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Gender Differences among Principals in Corruption Prevention Strategies in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya: The Case of Schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties

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Abstract:

The gender differences among principals regarding corruption prevention strategies in education particularly in secondary schools in Kenya is not clearly demonstrated and documented. The menace of corruption continues to ravage secondary schools in Kenya. The differences among principal's in respect to their corruption prevention strategies is not clearly established and documented. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the gender differences among principals in corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives, which were to; examine the principals' corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua counties and compare the principal's corruption prevention strategies by gender from Nakuru and Nyandarua in Kenya. The study tested the null hypothesis that, H_0 : There is no statistically significant difference among principals by gender in corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised of 420 principals (162 male and 118 female). The sample size was determined using Cochran (1977) sampling formula which yielded a total of 321 respondents (162 males and 90 females). Data was collected using a questionnaire with 10 items in five-point Likert scale. Validity of the research instruments was ascertained by use of expert opinion while reliability was computed using Cronbach alpha coefficient which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.791 which was higher than the 0.7 recommended by Kothari as the threshold of acceptance. Data was analysed using the descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. The results of the study on a scale of 1 to 5, showed that female principals had relatively better corruption prevention strategies with a mean of 4.15 while male principals scored 4.01. To ascertain whether these means were statistically significant, t-test was computed which yielded $p\text{-value} = 0.041$ which was less than $\alpha\text{-value}$ of .05. Hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The conclusion was that there are gender differences among principals in regard to corruption prevention strategies in Kenya. It is recommended that there is compelling need to provide capacity building especially among the male principals through psycho educational techniques like socialization and personality shaping in corruption prevention strategies in Kenya.

Keywords: Corruption, corruption prevention strategies, capacity building, gender, socialization

1. Introduction

The gender differences among principals in corruption prevention in education and particular in secondary schools in Kenya is not empirically established and documented. In the contemporary society, there has been incessant advocacy for gender parity in leadership fired by the need to promote inclusivity among human beings. Though there is strength in diversity, great value resides in the way in which either gender complements each other especially in the prevention of corruption in society particularly in education. There is extensive consensus among educationists and stakeholders in education that corruption poses the greatest threat to the integrity and quality of education. Corruption in its diverse manifestations in education not undermines the trust placed in the educational process, devalues academic qualifications and compromises the future of the learners (UNDP, 2012). All educational stakeholders are obliged to carry implicit responsibility for identifying, addressing and helping to eradicate corrupt practices in schools. Glendinning, Orim and King (2019) assert that in schools, head teachers are bestowed with the responsibility of supporting integrity, together with upholding quality and standards at the school level. Consequently, the head teacher's commitment and leadership on integrity are essential prerequisites for addressing corruption and its attendant malpractices within the school system, its outcomes and effects. UNESCO(2006) asserts that as a result of the growing recognition on the importance of education in recent years, the funding for the sector has been increasing. More international and philanthropic organizations are participating in the implementation of educational policies. Political consensus has been

reached among international and local actors on the importance of striving to achieve universal access to education and improve its quality (UNESCO, 2006). In spite of the increased attention to the sector, there is lacuna on essential strategies that can effectively be applied to control corruption which is believed to complicate realization of the universal access, relevance, quality and gender parity global goals of education. This paradox of poor educational outcomes may be partly explained by corruption and unethical practices that inhibits the implementation and achievement of the global goals, initiatives and aspirations.

The vice of corruption in schools manifests itself in different forms that may include diversion of public resources to serve private purposes of administrators, teachers and other stakeholders in education. Unethical behavioral tendencies such as bribery, nepotism, fraudulent procurement procedures, misappropriation and theft of funds abounds in secondary schools (Khan, 2004). In the United States, teachers cheating on standardized tests pervert incentive programs which have the likely results of their students receiving a substandard education (Jacob & Levitt, 2003). Chua (1999) report that in the Philippines, teacher candidates bribe educational authorities to be hired. Such abhorrent behaviour may likely result in the outcome that those hired may not necessarily be the candidates that are most capable to offer effective teaching and quality education. In Mexico, embezzlement of public education funds often results in insufficient distribution of textbooks to the schools (Martinez, 2004). Such a situation may greatly influence the academic achievement of students. In Africa, high attrition rates result, in part, from illegal enrollment fees (Cockroft, 1998). Charging illegal fees has the potential of fueling dropping out of school from among students due to their inability to afford the levies especially those from the poor families.

In Uganda, Kenya and India, the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism is a common problem in rural communities. Teacher absenteeism has the likelihood to deny children the opportunity to learn the intended curriculum (Reinikka & Smith, 2004; Banerjee and Duflo, 2005). The result is typically an under-provision of essential education inputs relative to the resources budgeted to procure them. This contributes to social inequalities across the breadth and depth of the social structure and spectrum of the society greatly affecting the rural poor. Therefore, identifying possible sources of ineffectiveness in the allocation of these resources becomes a key task for school principals as the accounting officers and administrators in their respective schools.

Eckel & Fullbrunn (2015) argue that women are less tolerant to corrupt practices compared with men. They explain that this is because women are inherently less corrupt due to their innate psychological orientation for better self-control, risk aversion and lower willingness to engage with criminal or corrupt officials. However, Frank, Lambsdorff & Boehm (2011) cautions citizen on the notion that women can be better managers against corruption on account of being inherently less corrupt is a way of reinforcing gender stereotypes and oversimplifying corruption. Reiss and Mitra (1998) support this view and add that though behavioural studies have established that women have higher scores on integrity tests, and display higher norms of ethical behaviour compared to men, this alone is not a qualification to better management strategies towards corruption prevention. Dollar et. al. (2001) hypothesize that women are more likely to sacrifice personal gains for the common good hence less prone to be involved in corrupt behaviour. Alhassan-Alolo (2007) showed that male and female public servants in Ghana have similar attitudes towards corruption and are equally likely to engage in it. He hypothesizes that the question if an individual engages in corruption is a question of opportunity, networks and social norms, rather than one of gender differences. Alatas et. al. (2009) came to similar conclusions, using an experimental research design in India and Indonesia. The authors established that there are no significant gender differences in the attitudes towards corruption.

From the international, regional and national levels, there are voices on gender differences among school administrators and managers pertaining to how they manage the vice of corruption. The studies are biased on the innate traits of the educational managers in terms of their attitudes and mindset as opposed to the strategies that either gender utilize in combating the menace. There is paucity of empirical studies on the gender differences among principals regarding the strategies they use in combating the vice of corruption in secondary schools in the world and Kenya in particular. This study hence sought to evaluate the gender differences among principals in corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The role of gender in the fight against corruption especially in education continues to exercise the minds of educationists and policy makers in the contemporary society. In the modern society, there has been aggressive advocacy for gender parity and inclusion in all sectors yet its value has not been empirically proven in regard to corruption prevention strategies. Available literature demonstrates gender differences among school administrators and managers towards corruption in terms of their attitudes and personality traits. However, a lacuna exists regarding strategies used by either gender in corruption prevention especially in education. In order to better support the development of students to achieve higher levels of learning, transparency and accountability in education is fundamental. Studying corruption in education is relevant because it may increase public awareness on its deleterious effects and also provide political support to implement anti-corruption initiatives in the sector. Unfortunately, research of corruption in education has largely escaped scholarly attention. The limited available research in schools suffers from the lack of reliable data and from a missing link in regard to gender differences to describe the particularities of corrupt practices in education. Thus, this study intends to fill this gap with regard to gender differences among principals in corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in Kenya.

2. Methodology

The study adopted the correlational research design. The Zimbardo (2007) Lucifer effect theory guided the study. The target population comprised of 420 principals (162 male and 118 female). The sample size was determined using Cochran (1977) sampling formula which yielded a total of 321 respondents (162 males and 90 females). Data was collected using a questionnaire with 10 items in a five-point Likert scale. Validity of the research instruments was ascertained by use of expert opinion while reliability was computed using Cronbach alpha coefficient which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.791 which was greater than Kothari 0.7 recommended threshold of acceptance. Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 20.0. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were used. Inferential statistics used was t-test. Research findings were presented using narration and tables.

2.1. Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives, which were to;

- Examine the principals' corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua counties,
- Compare the principal's corruption prevention strategies by gender from Nakuru and Nyandarua in Kenya.

2.2. Hypothesis

The study tested the following null hypothesis;

- H0: There is no statistically significant difference among principals in corruption prevention strategies by gender and county of origin in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya.

2.3. Empirical Literature Review

There exists aggressive advocacy for gender parity and inclusion in leadership in all its diversity in the contemporary modern society at the global regional and national levels. The value that accrues to society from gender parity and inclusion cannot be overemphasized yet there is paucity in empirical evidence especially regarding its significance in the prevention of corruption in education. Most studies on gender differences in prevention of corruption is biased towards attitudes and personality traits of the administrators and school managers. Eckel & Fullbrunn (2015) argue that women are less tolerant to corrupt practices compared with men. Bjarnegard (2013) concur with this view and add that it is simply a question of access to opportunities for corrupt behaviours that brings about differences in the vice between men and women. He explains that the reason why most women may be not corrupt as opposed to men is due to the fact that they may have limited economic networks that support the vice. To Bjarnegard (2013) this focus on the inherent gender differences on susceptibility to corruption is not just a theoretical discussion but has fundamental impacts on women's lives and anti-corruption initiatives. Goetz, (2017) agrees that there is no clear evidence that women are inherently less corrupt and that their concern to help and to please, cannot in anyway be construed as abilities for good management. Hazarika (2016) continues this argument and notes that traits ascribed to women once viewed as making for moral weakness are now seen as cornerstones of moral strength, that have implications in their performance in public office.

It may make little sense to consider women morally superior if notions of morality are mutable, adding that perhaps it is more useful to speak of honesty than morality (Echazu, 2010). Echazu (2010) further argues that differences in corruption are much more rooted in power imbalances. Where one group is dominant the other group will be much more intolerant of this group's misbehaviour. Without changing the system, simply increasing the number of women might therefore even have the opposite effect and lead to more corruption. The verdict is still out on the role women that can and should play in anti-corruption. However, it is clear that this discussion has deflected attention from the big question of gendered impacts of corruption (UNDP, 2012). Ellis, Manuel and Blackden (2006) point out that there is little data available pertaining to gender differences in corruption management practices in learning institutions. Arising from this apparent lacuna in information regarding gender differences in corruption prevention strategies, the present study set out to examine whether there existed differences regarding how male and female school principals combatted corruption in their jurisdictions.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study were analyzed in accordance with the stated objectives and the null hypothesis that guided the study discussed as follows;

a). The first objective of the study was to examine the principals' corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua counties in Kenya. Corruption prevention strategies were rated using 10 items in a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agreed (1), Agree (2), Undecided (3), Disagree (4) and 5-Strongly Disagree (5). The responses obtained were used to compute frequencies, mean scores ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (s) for each of the 10 statements. The mean scores ranged from 1-5 and were interpreted as follows; 1.00 -2.33 indicated that the implementation of the attribute was to a small extent, 2.33- 3.66 to a moderate extent and 3.66 to 5.00 to a great extent. In this study, the Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) levels were combined and labelled 'Agree (A)' while the Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D) levels were collapsed together and renamed 'Disagree (D).'

The results of data analysis are presented in Table 1. The findings of the study revealed that majority of respondents 181(65.6%) agreed that the school had an audit and financial committee of BOM, 78(28.3%) disagreed and

17(6.2%) were undecided. The overall mean score from these responses was ($\bar{x} = 3.27$) which implied that the strategy was implemented to a small extent. On whether the school kept class register to monitor student's enrolment, 267(96.7%) agreed, 6(2.2%) disagreed and 3(1.1%) were undecided. The strategy yielded a mean score ($\bar{x} = 4.22$). The implication was that the strategy was implemented to a great extent.

Asked whether the school had the teachers' attendance register, 262(96.3%) agreed, 6(2.2%) were undecided and 3(1.1%) were undecided. The overall mean score was ($\bar{x} = 4.2$). The interpretation was that the strategy was implemented to a great extent. Pertaining to the mitigation of teaching time lost during teacher absenteeism, 254(92.7%) agreed, 12(4.4%) were undecided and 8(2.9%) disagreed. The mean score was ($\bar{x} = 4.21$). The conclusion was that thus the strategy was implemented to great extent. On whether schools had a stick and timetabled supervision of examinations, 262(94.9%) agreed, 8(2.9%) disagreed and 6(2.2%) were undecided. The strategy had the mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.17$). The interpretation was that the strategy was implemented to a great extent. On whether schools adhered to government procurement procedures, 252(92.0%) agreed, 16(5.8%) disagreed and 6(2.2%) were undecided while the mean score was ($\bar{x} = 4.15$). The implication was that the strategy was implemented to a great extent. Regarding whether payment of procured goods was accompanied with required documentation 259(93.8%) agreed, 14(5.1%) were undecided and 3(0.7%) disagreed which produced a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.26$). This meant that the strategy was implemented to a great extent.

Asked whether the school kept store ledgers 259(94.9%) agreed, 11(4.0%) were undecided and 3(1.1%) disagreed. The mean score for the strategy was ($\bar{x} = 4.23$). The implication was that the strategy was implemented to a great extent. Pertaining to adherence to the constitutional dictate of 30% gender rule in recruitment, 249(90.2%) agreed, 14(5.1%) were undecided and 8(2.9%) disagreed. The mean score was ($\bar{x} = 4.06$). This meant that the strategy was implemented to a great extent. On existence of QIC of goods procured by the school, 240(88.2%) agreed, 10(3.7%) were undecided and 9(3.3%) disagreed; mean score ($\bar{x} = 3.96$) indicated that the strategy was implemented to a small extent. The overall computed mean score and standard deviation for all the ten items on corruption prevention strategies was ($\bar{x} = 4.08, s = .54$) which indicated that the respondents on average rated corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools as greatly above average.

		Disagree	Undecided	Agree	n	$\bar{x}$	s
1.	Existence of audit and financial committee of BOM	78(28.3%)	17(6.2%)	181(65.6%)	276	3.27	1.30
2.	Class register for student's enrolment	6(2.2%)	3(1.1%)	267(96.7%)	276	4.22	.62
3.	Teachers attendance register	3(1.1%)	6(2.2%)	262(96.3%)	271	4.27	.55
4.	Mitigation of teaching time lost during teacher absenteeism	8(2.9%)	12(4.4%)	254(92.7%)	274	4.21	.74
5.	Strick and timetabled supervision of exams	8(2.9%)	6(2.2%)	262(94.9%)	276	4.17	.60
6.	Adherence of government procurement procedure	16(5.8%)	6(2.2%)	252(92.0%)	274	4.15	.75
7.	Payment of goods accompanied by the required documents	3(0.7%)	14(5.1%)	259(93.8%)	276	4.26	.60
8.	Existence of store ledgers	3(1.1%)	11(4.0%)	259(94.9%)	273	4.23	.57
9.	Adherence to 30% gender rule in recruitment	8(2.9%)	14(5.1%)	249(90.2%)	276	4.06	.74
10.	Existence of QIC of goods procured by the school	9(3.3%)	10(3.7%)	240(88.2%)	272	3.96	.90

Table 1: Corruption Prevention Strategies used by Secondary School Principals

Overall mean ($\bar{x}$) = 4.08, standard deviation (s) = .54

The overall research results indicated that the public secondary schools were implementing corruption prevention strategies greatly. The implications demonstrate that the strategies put in place to combat corruption are robust and being implemented in a great manner. Yet the vice persists. This presents a complicated contradiction which requires in-depth analysis and examination. Probably the explanation is that corruption being a human behaviour is difficult to control through legislations and procedures external to the process of socialization and the shaping of personality of the individual. Corruption prevention strategies are aimed at reducing opportunities for engaging in corrupt practices by eliminating the loopholes and avenues of corruption. This ensures that chances of engaging in corruption are reduced because proper control measures are put in place and that incidents of corrupt practices do not succeed. However, the sustainable and effective control measure resides in inculcating values and ethos in individuals through appropriate socialization and moulding of personality in individuals (Ringera, 2007). This is because, strategies such as requiring documentations to support payments, keeping registers or mitigation for lost teaching time to name but a few, may not be fool proof since the concerned parties can fabricate such data when requested from them.

These findings support previous studies such as Hallak and Poisson (2007); Levacic and Downes (2004) and Ochse (2004) which found that corruption at school level is a major concern because corruption prevention strategies seemed not to be working. As a result, fraud in the embezzlement and misuse of funds, school fees, donations were prevalent where cash was handled. Some of the listed common examples of fraud are taking place in schools are theft of money, false claims for travels, unauthorized purchase of items of equipment for personal use or gain, improper use of petty cash for personal use, nepotism, processing false invoices to non-existent suppliers and pocketing the proceeds.

Mobegi, Odigi and Simatwa (2012) concur with these finding and acknowledges that the strategies used to fight corruption were weak. This was partly due to poor financial administration by head teachers at schools as a result of the ignorance of financial management procedures. The situation contributed to financial mismanagement and misappropriation, weak internal control mechanisms such as receipting of school fees, missing fees registers, irregular auditing of school funds and personal gains of head teachers.

b) The second objective compared the principal's corruption prevention strategies by gender from Nakuru and Nyandarua in Kenya. The study computed the principals' corruption prevention strategies according to gender. The results of the study are presented in Table 2. The findings of the study produced a mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.01$) for male principals which was lower than the mean score of ($\bar{x} = 4.15$) for the female principals. The mean scores indicate that the female principals were putting in place better corruption prevention strategies than their male counter parts.

Gender	Mean score ($\bar{x}$)	Standard Deviation
Male	4.01	.58
Female	4.15	.47

Table 2: Principal's Corruption Prevention Strategies by Gender

The findings support previous studies such as Eckel and Fullbrunn (2015) whose study revealed that women were less tolerant to corrupt practices compared with men because they are inherently less corrupt due to better self-control, risk aversion and a lower willingness to engage with criminal or corrupt officials. However, the results dispute earlier findings by Lambs dorff and Boehm (2011) who criticized the notion that women can be better managers towards corruption on account of being inherently less corrupt as a way of reinforcing gender stereotypes and oversimplifying corruption. A different view point is provided by Alhassan-Alolo (2007) who study in Ghana of gender differences in attitudes towards corruption, revealed that male and female public servants had similar attitudes and are equally likely to engage in corrupt practices. He hypothesizes that the question if an individual engages in corruption is a question of opportunity, networks and social norms, rather than one of gender differences.

4. Results of Tests of Hypothesis

In order to establish whether there were observed differences in male and female principal's corruption prevention strategies were statistically significant, the independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis stated was;

- Ho: There is no statistically significant difference in corruption prevention strategies among principals in in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties.

The results of the null hypothesis testing are presented on Table 3. The findings of hypothesis testing were computed where p-value (.041) was less than the alpha value ($\alpha = .05$). In view of these findings, there was a statistically significant difference between corruption prevention strategies used by male and female principals in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyadarua Counties in Kenya. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. The conclusion was that principals' corruption prevention strategies by gender were different.

Principal's Management Strategies	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Conf. limits 95%	
Equal variances assumed	2.104	.148	2.055	268	.041	.13544	.06591	.00568	.26520
Equal variances not assumed			2.125	264.104	.034	.13544	.06372	.00997	.26091

Table 3: T-test Results on Principals' Corruption Prevention Strategies by Gender

The study revealed that female principals adhered better to strategies in combatting corruption than their male counterparts. The results were consistent with the UNESCO (2007) who asserted that the key aspects related to combating corruption in schools revolved around gender issues and enhancement of individual capacities. The areas that were of great concern and importance were not ably accounting, education, expenditure tracking, financial management, publication and production, supervision mechanisms, verification and audits, public procurement procedures and the use of new management technologies. From the available literature, there is evidence that gender plays a role in corruption prevention of corruption among people.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that corruption prevention strategies employed by principals in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties were rated above average yet the vice persists. The findings of the study presented a contradiction that requires researchers to go beyond the mere analysis of the existent and operationalization of the stated corruption prevention strategies. There is need to examine in-depth and deeper aspects of corruption prevention mechanisms especially the dimension of socialization and inculcation of values and ethos in individuals through the personality development processes. This is due to the fact that legislative and establishment of procedures to combat corruption have the potential of being circumvented by human beings through fabrication, doctoring and cooking of data

especially to satisfy authorities. This way, the scenario where robust strategies to combat corruption exists amidst escalation of the vice may arise, hence the contradiction.

It is recommended that there is need to use psychoeducational techniques in the capacity building among principals regarding corruption prevention strategies. The psychoeducation techniques should focus on impartation of values and ethos through molding and shaping of personality development of the school administrators and managers especially men, whom it was found performed relatively poor compared to women in corruption prevention strategies.

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