Simple random sampling resulted in a study sample of 76 officers as shown in Appendix C. In the study sample there were 16 top management educational officers which included one Education Secretary, five Directors, five Senior Deputy Directors and five Deputy Directors from the five directorates in the Ministry. Sixty middle management officers were sampled from the directorates and this comprised of 14 Senior Assistant Directors, 14 Assistant Directors, 16 Senior Education Officers and 16 Education Officers. The sampling from all the five directorates gave a representative sample of the Ministry.

Data Analysis
The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS computer software employing descriptive statistics such as percentages; frequency distribution; mean; and standard deviation. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically providing a detailed and personal view of important characteristics for top educational management and leadership positions, and their possession by gender as well as barriers to women in the top positions.

Process
Five primary questions were developed to anchor this study. These were, what is the distribution of educational personnel at the M.O.E. headquarters by gender? What skills are important for top educational management and leadership positions and which gender posses them? What personality characteristics are important for top educational management and leadership positions and which gender posses them? What individual, organizational, and socio-cultural factors cause under representation of women at the top educational management and leadership positions? What strategies would improve the representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions? To answer these questions, educational officers were given self administered questionnaire which had both closed and open ended questions. To allow for probing five males and five females randomly selected were interviewed using interview guide.

Findings

Gender and Professional Qualifications of the Educational Managers
Data analysis from staff returns showed that there were 24 top management and 137 middle management officers at the Ministry of Education headquarters. In top management positions, 33.3% were females, while 66.7% were males. In the middle management cadre 32.1% were females while 67.9% were males. Analysis of the professional qualifications showed that there was no PhD holder among the respondents. However, 55% of M.Ed degree holders were females while 45% were

males. Holders of B.Ed degrees were 51.5% female and 48.5% male.

Skills and personality characteristics important for Top Educational Management and Leadership Positions
The respondents were to rate the degree of importance of skill and personality characteristics based on a five point rating scale i.e. 1-not important, 2-of little importance, 3-important, 4-very important and 5-extremely important. Team work ability, communication, managing time, delegating, formulating policies and decision making skills were rated as 'extremely important, while sharing power and information, analytical and report writing skills were rated as 'very important. No skill was rated as 'important', 'of little importance' or 'not important'.

Decisiveness, self confidence, listening and honesty were considered to be extremely important, while emotional stability, objectivity, empathy, consistency, attention to detail and nurturing were rated as very important. None was rated as 'important', 'of little importance' or 'not important'.

Possession of Skills and Personality characteristics by Gender
The degree of possession of the skills and personality characteristics by the male and female gender were rated on a five point rating scale i.e. 1-very low, 2-low, 3-moderate, 4-high and 5-very high. Averagely, personality characteristics and skill possession by both genders was rated as 'high'. Female gender was rated higher than male in possession of teamwork ability, communication, report writing and managing time skills, while male gender was rated higher than female in possession of skills such as analytical, formulating policies, decision making, delegating and sharing power and information.

Male gender was rated 'high' in possession of characteristics of decisiveness, self confidence, emotional stability, Listening, objectivity, and consistency, and moderate in possession of empathy, attention to detail, honesty and nurturing. Female gender was rated 'high' in possession of all the qualities except emotional stability which was rated as 'moderate'. Generally, male gender was rated higher than female gender in possession of characteristics of decisiveness, self confidence, and emotional stability, while the female gender was rated higher than male gender in possessing listening, empathy, consistency, attention to detail, honesty and nurturing.

Barriers to Women
A comparison of mean scores from all respondents showed that organizational factors were the strongest barriers to women's fair representation in top educational management and leadership positions. These were barriers that emanated from the work place. They were followed by socio-cultural barriers and least were individual barriers. The socio-cultural barriers ranged from gender roles and gender stereotypes. Individual barriers looked to women as their own enemies in occupying

top educational management and leadership positions.

Organizational Barriers
These factors included: management and leadership requirements such as long working hours not favoring women; prejudice against women in management that prevents full utilization of their talents and abilities; women in management positions having to prove themselves while men are assumed to be experts; men in management not supporting advancement of women; jobs being got on the basis of 'who knows who' rather than competences; discrimination against women during interviews for jobs and promotions, since such panels are male dominated; men being better in networking, lobbying and canvassing for upward mobility, while women have poor, disunited and tactless network in strategizing for power; men also teaming up in execution of duties and socialization leaving little or no room for women to fit; and the country's constitution and government employment policies being gender neutral.

Socio-cultural Barriers
These barriers included: Dual responsibility of family care and employment being too demanding; Society labeling women as wives and mothers and not capable of top management positions; both men and women not liking to work under women; belief that women in positions of power and authority tend to be lonely; and lastly management and leadership norms have been set by men and women seem not to fit.

Individual Factors
These factors included: women tending to avoid where they risk facing criticism and receiving negative feedbacks; women having fear of failure hence reluctant to voice their opinion; women tending to express less confidence in their ability to assume leadership roles; women in management tending to be more concerned about how they are perceived by others; fear of sexual harassment, of responsibility, of success, of broken marriages and divorces because of accusations of love affairs with senior male officers especially when the females rise fast to the top, of paying the price of being at the top, of being labeled *iron lady*, of taking risks, and finally of being public figures as most prefer to be fairly private; and lastly, women not supporting one another on the upward ladder of management. While many previous studies had included women not being interested in power as an individual factor, in this study this factor was disputed.

Strategies to Improve the Representation of Women in Top Educational Management and Leadership Positions
Respondent's responses through the open-ended question in the questionnaire revealed that practical way forward to improve the representation of women in these positions should focus on the women themselves, the girl child, the government/MOE and the society. Women themselves would need to consciously address the individual barriers, the government would address the organizational barriers, while the society would address the socio-cultural barriers. The focus on the girl child would be a long term point of intervention, and the women would have to take the lead.

Conclusions
The study concluded that there is under-representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions at the MOE headquarters. Kenya Vision 2030, the country's development blue print, aims at making Kenya a newly industrialized middle income country by the year 2030. The vision is based on three pillars namely, the economic pillar, the social pillar and the political pillar upon which the government intends to address gender equity and equality (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Republic of Kenya (2007) adds that in as much as the government has put a minimum of 30 percent representation of women in all sectors and particularly in decision making positions, it is envisaged that full equality will be eventually achieved as stipulated in international goals, protocols, conventions and the gender policy in education. While past studies show that women have lagged behind men in education, this study shows that women are more aggressive than men in pursuit of under graduate and post graduate educations which are a prerequisite for top educational management and leadership positions.

The basic differences in possession of skills and personality characteristics considered important for top educational management and leadership positions between men and women seems to be in degree of intensity rather than in kind. Women have not been left behind in possession of these skills while they are ahead of men in possession of important personality characteristics. Equal gender representation in these positions would enrich the existing pool with skills such as team work ability, communication, report writing and skills of time management. Personality characteristics such listening, empathy, consistency, attention to details, honesty and nurturing would also be improved.

Previous studies reveal that there are individual, organizational and socio-cultural factors that have resulted in the under-representation of women in top management and leadership positions in almost all spheres of life. In the past it has been assumed that the major barrier is the individual factors, therefore looking to women as the cause of their under-representation in top echelon of management and leadership. The findings of this study have also revealed that there are individual, organizational and socio-cultural barriers to women aspiring top educational management and leadership positions, however, the organizational factors are the strongest barriers, followed by socio-cultural and least were the individual barriers. Women have also been proved to be more interested in power than in the past.

Recommendations
Recommendations for the profession include:
- Training of women in top, middle and supervisory

management in skills required for top educational management and leadership positions.

- Providing gender sensitive training to both males and females to promote non discriminatory working relationships and respect for diversity in work and management styles.
- Creating a system for mentoring for women in middle and supervisory management.
- Engendering government educational and employment policies, with the government committing itself to provide the political will which a pre-requisite in the success of the policies implementation.
- Focusing on girl child education in terms of women in top educational management and leadership providing candid role models, meeting the biological and sanitation needs of the girls in school and removing all types of stereotypes against women at all levels of education. These will improve retention of the girl child in school and improve the number that will complete education at all levels
- Employing affirmative action, such as constitutionally managed quotas, to improve the representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions.

Recommendations for further research include:

- Case studies of women who have been in top educational management and leadership positions to find out the challenges they faced and how they overcame the barriers.
- Detailed survey of practical affirmative action strategies that could be employed to improve the representation of women in educational management and leadership.
- Gender roles in change management. Changes are normally resisted and can be a source of conflict which must be managed.
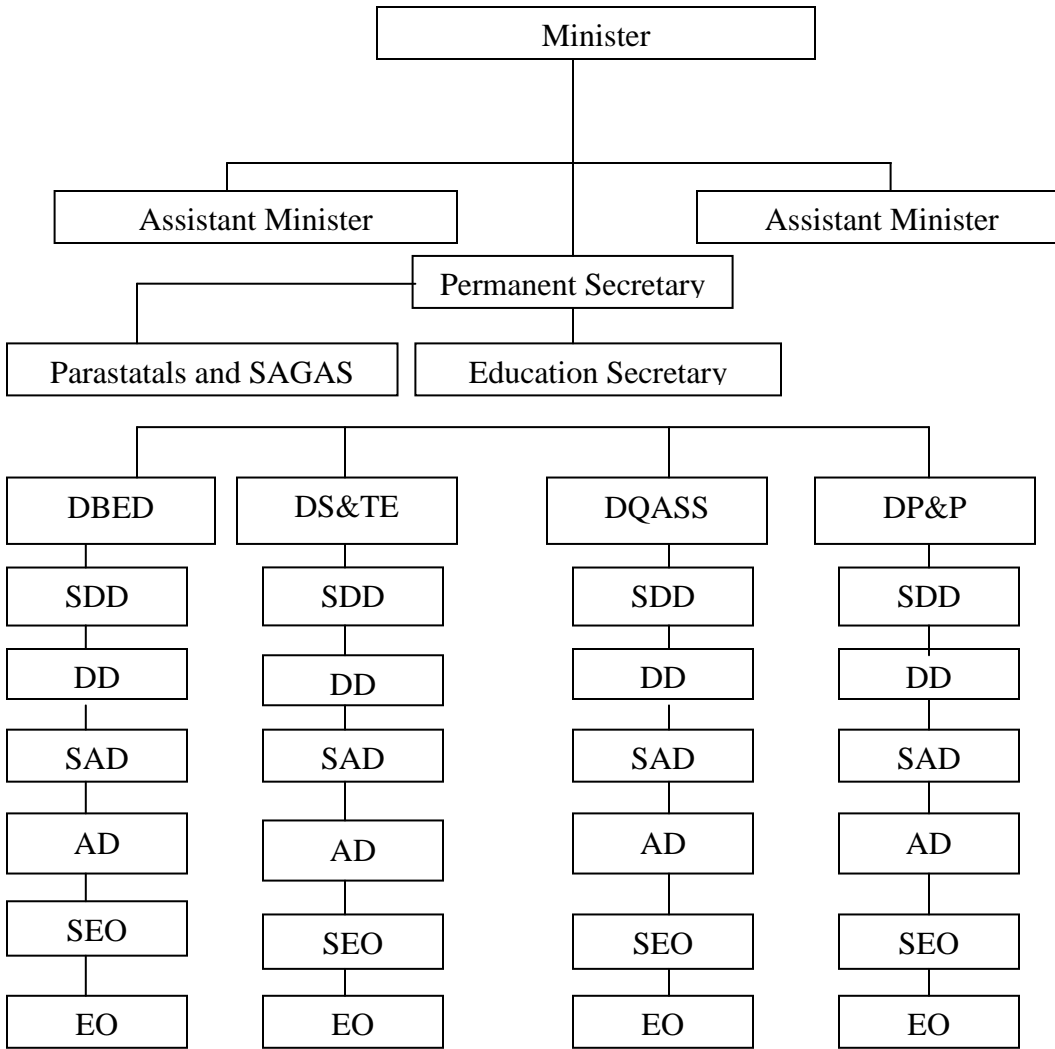
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Appendix A

Organizational Structure of MOE Headquarters (MOE, 2009).

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                              ┌─────────────┐
                              │   Minister  │
                              └─────────────┘
                                     │
         ┌───────────────────────────┼───────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────┐              │              ┌─────────────────────┐
│  Assistant Minister │              │              │  Assistant Minister │
└─────────────────────┘              │              └─────────────────────┘
                          ┌──────────────────────┐
              ┌───────────│  Permanent Secretary │
              │           └──────────────────────┘
              │                      │
┌───────────────────────┐   ┌──────────────────────┐
│ Parastatals and SAGAS │   │  Education Secretary │
└───────────────────────┘   └──────────────────────┘
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DBED	DS&TE	DQASS	DP&P
SDD	SDD	SDD	SDD
DD	DD	DD	DD
SAD	SAD	SAD	SAD
AD	AD	AD	AD
SEO	SEO	SEO	SEO
EO	EO	EO	EO

Appendix B

Distribution of Educational Personnel in the Five Directorates

Officer	DBED	DHED	DTED	DQAS	DPP	Total
ES						1
Ds	1	1	1	1	1	5
SDDs	1	3	-	1	-	5
DDs	3	3	-	4	3	13
SADs	8	4	2	3	2	19
ADs	6	6	-	8	3	23
SEOs	10	8	7	15	4	44
EOs	13	12	6	10	10	51
Total	42	37	16	42	23	161

Note. DBED = Directorate of Basic Education ; DHED = Directorate of Higher Education; DTED = Directorate of Technical Education; DQAS = Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards; DPP = Directorate of Policy and Planning; ES = Education Secretary; Ds= Directors; SDDs = Senior Deputy Directors; DDs = Deputy Directors; SADs = Senior Assistant Directors; ADs = Assistant Directors; SEOs = Senior Education Officers; EOs = Education Officers; - = vacant position. Compiled from Staff Returns Documents at Ministry of Education in March 2005.

Appendix C

Sample of Study

Officer	DBED	DHED	DTED	DQAS	DPP	Total
ES	1					1
Ds	1	1	1	1	1	5
SDDs	1	3	-	1	-	5
DDs	1	1	-	2	1	5
SADs	3	3	2	3	3	14
ADs	3	4	-	4	3	14
SEOs	3	3	4	3	3	16
EOs	3	3	4	3	3	16
Total	16	18	11	17	14	76

Note. DBED = Directorate of Basic Education Ds; DHED = Directorate of Higher Education; DTED = Directorate of Technical Education; DQAS = Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards; DPP = Directorate of Policy and Planning; ES = Education Secretary; Ds= Directors; SDDs = Senior Deputy Directors; DDs = Deputy Directors; SADs = Senior Assistant Directors; ADs = Assistant Directors; SEOs = Senior Education Officers; EOs = Education Officers; - = vacant position