

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers towards placement of women as Educational Administrators

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Abstract

The issue of women in administrative positions has been a matter of concern worldwide. This is because it had a negative impact on female capabilities with regard to their leadership and management roles in different organizations in general and that of educational institutions in particular. In many countries, including India, women are regarded as people who cannot lead and manage schools as men can do. Women are considered fit only to discharge their teaching duties in the classrooms. Although women comprise over two-thirds of the teacher population, men dominate the positions of school administration. Studies on the representation of women in school leadership positions are not new. But, it remains unexplored in Indian context. The present study is intended to explore the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators in relation to certain demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution. Descriptive Survey method has been adopted in this study. The sample consisting of 300 teachers (150 Male and 150 Female) from 30 secondary schools of Visakhapatnam district has been selected using Stratified Random Sampling method. The data were collected using a questionnaire developed and standardized by the researchers. The tool consists of 36 items (12 items from each one of the three areas) to find out the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators. The data were analyzed using different statistical techniques like means, standard deviations and t-tests. The major findings of the study revealed that the variables –gender and location of the school have a significant positive influence on the perceptions of teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators. However, age and teaching experience have no influence on the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.

Key words: Secondary School Teachers, Educational Administrators, Educational leadership cont.....2

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I. Introduction

The under-representation of qualified women in leadership positions has created a gender gap that exists not only in education but in many areas of the workplace. In the twenty-first century, women are still underrepresented in educational leadership positions; and their small share of leadership positions in schools has not changed significantly in recent decades (Kruger, 2008; Marczynski and Gates 2013). As women began to climb the ladder in their organizations, balancing their family life with leadership roles has become a problem (Naidoo and Perumal, 2014). One of the concepts that express all these career barriers for women is the ‘glass ceiling syndrome’, wherein invisible obstacles fueled by prejudices that prevent women from reaching senior management positions (Wirth, 2001). Women who manage to break the glass ceiling face many challenges in leadership and develop a range of qualifications and skills to deal with these challenges (Smith, 2008).

The stereotypic image of a leader was found to be equal to that of a male, even though many theories argue that the most effective leader should behave androgynously. Beason (1992) reported that majority of female secondary school principals obtained their first administrative position later than male principals and faced problems of sex-discrimination, exclusion from the old boys’ network, negative attitude towards women in administration, lack of role models and lack of professional networks. Eagly and Karau’s (2002) role congruency theory says that when raters experience incongruence between the behavior they expect of a leader and what they expect of a woman, they under-value the female leader’s behavior and performance and prejudice toward female leaders. The result of Agezo’s study (2010) explores Ghanaian context and reveals that women are not perceived as leader. They are perceived home makers and not the good decision makers. In South Africa, women principals are discriminated against simply on the basis of their sex, and have been stereotype portrayed

as weak, passive, dependent, soft hearted and good follower and men as strong, independent, and capable of making sound decisions. According to Shakes shaft, Irby, Brown, Geron, and Ballenger (2007), barriers to women in educational leadership are poor self-image of women, lack of aspiration and motivation, family and home responsibility, working conditions and sex discrimination, lack of support socialization and sex role stereotyping, preparation programmer and curriculum materials.

Women in Educational Leadership

India has women as half of the human capital; but it also has the largest number of illiterates as compared to several other countries in the world. The literacy rate of Indian females is 65.46% as compared to 82.14% of males as per the Census of India (2011). In India, gender inequality in education and training; reinforced by social attitudes; has largely contributed to occupational segregation, whereby men and women are streamed with different trades, profession and jobs. For example, in teaching profession, majority of teachers are women; but one finds very few women at top level positions such as Vice Chancellors, Directors of Public Instruction, Deans Principals (Vimala Ramachandran, 2003). The stereotype that 'Women teach and men Manage' seems true for current educational organization in India. Though, women's movements, introduction of gender sensitive policies and programs and educational budget have challenged the male-dominance structure and gender-inequalities in developing countries (Oplatke, 2006), but girls are still missing out on primary and secondary education in far greater numbers than boys. Among those women who do receive the benefits of health and education, many are unable to contribute fully and productively to the economy because of the barriers to their entry into the workforce or barriers to accessing positions of leadership. A review of related literature provides us the scenario of placement of women as educational administrators.

Review of Related Studies

The studies carried out earlier by the other researchers that aim at finding out the perceptions of teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators have been examined; and a brief review of the same is provided in the following paragraphs.

Wilard Nyathi (2021) conducted a study to investigate the feelings of secondary school teachers towards the promotion of women into leadership positions in the Eswatini Region of Manzini. A total of 300 respondents were considered of which 53% were male and 47% were female. The research instrument used was the questionnaire which had both close-ended and open-ended questions. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to interpret the data. The study revealed that the majority of male teachers have negative attitudes towards female education leaders. More female teachers support their fellow females in administration. The study recommends that the Government should promote women on merit so that they may be respected by their workmates. All administrators in promotion should attend in-service workshops to up-date them on current leadership trends. Teachers, particularly the male ones, should be sensitized on gender equality in order to change their negative attitudes towards female leaders.

Mert, P. (2021) conducted a study on 'Leadership characteristics of female school principals according to female teachers'. In this study, the perspectives of female teachers working in private schools who are gradually raising their educational levels are discussed in depth about female head teachers. For this purpose, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 37 female teachers working in private schools in the Anatolian part of Istanbul selected using purposive sampling method. The data were analyzed using content analysis, one of the qualitative analysis methods. The researcher identified three main themes for the investigation. These themes include the characteristics of female leaders; the competencies of female leaders; and the impact on the work environment. Under the theme of 'characteristics of female leaders', there are five categories: being selfish, forming problematic working relationships, being detail-obsessed, being jealous, acting emotionally; under the theme of 'competencies of female leaders': they lead well, their leadership skills are weak, they cannot be fair and impartial, they are not solution-oriented. The theme of the impact of female leaders on the work environment include the categories: a chaotic environment; communication is important, supportive environment.

The study revealed that not all female and male principals have the same characteristics. It is essential to examine the behavior of the leader without putting gender-related factors in focus. At the same time, school principals must be consistent in the decisions they make and implement. Must demonstrate leadership with a professional approach. This research examined the behaviors of female school principals from the point of view of female teachers working in private schools and presented different views on this issue. However, the study group only includes private schools in Istanbul. It is suggested to conduct further research in other types of schools or focus on principals' stereotypes of age and professional seniority, apart from gender, and to what extent these stereotypes predict teachers' performance.

Getachew Alebachew Mekonnen (2021) opined that women face multi-faceted challenges in participating in management positions due to different factors. The purpose of this study is to investigate factors that affect participation of women in leadership positions in Bahir Dar city administration. To address this objective, the study adopted mixed research methods with descriptive survey design. A total of 190 women public civil servants were taken as a sample. Moreover, a key informant interview with women in leadership positions was conducted. In addition, FGD were also a very important data-gathering instrument for this study. The findings revealed that there are three major factors for women's low participation in leadership positions, i.e., institutional, socio-cultural and individual factors. Those factors have decisive contributions for low participation of women in leadership positions. With proper implementation of women's policies in the organization, equal treatment during assignment of leadership positions and creating awareness in society that woman is capable for leadership positions would certainly help women take administrative roles.

Iyekolo et al. (2020) conducted a survey of secondary school teachers' attitude towards women leadership of secondary schools in Ilorin Metropolis. The study population comprises all public secondary school teachers in Ilorin Metropolis. From the population, random sampling technique was used to sample a total of 500 secondary school teachers across 20 randomly selected public secondary schools in the metropolis. The samples were further stratified on the basis of gender and years of experience. Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire entitled 'Women School Leadership Questionnaire' (WSLQ); and the collected data were analyzed using percentages and t-test statistics. Findings revealed that 35.4% (n=177) secondary school teachers preferred women as principals; 37.4% (n=187) as Vice-Principals and just 9.8% (n=47) never wanted women as school leaders. On the other hand, 81% (n=405) of respondents believed that women school leadership is characterized by financial prudence; 29.8% (n=149) agreed women school leadership encouraged collaborative approach to school governance; 12% (n=60) believed it led to domination of school activities by the women; and 40.2% (n=201) believed having women as principals made schools well organized. At the level of hypotheses testing, it was found that secondary school teachers' preference of women as principals did not differ on the basis of gender of the teachers but differed on the length of teachers' teaching experience. It was therefore, concluded that appointing women as school principals may not be rejected by male and female subordinates as such appointment may even bring about financial prudence and organized school environment at secondary school level. Thus, it was recommended that more women should be encouraged and appointed to become principals in Nigerian secondary schools.

Need and Importance of the study

The teaching profession is often viewed as a more female friendly work environment as compared to other professions: as Informational Technology, business, and industry, which are frequently described as male-dominated and less woman friendly.

Women exercise their power in a more 'facilitative' way rather than in a 'dominant way'. Women head teachers identify themselves as caring, creative and aware of individual differences. All women agree that their leadership is about caring for others rather than leading others. Male principals, on the other hand, see themselves as more defensive and aggressive. They think their work is about leading, testing, and evaluating others rather than about caring for others. Female principals are more concerned about harmonious staff relationships and develop a friendlier atmosphere in the school.

Female leadership has steadily increased over the years; but continues to be underrepresented in an occupation that is predominately women. The under-representation of women as school leaders is due to sociocultural traditions such as patriarchy in the education system. It may also be due to non-acceptance of leadership of women by other women as well as men colleagues, hesitation on the part of the women to take risks as school leaders, lack of family support and other social compulsions, cultural context of the society where competitiveness is not encouraged or accepted and many other factors also limit the women from aspiring and seeking an identity as school leader.

In this context, the researchers felt it necessary to explore the perceptions of teachers working in secondary schools towards placement of women as educational administrators. The study makes an attempt to know the influence of certain demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution on the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women in administrative positions.

Objectives of the study

1. To study the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.
2. To examine the influence of demographic variables – gender, age, teaching experience and location of the institution on the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.

Hypotheses of the study

1. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of male and female teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.
2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards placement of women as educational administrators.
3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards placement of women as educational administrators.
4. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of teachers working in rural and urban areas towards placement of women as educational administrators.

Limitations of the study

The study is limited to find out Teachers' perception towards placement of women as educational administrators in respect of 300 teachers working in 30 secondary schools located in the rural as well as urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh. Further, the study is confined to find out the influence of four demographic variables, viz., gender, age, teaching experience and location of the school on the perceptions of teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.

II. Methodology

(a) Method of Research

The researchers followed the Survey Method of the descriptive research for the present investigation.

(b) Sample

The sample of the study consists of 300 teachers (150 Male and 150 Female) from the selected secondary schools located in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh using Stratified Random Sampling technique.

(c) Research Tool

The researchers used a well prepared and standardized questionnaire consisting of 36 items on three perceptual dimensions of teachers to collect data for the present investigation.

(d) Administration of the Tool

The research tool consisting of 36 items on three different perceptual dimensions, viz., Teachers' beliefs on administrative jobs, Home conditions and Working environment, is administered to 300 teachers (150 Male teachers and 150 Female teachers) working in 30 selected secondary schools in the rural as well as urban areas in Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh.

(e) Analysis and Interpretation of data

The investigators used different statistical techniques such as Mean, Standard Deviation and 't'-tests for data analysis and interpretation.

Table showing Mean, SD and 't'-values on the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators

S. No.	Variable		N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio/ F-value	Result
1	Gender	Male Female	150 150	107.43 115.16	29.28 29.61	2.31*	* Significant at 0.05 level

2	Age	Below 40 yrs. 40 yrs. & above	160 140	111.50 112.36	32.07 32.42	0.23*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
3	Teaching Experience	Less than 10 yrs. 10 yrs. & above	190 110	111.66 112.50	34.16 31.56	0.22*	*Not Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels
4	Location of the institution	Rural urban	170 130	106.74 117.12	33.04 30.62	2.81*	*Significant at 0.05 and 0.01 levels

III. Findings of the study

1. There is significant difference in the perceptions of male and female secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.

Female teachers working in secondary schools perceived higher towards placement of women as educational administrators as compared to their male counterparts.

2. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of secondary school teachers aged below 40 years and those aged 40 years and above towards placement of women as educational administrators.

3. There is no significant difference in the perceptions of secondary school teachers with an experience of less than 10 years and those with 10 years and above towards placement of women as educational administrators.

4. There is significant difference in the perceptions of secondary school teachers working in rural and urban areas towards placement of women as educational administrators.

Teachers working in Urban secondary schools perceived higher towards placement of women as educational administrators as compared to their counterparts working in Rural secondary schools.

IV. Conclusions

From the findings of the study, it is concluded that 'gender' and 'location of the school' have a significant positive relationship with the perceptions of secondary school teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators. However, 'age' and 'teaching experience' have no influence on the perceptions of teachers towards placement of women as educational administrators.

V. Recommendations

The study has suggested that the teachers should possess a favorable attitude and right perceptions towards placement of women as educational administrators.

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