

Influence of Leader's Demographic Characteristics and Perspective towards Implementation of NGOs' Gender Parity Strategies in Secondary School of Kibera Informal Settlement

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of leader's demographic characteristics and perspectives towards implementation of gender parity strategies (GPS) in secondary schools of Kibera informal settlement, Kenya. The study was guided by Adams Stacy's equity theory and Herzberg's two-factor theory. The study utilized survey design. It targeted leaders of secondary schools managed by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Purposive sampling was utilized to select the schools, while stratified and simple random sampling was used to select the respondents. Data were collected by use of a questionnaire. Data analysis techniques included Chi-square, regression, and ANOVA. The study established that the demographic characteristics; age, academic qualification and experience influenced the leader's implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies ($p < 0.05$). Additionally, the perspective of the leaders also influenced positively the leader's implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies ($p < 0.05$). This study will contribute to the preparedness of the education stakeholders in addressing gender disparities gap in secondary schools, it will intensify the extent of involvement of NGOs and other education stakeholders in supporting the efforts towards attainment of EFA goals and Sustainable Global gender parity educational goals. The study will enlighten education stakeholders on measures and strategies of minimizing gender disparities gap in secondary education in informal settlements of Kenya.

Keywords: *Demographic characteristics, Perspective, Implementation, Gender parity, Strategies.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of Gender disparities gap in secondary education is a worldwide concern. In Kenya, gender disparities gap in secondary education is still alarming among the poor, underserved and marginalized communities. In informal settlements in Kenya for example Kibera, over 20 NGOs, (CBO's and Faith-Based Organizations) are represented and involved in education, health, and human rights. Despite the involvement of many educational stakeholders, gender disparities gap in secondary education in Kibera still manifests itself in a high number of dropout and low performance of girls at the secondary school level. A further manifestation of disparity is in access, enrolment, attendance, choice of subjects, retention, completion and in general performance of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (GoK, 2007). Previous studies on gender disparities in secondary education have not focused on leader's demographic characteristics and perspectives towards implementation. This study, therefore, seeks to determine the influence of leaders' demographic characteristics and their perspectives towards the implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies in Kibera informal settlement.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. The Concept of Implementation

Implementation refers to a process that turns strategies, policies, and plans into action in order to accomplish the objective. It is a process of putting a decision or plan into effect.

It is carrying out, accomplishing, fulfilling, producing or completing a given task (UNESCO, 2016). Rajasekar (2014) indicated that strategy implementation cannot be achieved by the top leaders alone but requires the collaboration of everyone including parties inside and outside the organization. Rajasekar noted that implementation requires leadership skills, precision planning and organizing of resources and activities as well as ensuring people's commitment to the new strategy.

He pointed out that successful implementation also requires administrative, managerial talent and an ability to foresee obstacles that might arise in strategy implementation. Rajasekar (2014) as well pointed out the factors affecting implementation including leadership style, information availability, and accuracy, uncertainty, organizational structure, organizational culture, human resources and technology. He emphasized that human resources management plays a key role in the effective implementation of strategies.

Newton and Tarrant (1992) indicated that implementation focused on how to use innovation as intended and achieve the promised results in usual practical settings. They also indicated that for a school to implement change or new strategies, system factors such as administrative support, school environment and staff opportunities for participation in the change process are important for success. Although Newton and Tarrant (1992) observed that the 21st century was characterized by the demand for change in the education sector across the world, they indicated that the challenge of coping and effecting change in schools mainly lied with the school leadership. They observed that the demands of the 21st century brought with it anxiety and required that leaders who were entrusted with change would be prepared to implement it.

He pointed out that some schools did not receive change in a positive way but resisted it. They cited human factors that led to resistance of change such as; fear of the unknown, lack of information, a threat to core skills and competence, fear of failure and reluctance to experiment. Newton and Tarrant (1992) also discussed reasons for change and attitudes towards change that help to sustain the process of change. They observed that while positive attitudes were helpful or necessary to innovation, education leaders came out as having either conservative or radical attitude.

They further pointed out that resistance was evident when; change increased the workload of teachers, created unpopularity with colleagues; when it created career risks and if it opposed the prevailing establishment. Newton and Tarrant, however, noted that change could be embraced in schools if the education leaders could be prepared through planning, consultation, negotiation, professional development, research and through care of personnel that is in charge of implementing change.

Wychowaniec (2016) discussed the role of age in the implementation of policies. He indicated that the age of the employee had an impact on the implementation of policies and this could differ across generations. In particular, Wychowaniec observed that younger employees demonstrate openness to new challenges, with some adapting to change faster than others

Wychowaniec (2016) noted that fear of change was felt more by workers who were aged 50 and above. He further found out that young workers were willing to accept changes as compared to older workers who more likely had higher levels of fear of change and were conservative. Wychowaniec however, does not clarify the fact that all young people are not the same as each could have fears even about the same change too. Rogers and Cartano (1962) discussed implementation stages that lead to greater results.

They emphasized the need to maintain all that worked well before new changes or procedures were introduced. They outlined the implementation stages that led to better results as including: Exploration (the critical starting place for work); installation stage whose purpose is to acquire resources needed to do the work and initial implementation that is reached when 50% or more of the intended practitioners use the intended effective strategies with fidelity and good outcomes (nirn.fpg.un.edu/learn-implementation/implementation-stages).

2.2. School Leadership in Relation to Implementation of Gender Parity Strategies

School leadership is the process of guiding the school stakeholders towards achieving educational and school goals. Educational leaders may involve all the individuals that have been entrusted with decision making roles in implementing change in educational institutions. School leadership may be transformational or instructional. School leaders play an important role in the implementation of change in schools.

They are viewed as key to educational reforms and outcome. In the context of our world that is characterized by globalization and is dependent so much on technology, the school leaders are expected to be far more than administrators. According to Eurydice (2010) teachers' perceptions of male- and femaleness are crucial for their relations with pupils and can be an important factor in generating gender equity in schools. Their role combines administrative and instructional responsibilities (Odhiambo, 2008). The school leaders are also expected to take the role of change agents. To achieve the school goals and objectives, a good school leader uses his/her influence to inspire and involve individual workers and groups of employees in the school (Northouse, 2007). Most school leaders could, therefore, influence other stakeholders by applying their leadership talents, knowledge, and skills (Jago, 1982).

Ayiro (2013) focused on theories and models of school leadership. He pointed out that school leadership core function was setting direction and exercising influence. Ayiro discusses three different approaches to school leadership: instructional, transformational and transactional leadership approaches. He indicates that instructional leadership functions include defining school mission, framing and communicating school goals, managing an instructional program and promoting positive school learning climate.

He observed that transformational leadership on the other hand highlight leaders influence on follower's emotional states, teacher Job satisfaction, heightens performance, creates positive moods, and lessens emotional burnout and stress. Ayiro (2013) further indicated that the third approach; transformational leadership influences

the teacher's classroom practice and motivates followers to perform beyond expectations. Ayiro presented transformational leadership as an ideal type of leadership and approach. He noted that this kind of leadership needs leaders to have self-motivation and to draw from their experiences for better achievement (Ayiro, 2013).

Rogers and Cartano (1962) on the other hand discussed opinion leadership. They defined opinion leadership as the process by which one person (the opinion leader) informally influences others who might be either opinion seekers or opinion recipients. This influence occurs between two or more people. Rogers and Cartano (1962) pointed out that; opinion leaders had huge information and updates about the products or the services they are involved in. They influenced more people, encouraged people to purchase or reject the product when they did not have enough information and to carry a strong opinion about a product or service they deal with.

Newton and Tarrant (1992) observed that for change to occur successfully in an organization, the leaders need a vision of where they are going, a plan of the attainable and short-term or immediate objectives worked out in some detail against a clear time span. They indicated that professional development, in-service training or some other form of training or learning activity is what a leader needs to effect change.

They also indicated that opinion leadership needs to work in collaboration with influential colleagues from within and from outside the institution. The opinion leadership plans for support of the colleagues and monitors change during the implementation period.

In the context of implementing NGOs' gender parity strategies in an informal settlement, the leadership of positive attitude towards gender parity strategies could influence the rest of the staff to foster proper implementation. They could guide the other employees to understand the importance of gender parity in Education. Such positive/opinion leaders help in cultivating a positive environment and acting as catalysts of positive change. Implementation likewise requires the capability of the leaders and their positive attitudes towards change.

Leaders who have a positive attitude towards gender parity in schools will, therefore, do all that it takes to influence other school leaders to implement gender parity strategies and achieve equality in the education of both girls and boys. Leadership, therefore, has an important role in strategy implementation.

2.3. Perspective in Relation to Implementation of Gender Parity Strategies

A perspective is a point of view from which certain decisions are made or conclusions are derived. One's perspective is, therefore, a way one sees something. It is a worldview of someone (Farlex, 2012). A perspective is also defined as an opinion that plays a role in influencing someone's decision (Rogers and Cartano, 1962). Thesaurus dictionary defines perspective as a way of regarding a situation or a topic. In the context of this study, perspective refers to an integrated set of attitudes and beliefs that secondary education leaders in Kibera hold towards implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies.

Attitudes refer to someone's past or present behavior towards other persons or object or issue. It also refers to how one behaves in future towards the same person, object or a learned disposition to respond positively or negatively to any person and to issue or event (Coaley, 2010). Coaley indicated that an attitude is: a mental and neural stage of readiness; it is exerting a directive or a dynamic influence upon the individual response to all objects and situation with which it is related. Coaley (2010) observed that whereas some leaders would have a conservative attitude (leaving things the way they are, not implementing any gender strategies), others would prefer to approach things in a radical way thus leading to change.

Razar and Standing (2005) indicated that the success of the change process depends less on whether the source of change is internal or external. Internal may include the degree of openness and readiness of an organization to consider the action being undertaken and to continually examine ways to learn. NGOs' initiatives of realizing

gender parity in secondary education in informal settlements of Kibera would be greatly influenced by the attitude of both the school administration and the PTA leaders. [Newton and Tarrant \(1992\)](#) also pointed to the fact that the perspective of the staff towards the implementation of strategies for changes could also be assessed from their confidence during the implementation period.

They also indicated that the cooperative view of achievement symbolized the view that implementation can be achieved in cooperation with others. Positive secondary school leader's perspective on implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies can, therefore, provide an understanding of NGOs' initiatives of realizing gender parity in secondary education in informal settlements.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Study Location

This study was conducted in twenty-two mixed secondary schools in Kibera informal settlement. Kibera is a division situated in Langata Sub-county-Nairobi County, Kenya. It is 5 kilometers South West from Nairobi city center, with a population of 634,491 people ([Kenya National Bureau of Statistics \(KNBS\), 2010](#)). It has few public secondary schools. Secondary education is managed by CBO's and FBO's.

3.2. Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design. A survey is a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. [Orodho \(2004\)](#) and [Kombo and Tromp \(2006\)](#) observed that a survey could be applied to quantitative information about people's attitudes, opinions or any of the variety of education or social issues. The design presents a clear picture of the influence of demographic characteristics and leader's perspective on implementation of gender parity strategies.

3.3. The Target Population

The target population for this study was 330 secondary school leaders from 22 mixed secondary schools. The leaders were chosen because they had the experience of the phenomenon that was studied and they were better placed to give the required information as opposed to student and support staff.

3.4. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

All the secondary school leaders were selected through stratified purposive sampling from NGO managed mixed secondary schools. They comprised of 4 categories of leaders 22 Deputy Principals, 22 school bursars, 176 HOD's and 88 PTA class representatives. Out of a total of 308 respondents, 291 leaders responded (with 17 parents not responding due to their unavailability) for the purpose of determining the influence of demographic characteristics and perspective on implementation of GPS.

The researcher sought an introductory letter from Moi University School of Education to assist in obtaining a permit from NACOSTI. The researcher sort permission from the Ministry of Education, Kibera Sub-County education officer and the school principals before she sent out the questionnaire and conducted the research. The researcher took measures to ensure professionalism, confidentiality, privacy and the rights of the participants to participate or not.

3.5. Collection Instruments and Variables

The study used self-administered questionnaires. The respondents filled the questionnaire in the absence of the researcher. The Likert scale was chosen for the study to help in capturing the perspective of the leaders on the implementation of GPS (Khan, 2008).

4. RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

Chi-square test of independence and regression analysis was used to establish and determine the relationship between demographic characteristics and implementation of Gender parity strategies as well as the relationship between leader's perspective and implementation of the same.

4.2. Background Characteristics of the Study Population

The study established the demographic characteristics of the respondents, which included their gender, age, highest academic qualification, the category of school served in, responsibility in the school, and a number of years served in the school. Results indicated that of the 291 respondents, the majority (64 %) were male while 36 % were female. The majority (40 %) of the respondents fell in the 25-30 years age bracket. 23 % were below 25 years; 19 % were aged 31-35 years; 7 % were aged 36-40 years; 6 % were aged 41-46 years; while 5 % were aged above 46 years. Nonetheless, data was collected across all age groups, implying that the study represented the perspectives of school leaders in all age groups (Table 1).

Table-1. Summary of background characteristics of the study population

Variable	N=291	N %
Gender		
Male	186	63.9
Female	105	36.1
Age in years		
Below 25	68	23.4
25-30	116	39.9
31-35	54	18.6
36-40	20	6.9
41-46	19	6.5
Above 46	14	4.8
Highest Academic Qualification		
PhD	2	.7
Masters	14	4.8
Bachelors	132	45.4
Diploma	77	26.5
Certificate	63	21.6
Secondary School	2	.7
Primary School	1	.3
School Category		
CBO	224	77
FBO	67	23
Responsibility in School		
Deputy Principal	23	7.9
Head of Department (HOD)	170	58.4
Bursar	18	6.2
PTA	80	27.5
Number of Years Served in the School		
Less than 1 year	73	25.1
1-5 years	178	61.2
6-10 years	32	11.0
Over 10 years	8	2.7

Source: Research findings, 2017

With regard to highest academic qualification of the respondents, the study results indicated that the majority (45 %) of the respondents had a bachelors degree. 27 % had attained the Diploma level of education; 21 % had certificate level of education; 5 % had attained a Masters degree; 1 % had PhD; another 1 % had completed secondary school while another 1 % had completed primary school (Table 1).

With regard to the category of school, the respondents served in, results study indicated that more than half (77 %) of the respondents served in schools categorized under CBO while only 23 % served in schools categorized under FBO. Further, the results indicated that a majority (58 %) of the respondents were HODs. 28 % were PTA members, 8 % were deputy principals while only 6 % served as Bursars (Table 1). Results also indicated that the majority (61 %) of the respondents had served in their schools for 1-5 years. 25 % had served for less than 1 year; 11 % had served for 6-10 years; while only 3 % had served for over 10 years (Table 1).

4.3. The Influence of Demographic Characteristics of Secondary School Leaders on Implementation of NGOs' Gender Parity Strategies in Secondary Schools of Kibera Informal Settlement

This tested the hypothesis H_{01} : There is no statistically significant relationship between secondary school leaders' demographic characteristics and implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies in secondary schools of Kibera informal settlement.

The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between gender and implementation of gender parity strategies ($\chi^2 = 1.78$; $df = 2$; $p\text{-value} = 0.41$). However, there was a significant relationship between age, the highest level of education and experience with implementation of gender parity strategies ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) (Table 2).

This implies that there is more likelihood for respondents who are younger to implement more Gender Parity Strategies than their older counterparts. These findings agree with those by Wychowaniec (2016) who indicated that the age of the employee impact on the implementation of policies.

Table-2. Summary table of Demographic characteristics

Demographic Characteristics	Pearson Chi-Square Value	Df	p-value
Gender	1.78	2	0.41
Age	18.56	10	0.046
Highest Qualification	18.98	6	0.004
Experience	27.62	12	0.006

Source: Research findings, 2017

In conclusion, it can be said that, except for gender, the demographic characteristics such as age, highest qualification and experience are critical for implementation of gender parity strategies. Therefore, this calls for careful consideration of the composition of the leaders who are supposed to carry out, not only the implementation NGO's GPS but also other secondary school policies and programmes.

Results from simple regression revealed that age, education level and experience of the leaders contributed 0.2%, 5.4%, and 2.8% respectively to the implementation of the gender parity strategies. On the other hand, multiple regressions revealed that age, academic qualification, and experience all combined, contributed to 7.8% to the implementation of gender parity strategies.

The model equation was as follows:

$$Y = 3.652 - 0.028x_1 - 0.159x_2 + 0.0120x_3 + 0.189; \text{ where}$$

Y is level of implementation of gender parity strategies

x_1 is age of the respondent

x_2 is academic qualifications of the respondent

x_3 is the number of years the respondent has served in the school

This implies that the higher the academic qualification of a school leader, the higher the likelihood and level of implementing NGOs' gender parity strategies. In addition the higher the number of years served in the school, the lower the likelihood and level of implementing NGOs' gender parity strategies.

4.4. Effect of Secondary School Leaders' Perspective on Implementation of NGOs' Gender Parity Strategies in Secondary Schools of Kibera Informal Settlement

The investigation was done by testing the hypothesis H_{02} : There is no statistically significant relationship between secondary school leaders' perspective and implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies in secondary schools of Kibera informal settlement. Results revealed that there was a significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 6.875$; $df=2$; $p\text{-value}=0.03$) between the leaders perspective and the implementation of gender parity strategies. In this regard, we reject the hypothesis (H_{02}) which states that: there is no statistically significant relationship between secondary school leaders' perspective and implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies in secondary schools of Kibera informal settlement.

We conclude that the leader's perspective is key to the implementation of NGO's Gender parity strategies. This implies that whenever the perspective (attitude) of the respondent is positive; there is more likely that more gender parity strategies would be implemented. These findings are supported with those by [Adams \(1965\)](#); [Razar and Standing \(2005\)](#) who acknowledged that different factors affect an employee's assessment and perception of their relationship with their work and their employer.

[Coaley \(2010\)](#) defined perspective as "a learned disposition to respond positively or negatively to any person and to issue or event" while [\(Razar and Standing, 2005\)](#) pointed out that change depends more on the degree of openness and readiness of an organization to consider the action being undertaken and to continually examine ways to learn.

Results revealed that the leaders' perspective was contributing 23.0% to the implementation of the gender-based strategies. These findings are supported by both Adams Stacy equity theory and Hesberger's two-factor theories. Therefore, for implementation of NGOs' gender parity strategies in secondary schools in Kibera informal settlement to be successful, there is need to fully involve and build the capacity and interest of all the secondary school leaders at different levels.

5. DISCUSSION

Leader's traits such as age, educational qualification, experience and perspective are critical to the implementation of NGOs gender parity strategies, and as such, due consideration should be given to them when appointing leaders who can help to implement change

When the leader has a positive perspective then he or she is most likely to implement more strategies and vice versa. However, this does not mean that all leaders who have negative perception don't do great work since results revealed that even when there were leaders with a negative perspective, they were able to implement more strategies than expected.

Therefore, leaders with a positive attitude will implement more gender parity strategies compared to their negative counterparts. The negative attitude perspective of the school leaders may arise when the NGOs put too much pressure on school leaders to implement gender parity strategies in schools.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

First, the Kenya government should continue strengthening the affirmative action of admitting girls into secondary schools and public universities. Secondly, most girls and vulnerable boys should be targeted for scholarships, bursaries, and provision of free sanitary towels and school basic needs. Third, the Government of Kenya should realize the implementation of free secondary education for both girls and boys in the informal settlements and eradicate any cost sharing implication such as tuition fees, cost of uniform, textbook, and supplies as these prevent poor families from sending children to secondary schools. Finally, there is a need for the Ministry Of Education to consider the experience of the school leader (mostly Headteachers) and academic qualification in deploying educational staff, as well as the perspective or vision of the leaders when employing or deploying them for the headship of a secondary school.

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