



# The Role of Gender in Educational Management

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## ABSTRACT

Educational management is a vital aspect of the schooling system, responsible for ensuring the delivery of quality education through effective administration. However, gender disparities persist in leadership roles within educational institutions, limiting the representation and influence of women in decision-making positions. This paper investigates the historical evolution of gender in educational management, current disparities in leadership, challenges faced by women in these roles, and strategies for promoting gender equity. Despite progress in gender inclusivity, women remain underrepresented in top leadership positions due to societal norms, structural biases, and institutional barriers. The study highlights the importance of mentorship, policy interventions, and organizational reforms in fostering gender-balanced leadership within educational systems. Addressing these disparities is crucial for creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment that benefits both students and professionals.

**Keywords:** Gender disparities, educational leadership, school management, gender equity, women in leadership, educational administration.

## INTRODUCTION

The management of education is to a large extent the management of people—both adults and children. Education management is tasked with the development of adults (teachers, administrative, support staff, etc.) whereby the well-being of children (students) is central. School management is essentially like the management of any business but with the additional importance of children. Education management is about the management of a school, for example, a secondary school, which in Kenya has classes from Forms One to Four. The actual management is done by the principal or head of the school, an administrative educational officer (Director of Education), teachers who are knowledgeable about the subject areas, and of the nonteaching staff undertaking the secretarial, cleaning, cooking, and dormitory supervision. In a secondary school, students are aged between 13 and 18 in Forms One to Four. Students are managed so they can acquire a quality education that meets the needs of the development of the country [1, 2, 3]. The central objective of educational management is to create an environment conducive to the achievements of educational objectives. The principal of the school by the very nature of the post exercises formal leadership in the school by providing management direction to a team of staff. It is expected that comprehensive management roles of those who manage educational institutions will greatly influence the development of the school, thus increasing the quality of the curriculum which impacts positively on the educational attainment of pupils, children, students, etc. There is a significant body of research literature on these management roles or characteristics of educational leaders. However, the majority of the past and recent research has principally concentrated on roles, tasks, and styles, and the effectiveness of the management strategies or approaches adopted by school administrators. There is a limit body on gender of educational management effectiveness in Kenya secondary schools. In this view it seems that gender occupies a marginal place in the conception of the management of education in an international system. Consideration of the gendering process in the management of educational systems represents a complex task [4, 5].

### **Historical Perspectives on Gender in Educational Management**

In order to gain an understanding of the current situation around gender in educational management, it is important to reflect on how women in leadership within educational institutions have articulated their identity and position historically and how society has done so for them. Different dimensions are identified that help to “gender” the position of leadership in educational institutions or systems. The different “faces of women as leaders” are connected to existing societal notions or societal beliefs about women’s leadership, thus facilitating a certain public perception of women in management and leadership in education. By stressing different historical milestones since the 19th century, this narrative is able to emphasize the barriers as well as the advancement made towards gender inclusivity in the educational management field [6, 7]. Gender in educational management needs to be situated in its historical context. That there have been major milestones in the positioning of women through educational management, as well as major societal beliefs about gender and leadership that have waxed and waned over the period. During the 19th century, significant changes were wrought within the societal positioning of women, partially due to the First and Second Waves of feminism. Moreover, major reforms and changes within the education sector during the 19th century set the stage for educational management structures in which women’s presence is nowadays strong. The annus mirabilis of 1870 was a tapestry of events which reshaped the understanding, the perception, and the enactment of women and leadership. These codes—often portrayed as an unequal one in the Macaulayan myth of Clive at Plassey—loomed as well over the management of an education sector in expansion. In such a sector, where newly created institutions nurtured the blooming of a variety of professional and administrative positions, parity became for the first time an issue with enduring repercussions. This reform is widely recognized as a major milestone in the constitution of the supply-side of the managerial labor market. It is to a great extent with the education bill that the mechanisms of recruitment of a top-ranking officer caste, predominantly male and highly educated, were put in place; and it is from 1870 onwards, and especially after 1876, that the profile of women as members of an educational bureaucracy appear in its most notable and obvious form. Yet four of the most celebrated figures in the management of the education of one-sixth of the globe are strictly speaking “managers of sorts” [8, 9].

### **Gender Disparities in Educational Leadership Positions**

Current educational systems are rife with disparities regarding who holds leadership positions. In the United States of America (USA), roughly 76% of teachers are female, yet only 30% of Superintendents are women. Whilst woman comprises 54% of school principals, they are still underrepresented in leadership roles (in comparison to male counterparts). The lack of woman in leadership roles has also been observed globally in countries such as Africa and New Zealand. Within Africa, just 15% of public university professorships are held by woman, whilst only 5% of Vice Chancellors are women. This is in spite of a recent rise in the number of women pursuing higher education. The statistics of 2006 show that just 3.5% of educational management positions are females [10, 11, 12]. The existence of this underrepresentation raises several critical questions regarding biases present in cultural hiring and promotion practices within educational management. Within this same vein, how deeply rooted long-held expectations (gender and societal) negatively impact females aspiring to a management role is scrutinized. A larger examination also ensues about the particular implications of educational environments and outcomes when they lack gender diversity in leadership roles. In addition to questioning societal norms, potential areas of improvement in fostering a culture of gender diversity are addressed. This includes recognition of the vital roles of mentorship and establishing networks, as well as proposing guidelines to adjust policy. It is no secret that gender gaps remain a major issue in numerous industries. However, in the 21 Century, both women and man have increasingly been participating in society as equals, regardless of significant differences in physical traits. A good example can come from educational systems. Regarding faculty members, both gender and ethnicity have satisfied representatives on a global scale. Nevertheless, it has been perceived that in educational management, gender diversity seems to hindered [13, 14, 15].

### **Challenges Faced by Women in Educational Management**

Women in any part of the world are making significant strides ahead in educational management. However, they still encounter a wide range of prejudices and challenges in this sector. The emphasis of the paper is on those women managers who have devoted a significant proportion of their career in educational management. It investigates some of the difficulties they face in order to achieve success in educating management positions; by neutralizing these they will be able to advance further in their careers. Four key impediments are identified: work-life balance issues, the “old boys club”, lack of training

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and development opportunities, and professional devaluation. These are then considered further with partners commenting on their experiences and suggestions about overcoming these problems. While these obstacles are not invariably insurmountable, they must be addressed by both individual themselves and their organizations if they are to make further gains in educational management [16, 17, 18]. Women who are aspiring for career advancement do face different types of hurdles, challenges and risks. At the primary level, there would be family commitments and responsibilities which are presumed to be a part and parcel of the lives of most of the women, removal of which does not lay a good foundation basis on which, a professional woman could build up her career. For a woman, successful self-establishment often brings with it special social stigmas relating to her femininity. Most likely she will be perceived as abnormally unrestrained, knowing and independent. Women are expected to fit traditional sex roles which are not compatible with the demands of many positions of authority and responsibility. Women find it an overwhelming task to go for a high-profile job due to the lack of full co-operation, support and partnership from her husband or family members [19, 20, 21].

### **Strategies For Promoting Gender Equity in Educational Leadership**

Many countries have shown their commitment to gender equity in education, whilst educational management remains a small possibility of realising the same. Therefore, it is important to investigate further into the experiences of those engaged directly in educational management practices. As such, participation in educational management is found to be an effective strategy for promoting girl-friendly school practices. This is because good leadership in education means much greater opportunities for women to interact with schools and the management of these institutions. In many educational institutions women occupy a large proportion of employees yet only a few are empowered to the teaching activities. Previous research only focused on issues of enrollments, completion rates, and enrollments vis-à-vis the representation in management of educational institutions [22, 23, 24]. Effective promotion of gender issues is not likely to be achieved unless an active policy on gender is in place. Therefore, it is very necessary for the government to direct all educational institutions to implement policies which specifically support the idea of equal opportunities irrespective of gender. Moreover, measures for assessing the implementation of such a policy could easily impose a more direct response from the management of educational institutions both towards the realization of equity in general and participation in particular. Such measures, thus, should include, but are not necessarily limited to: efforts aiming to establish gender-sensitive objects recommended in recent years, activities dealing specifically with gender have so far taken the form of gender workshops and conferences, resulting in the institutionalization of networks that sustain existing equity programs through a provision of training and support for women in educational leadership [25, 26, 27].

### **CONCLUSION**

Gender continues to play a significant role in educational management, influencing leadership representation, decision-making, and institutional culture. Despite the increasing participation of women in the education sector, their presence in managerial positions remains limited due to persistent structural and societal challenges. Historical perspectives highlight both progress and ongoing barriers, while current disparities underscore the need for intentional efforts to promote gender equity. Addressing these issues requires proactive policies, targeted mentorship programs, and institutional reforms that support equal opportunities for both men and women. By fostering an inclusive leadership environment, educational institutions can benefit from diverse perspectives, ultimately improving the quality of education and creating a more balanced and progressive academic landscape.

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**CITE ON: Asuma Mariita Nchaga. (2025). The Role of Gender in Educational Management. RESEARCH INVENTION JOURNAL OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES 4(1):61-65. <https://doi.org/10.59298/RIJCRHSS/2025/416165>**