

**CAUSES OF UNDER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN THE HEADSHIP
OF MIXED PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYERI COUNTY, KENYA.**

BY

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ABSTRACT

Under the new constitutional dispensation in Kenya, the gender distribution in school headship has not been achieved as required. The third gender rule has not been met in the school headship among the mixed secondary schools. One of the most common reasons presented in the literature for the under representation of women in school administration was the negative perception of women's leadership. The study aimed at determining the causes of under representation of women in leadership positions in mixed public secondary schools in Nyeri County in Kenya. The study also investigated the factors influencing female's participation in the management of mixed public secondary schools, teachers' attitude towards female principals and to find out the extent to which schools are gender responsive to leadership especially to female principals. The study was conducted in Nyeri County in Kenya. Nyeri County constituted 8 sub-counties. The target population was 162 mixed public secondary schools in the county. Out of the 162 mixed public secondary schools, 126 (78%) were headed by male principals while 36 (22%) were headed by female principals. 40 mixed public secondary schools selected from 4 districts headed by 20 female and 20 male principals made up the sample population which constituted 25% of the target population. The participants were the Principals/Deputy Principals (DP), Heads of Departments (HOD), District Education Officers (DEOs) and the County Director of Education (CDE). Sampling technique applied for selecting 4 sub-counties was convenient sampling, 20 female principals were purposively sampled, male principals were conveniently sampled. Simple random sampling was applied to select 2 HODs from the sampled schools. Purposive sampling was used on selecting 4 DEOs and saturated sampling applied on 1 CDE. The sample size was 125 participants. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. A pilot study was conducted to ensure reliability and validity of the instruments. Content validity was improved through experts' judgment. Data collected was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). The study determined that with a mean of 4 for principals and HODs, teachers were indifferent between women and men leadership in the region under study. The study also established that leadership does not depend on ones gender with a mean of 5 for principals and HODs. The study recommends that strategies to reduce male chauvinism in education as well as minimizing cultural stigmatization about women leadership. The study recommends a deeper analysis on the role played by TSC in ensuring gender equity in education management.