

Original Research Article

CAN GENDER AFFECT PRINCIPALSHIP? LESSONS FROM RESEARCH

ABSTRACT

Over the years, despite the fact that women constitute two-third of the teaching corps in Cameroon, there exists gender bias in the appointment of secondary school principals. Today, there is increasing awareness amongst politicians, women scholars and pressure groups alike, that the trend of anomie has to be reversed, thus, the talk in this paper is to determine if gender affects appointment into principalship; to examine if significant differences exist in the management of personnel based on gender; to ascertain the performance of schools based on gender leadership; and to see if significant differences exist in supervision of instructions between male and female principals. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. A sample of 252 respondents mainly principals and teachers from twelve secondary schools in Bamenda Metropolis were chosen for the study using multi sampling techniques of stratified, purposive and convenient. The chi-square(x^2) goodness-of-fit test was used to verify the four (04) hypotheses at 0.05 alpha level. SPSS version 20.0 was used in computing the data. Findings revealed that gender affected the appointment of principals; male principals manage personnel better than female principals; schools managed by male principals performed better in official examinations than schools managed by female principals and male principals performed better in supervision of instruction activities. Conclusions were reached and some recommendations made. This will be the beginning of a turnaround process that seeks to build up a formidable arsenal of ideas, without which even the slightest progress is impossible, to say nothing about gender and sustainable principalship.

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Key Words: Gender, administration, principalship, leadership, research.

PROBLEM AND SETTING

In 1988, precisely in Beijing, women delegates all over the world met to discuss their rights on gender particularly on gender equality and to define their leadership roles. Leadership can be achieved or ascribed. The concept of leadership has been a perennial topic of concern and investigation in many fields. The leadership of the principal is a key factor in the success of any program in the school. (Lipham & Hoeh, 1974). Knowledge about leadership therefore is a prime factor if an individual is to fulfill effectively the principalship role. Principalship is simply the head of a post-primary institution. It can be a secondary school or college.

According to Lipham and Hoeh (1974), to perform effectively in the principalship, at least two productive alternative stances may be taken. The first and most current views we have termed the foundation of principalship. It draws heavily on recent theories, constructs and models from the basic applied social, behavioural and administrative sciences to describe and deliberate the antecedents, correlates or predictors of the behaviour of the principal and those with whom he works. The second and most typical views termed the functions of the principalship which focuses on the tasks, jobs and activities that occupy the bulk of the principal's time and analysis them according to the major competencies that must be demonstrated by an effective school principal.

The task of the principal can be grouped into five categories, instructional program, staff personnel, student personnel, financial and physical resources and school community relationships (Lipham and Hoeh, 1974; Ndu et al, 1997; Ogunu, 2000; Mgbodile, 2004; Nwankwo, 1981; Tamajong & Fonkeng, 2003 and Olagboye, 2004).

There appears to be some rapprochement among the conceptualization for us to define leadership as that behaviour of an individual which initiates a new

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60 structure in interaction within a social system; it initiates change in the goals,
 61 objectives, configurations, procedures, input processes and ultimately the output
 62 of social systems (Lipham and Hoeh, 1974). Ogunu (2000) summarizes the
 63 definition of leadership as a dynamic process in a group whereby one individual
 64 influences the other to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of group tasks
 65 in a given situation.

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66 Having seen then, to be an effective leader depends on a mastery of the
 67 theories and functions of the leader, it becomes worthwhile to assess the role of
 68 gender in this practice, if there is any. The trait or “Great Man” theory of
 69 leadership has failed to gain universal acceptance because of its failure to
 70 consider the foundational and functional roles of school administrators. The
 71 main focus of an educational administrator is for the administrator to take
 72 leadership in ensuring that each student develops the qualities needed in order to
 73 preserve and strengthen his way of living (Kartz, 1970; Mbiti, 1974).

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74 In Cameroon, the Handbook for Heads of Secondary Schools (1995)
 75 stipulated certain guidelines on the role of principals of which included
 76 management, leadership, spirit of dialogue, creation of links, team spirit, good
 77 relationships, educational planning and decision making. Okorie (1998)
 78 summarises the functions of principals into being a visionary, being able to
 79 promote and protect values, being able to empower teachers, providing
 80 instructional leadership and managing school climate. Similar conclusions were
 81 reached by Fonkeng & Tamajong (2003) and Mbua (2003).

82 Unfortunately, gender gap remains an impediment to potential
 83 institutional improvements (Chliwnaik, 1997). Even though effective leadership
 84 is more behaviorally derived than gender based, gender remains an obstacle to
 85 women seeking and obtaining leadership positions (Getskow, 1996). Schmuck
 86 (1986) identified three sets of concepts that have been used to understand

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87 women's representation in senior posts such as principals: the socialization of
 88 women; organizational constraints on women promotion and theories relating to
 89 gender-based careers, especially in developing countries.

90 Women in leadership confront barriers that men do not realize to exist.
 91 Some myths suggest that women cannot discipline older students, particularly
 92 males; females are too emotional; too weak physically; and males resist
 93 working with females (Whitaker & Lane, 1990).

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94 The scarcity of women in the role of secondary school principals is a
 95 phenomenon worldwide (Coleman, 2001). While women make up at least two-
 96 third of secondary school teachers, they are in the minority in secondary school
 97 administration (Coleman, 2001; McLay and Brown, 2001).

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98 Nchindo (1996) presented a paper on gender inequality in the appointment
 99 of school Heads. In his presentation, he noted that there was gender bias in
 100 appointments of school heads. When you make a survey of female principals in
 101 our schools in Cameroon, you will see that only one-fifth of the women are
 102 appointed principals. It seems the age long stereotype; sex role identity still
 103 remains in full as far as appointments are concerned. There is empirical
 104 evidence to at least the fact that very few females are appointed principals in
 105 Cameroon and world over. This slow growth rate in the number of female
 106 secondary school principals and the concern expressed by gender equality
 107 activist and particularly by women about the nonchalant attitude towards the
 108 appointment of female principals necessitated an investigation.

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109 It is based upon this backdrop that this study has a problem to answer the
 110 question of whether or not there is gender bias in the appointment of principals
 111 in Cameroon.

112

Objectives of the study

The research intended to:

1. Determine if appointment of principals is affected by gender.
2. Examine the difference in management of personnel between male and female principals.
3. Ascertain the performances in official examinations of schools managed by male and female principals.
4. Examine the difference in supervision of instruction between male and female principals

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses stated at a 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

Ho₁: Appointments into the post of secondary school principal is not significantly dependent on gender.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference in management of personnel between male and female principals

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between gender of secondary schoolPrincipal and students' performance in official examinations

Ho₄: There is no significant difference in supervision of instruction between male and female principals.

RESEARCH MODEL

The study is tailored around the management by objectives (MBO) model and Feminist Theory.

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137 Management by Objectives

138 MBO is a planning technique of achieving results through a process by which
 139 superiors and their subordinates participate jointly in setting objectives; in
 140 determining the activities that should be performed in order to realize the
 141 objectives; in setting the target dates for the realization of the set objectives; and
 142 in establishing the procedure for the evaluation of the performance of the
 143 worker with respect to the set objectives. The philosophy behind MBO is that
 144 the ability of an organization to achieve its goals is influenced by the degree to
 145 which the workers within the organization are motivated. Thus, Mali
 146 (1979) describes MBO as “a strategy of planning and setting results in a
 147 direction that management wishes to take while meeting the goals and needs of
 148 its participants”. An educational institution, like any other institution is out to
 149 achieve some objectives which are dove-tail into the national objectives.

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150 Feminist Theory

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151 This theory was propounded by Christine de Pizan in the 15th century and
 152 Mary Wollstonecraft in the 18th century. The theory was historically
 153 predominated by the middle-class white women from Western Europe and
 154 Northern America, which aimed at understanding differences and gender
 155 inequality and fixates on gender, politics and sexuality. The theory focuses on
 156 providing women rights. They are liberal feminists and radical feminists all
 157 advocating workplace rights including equal pay and equal opportunities for
 158 careers. They have opposed domestic violence, sexual harassment and sexual
 159 assault. They maintain that women are oppresses in organizations including the
 160 school set up. Thus, women should be given equal opportunities to hold the
 161 positions of principalship as male counterparts.

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164 METHODOLOGY

165 The study was carried out in Bamenda metropolis of the NorthWest
 166 Region with the highest number of secondary schools in the Region. It adopted
 167 the descriptive survey design and employed the purposive sampling technique
 168 to select twelve (12) secondary schools stratified into seven (07) public, three
 169 (03) Mission and two (02) private schools. All the twelve (12) principals were
 170 chosen for the study while 20 teachers were selected from each of the secondary
 171 schools. This gave a total sample size of 252 respondents. The instrument used
 172 for data collection was a self-developed closed ended 39-items questionnaire.
 173 The questionnaire was found reliable with use of test-re-test on a sample of 20
 174 respondents which gave a correlation value of 0.99. Four research hypotheses
 175 guided the study. The variables were gender effects on appointment of
 176 principals; gender effects on personnel management; gender effects on students'
 177 performance; and gender influence on supervision of instruction. The Chi-
 178 Square (χ^2) goodness of fit test was used to verify the hypotheses at a 0.05 level
 179 of significance (alpha level). SPSS version 20.0 was used in computing the data.

180 **Decision rule:** When the χ^2 calculated is greater than the χ^2 critical value, we
 181 retain the alternative hypothesis (H_a) and reject the null (H_0).

182 FINDINGS

183 **Hypothesis One (H_{01}):** Appointments into the post of secondary school
 184 principal is not significantly dependent on gender.

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189 **Table 1: 6 x 4 Contingency Table on Gender influence on appointment of**
 190 **secondary school principals**

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Categories	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
SA	87.1	63	24.1	580.8	9.2
A	26.9	63	-13.6	1303.2	20.7
D	49.8	63	-13.2	174.2	2.8
SD	88.2	63	25.2	635.0	10.1
Total	252	252	0	2693.2	42.8

Degree of freedom (df) = 3

X^2 calculated = 42.8

Level of significance = 0.05 =

Critical x^2 value = 7.82

Contingency coefficient (C.C) = 0.6

Conclusion: We retain the alternative (H_{a1}) hypothesis and reject the null (H_{o1}), meaning that the appointment into the posts of principalship significantly depends on gender. The contingency coefficient of 0.6 indicates a strong positive relationship. That is, the appointment is greatly on gender (by about 100%).

Hypothesis Two (H_{o2}): There is no significant difference in management of personnel between male and female principals

Table 2: 6 x 4 Contingency Table on Gender effects on secondary school personnel management

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Categories	Observed frequency(O)	Expected frequency(E)	$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
SA	91.7	63	28.7	823.7	13.1
A	35.1	63	-27.9	778.4	12.4
D	44.1	63	-18.9	357.2	5.7
SD	81.1	63	18.1	327.6	5.2
Total	252	252	0	2286.9	36.4

Degree of freedom (df) = 3

X^2 calculated = 36.4

Level of significance = 0.05 =

Critical x^2 value = 7.82

Contingency coefficient (C.C) = 0.4

207

208

209 **Conclusion:** According to the decision rule, we retain the alternative (H_{a2})
 210 hypothesis and reject the null (H_{o2}) since the X^2 calculated is far above the
 211 Critical x^2 value (7.82), meaning that a significant difference exists in the
 212 personnel management styles of male and female principals. Again, a
 213 contingency coefficient of 0.6 indicates a strong positive relationship. That is,
 214 management of personnel is greatly dependent on gender (by about 100%). We
 215 conclude that the significant difference existing between gender and school
 216 personnel management is very high.

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217 **Hypothesis Three(H_{o3}):** There is no significant relationship between gender of
 218 secondary schools Principal and students' performance in official examinations

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219 **Table 3: 6 x 4 Contingency Table on Gender effects on performance in**
 220 **official examinations**

Comment [HH36]: replace of

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Categories	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
SA	92.8	63	29.8	888.1	14.1
A	70.9	63	-7.9	62.4	0.9
D	49.5	63	-13.5	182.3	2.9
SD	38.8	63	-24.2	585.6	9.3
Total	252	252	0	1718.4	27.3

221

Degree of freedom (df) = 3

 X^2 calculated = 27.3

222

Level of significance = 0.05 =

Critical x^2 value = 7.82

223

Contingency coefficient (C.C) = 0.1

224

225 **Conclusion:** We retain the alternative (H_{a3}) hypothesis and reject the null (H_{o3})
 226 since the X^2 calculated (27.3) is far above the Critical x^2 value (7.82). Thus,
 227 there is a significant relationship between gender of principal and students

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performance in official examinations. The C.C value of 0.1 is low, indicating a weak positive relationship between the gender of principal and students' academic performance.

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Hypothesis Four(Ho₄): There is no significant difference in supervision of instruction between male and female principals.

Table 4: 6 x 4 Contingency Table on Gender effects on supervision of instruction.

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Categories	Observed frequency (O)	Expected frequency (E)	$O - E$	$(O - E)^2$	$\frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$
SA	65.3	63	2.3	5.3	0.1
A	37.3	63	-25.7	660.5	10.5
D	59	63	-4	16	0.3
SD	90.4	63	27.4	750.8	11.9
Total	252	252	0	1432.6	22.8

Degree of freedom (df) = 3

X^2 calculated = 22.8

Level of significance = 0.05 =

Critical x^2 value = 7.82

Contingency coefficient (C.C) = 0.3

Conclusion: We retain the alternative (Ha₄) hypothesis and reject the null (Ho₄) since the X^2 calculated (22.8) is far above the Critical x^2 value (7.82). Thus, there is a significant relationship between gender of principal and supervision of instruction. The C.C value of 0.3 is low, indicating a weak positive relationship between the gender of principal and supervision of instruction. Thus, students managed by male principals perform better in official exams than those managed by female principals.

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DISCUSSION

Findings based on hypothesis one revealed that appointment into the post of secondary school principal is significantly dependent on gender. The million

dollar question is why this disparity when women have the same skills, experience, competence and qualification as their males counterparts. Aspects like women instability, no authoritative voice, opposition, lack of self-esteem and domestic responsibilities were identified. This is in congruent with the feminist theory. Aiseberg and Harrington had earlier noted that women lack confidence in their management skills.

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Secondly, findings based on hypothesis two (HO₂) revealed that gender seriously affected personnel management strategies. Male principals were found to manage personnel better than female counterparts. This again ties with the Feminist theory and in congruent with the findings of Schmuck (1980) and Cornner (1992). However, Mbua (2003) did not show any effect of gender on personnel management of schools so far as each understood the functional values and theories beneath.

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Hypothesis three (Ho₃) wanted to know whether gender of principals affected students' performance in official examinations. Findings revealed that schools managed by female principals performed better than those managed by female counterparts. Marshall (1984) had earlier stressed the fact that women are always occupied with domestic affairs. Mbua (2003) had noted that the selection, orientation, placement and counseling of students constitute an important function of school principals not depending on gender.

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Finally, findings from hypothesis four (Ho₄) revealed that male principals supervised instruction better than female principals. Supervision of instruction is very important for teacher effectiveness (Glickman, 1985). Effective supervision necessitates good working relationship between supervisor and supervisee (Ayodele, 2002; Reamer, 1989).

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CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

275 Having probed into the meaning of leadership, school administration and
 276 principalship, one can see that they all mean the same thing. However, it has
 277 been noticed that, women, despite their very high population amongst teachers
 278 are always left behind in principalship appointment which depends to a very
 279 large extent on foundational social science and administrative theories and
 280 functional values (Coleman, 2001). In conclusion, even though empirical
 281 findings revealed that male principals perform better than female principals in
 282 personnel management, supervision of instruction and that students managed by
 283 male principals may perform better in official examinations, these perceptions
 284 of teachers may be stereotype. It is important to note that one most important
 285 function of educational leaders or administrators or principals is that of financial
 286 management where women have been found to be reliable, trustworthy and
 287 excellent.

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288 Based on the forgoing, the following recommendations are made:

- 289 1. The government and other educational stakeholders should appoint
 290 principals based on qualification, hard work, experience, capability and
 291 moral rectitude. Again, gender equality should be ensured and women
 292 above child bearing age should be given this responsibility.
- 293 2. In-service training should be given to female teachers to ensure gender
 294 balance in administration. Equally, tertiary education should be opened to
 295 all sexes to ensure representation especially at post graduate levels.
 296 Professional school counseling should also be intensified to encourage
 297 female teachers to take positions of leadership.
- 298 3. The self-defeatist attitude of women should be discouraged in staff
 299 meetings. Equally, female principals should work in collegiality with
 300 their counterpart and be ready to adopt participatory decision-making
 301 approaches. This would develop potentials and build team spirit.

4. Teachers should be advised to give equal support and cooperation to their principals irrespective of gender, feminist ideology and stereotype attitudes.

REFERENCES

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Comment [HH59]: It should be Arial, Bold, 11 font, left aligned, caps)
Here one example of the reference is presented.
Please follow it:
Hugo JT, Mondal J. Parallels between tissue repair. Philadelphia: Lippincott Williams. 2002; 16:4. / 2002;49(2).

Comment [HH60]: Don't use , after the last names

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Comment [HH62]: Dates should come at the end of the reference without any ().

- 323 Arinze, F.O. (1997). "Application of Management by Objectives (MBO)".
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355 Principalship. Yaounde: Presse Universitaire d'Afrique.

Comment [HH63]: Don't use . between letters of the name

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Comment [HH65]: Don't use ()

Comment [HH66]: Lowercase ED: ed

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356 **Webography**

357 <http://www.fags.org/copyright/a-comparative> analysis of difference between
358 male and female administrators. Accessed on 12/02/14

359 <http://www.b/s.gov/oco/ocos007-htm/Educational> administration. Retrieved on
360 12/02/14.

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362 Rules. Retrieved on 23/04/2014.

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