An Investigation into the Challenges Women Face in Leadership Positions in Education in the Eastern Region of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges facing females in leadership positions in education in the Senior High Schools (SHSs) in New Juabeng Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The study was mostly qualitative, which implores a case study approach and design. The case study had the population of all female leaders in the schools selected (headmistresses and their assistants and the housemistress), in the New Juabeng Municipality. The sample size was fifteen and purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents and the sites for the study. Semi structured interview guide was used to collect data for the study. Thematic approach was used to analysed the data. The study revealed that women do not recognise that they have inherent potentials to deal with challenges they encounter whilst working yet they managed the challenges they face unconsciously. It is recommended that, women leaders in education are not taken through in-service training and therefore lack new skills to manage their challenges and therefore they should be taken through in-service training.

Keywords: Challenges, Women, Leadership, Education, Senior High Schools, New Juabeng, Eastern Region, Ghana

1. Introduction and Background

The examination of individual women of historical significance, and the effect that historical events have had on women is linked to studies of women’s history, which provide an underpinning conceptual belief pointing out that more traditional recordings of history have minimized or ignored the contributions of women. Further, the effect that historical events had on women as a whole provides suggestive evidence that from history, traditional dimensions
have entrenched influence on working life of women. Despite the significant progress made in Ghanaian women’s education to higher levels and their increase in the formal workforce participation, women still have to battle with lots of challenges in their workplace especially within the educational setup of Ghana [29]. The problem is that gender equity in leadership in corporate institutions in Ghana to seem be a mirage, despite women activism and rhetorical statements made by governments of Ghana to bridge the gender gap in leadership in the public sectors.

The absence of women from political life and leadership positions undermines democracy and women’s empowerment [2]. Women’s advancement is lack of mentoring, sex stereotypes, pipeline issues, and outdated concepts of what it takes to be a good leader that projects male images and devalue [43]. Women’s caring and skills in leading therefore are undermined especially if they happen to aspire for leadership positions [6, 35]. The educational situation in the 21stcentury shows that women are underrepresented in leadership positions around the world, despite their increasing representation in the work force [48]. Only few women are occupying higher positions across the globe. Public interest in women’s potential as leaders is fueled by high-profile women serving in powerful positions. For example, the Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day in the United States of America, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice and former Secretary of State Madeline Albright, also from the U.S., the president of Liberia His Excellency Ellen Johnson-Sir leaf, the Chief Justice Her lordship Theodora Georgina Wood of Ghana. Many of the newspaper and magazine articles written about these and other female leaders have a positive tone [1].

Even though women in leadership positions in the new Juabeng Municipality are performing as required, there have been lots of challenges in relation to how they are performing in their leadership positions. Practically, they appear to be overwhelmed by the challenges confronting them as they perform, as a result of this, this study seeks to use a counselling model (Carl Rogers' Humanistic approach) to support women to effectively deliver in the position they occupy. However, the social structure as found in educational institutions in the New Juabeng municipality in the Eastern Region is not balanced in the sense that women representations in highest leadership roles (headmistresses) are fewer than men in the case of SHS heads. The under representation situation is informed by gender socialization on the job where women are given unconventional roles which lead women to be tagged as non-performers. Both men and women in the work places tend to have negative attitudes towards women in educational leadership.
Interaction with people who believe in Patriarchal beliefs and theory provide thoughts to the effect that women in leadership positions are threats to the transformation of society in the direction of equal rights for women [48]. This is against the norms and values of the society we live in, hence women who climb the leadership ladder face challenges, like having self-concept, being able to control their subordinates, managing physical and personality as well as change their work ethics especially in the educational leadership. The Beijing conference in 2000 sought to invigorate women commitment to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, yet millions of girls are still not making it into school. The situation is even more alarming in some African countries, where the gender gap is still widening and discrimination continues to permeate the educational systems.

In most Ghanaian communities, women are not even allowed to hold leadership positions. Suggestive evidence from literature was that majority of women in the workforce are still concentrated at the lower echelons of the organizational hierarchy with small percentage in decision making positions hence their numerical strength cannot influence a change in organizational policies concerning women. This situation prompted the researchers to investigate the challenges that women in leadership positions face in Second Cycle Institutions in Ghana. The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges facing female leaders in SHS in the New Juabeng Municipality in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The research was guided by this research question- what are the challenges women in leadership positions in education face in the SHS(s) in the New Juabeng municipality.

2. Review of the Literature

Challenges of female leaders could be divided into three; those challenges within the school those outside the school and those within the person herself. A research finding on knowledge construction in collaborative enquiry among teachers’ postulates that intrinsic, internal or personal barriers that influence the life of women are generally regarded as the inadequacies, which are within women because of their femaleness [44]. A research demonstrated that women managers continue to face the perceptions of others which recognised means more suited for management positions than women [46]. Majority of women are not motivated by traditional models of leadership focusing on rank, position, or "turf status or rewards". Therefore, women at the lower echelons of the corporate arena do not avail themselves to mentors, utilizing sponsors, role models, and networking, which allow women a means for getting advice and moral support for promotions [7, 47]. They further added that, one of the factors contributing to the unfair proportion of fewer women to men in leadership is
the simple fact that women tend to be less assertive than men, and are less aggressive towards leadership. The supreme court justice Ruth Bader when at the Law school experienced discrimination throughout and in her legal career based on her being a female, a mother and a Jew. This spurred her to develop her expertise in equal opportunity law, which in turn was an influential factor in her appointment [40].

The inferior self-image of women becomes difficult to overcome to enable them aspire for leadership positions considering the fact that it is ingrained and conditioned in their upbringing and social development [15]. A study on women and minorities in management published in American Psychologist [27] also affirmed that most women would not sacrifice their domestic responsibilities for leadership position knowing what it entails [4], argue further that women are not in top leadership roles because they choose to leave the workplace for motherhood. However, Pedcheck: a program for identification of genotype incompatibilities in linkage analysis research affirms that women managers continue to face the perceptions of others which recognised means more suited for management positions than women [48]. A paper presented on the topic interfacing indigenous knowledge with other knowledge systems in the knowledge economy, believes that if men understood the challenges faced by women, they would be more likely to get involved in signing protocols and lobbying government to embrace the laws and statutes that protect women [34]. The implication is that, it presents evidence of biased evaluation of women's competence and potential for leadership, showing that across a wide variety of settings and contexts, women are presumed to be less competent than men and less worthy to hold leadership positions. This assertion leads shape discrimination against women in leadership.

A book titled “Women managers: Travelers in a male world” affirmed that, discrimination is usually used in hiring well qualified women by offering them less attractive positions [26]. Once they are hired they face another discrimination called treatment discrimination. A woman is less likely to be considered for a job when evaluators hold strong stereotype, or when the position is high-status or when the job is considered appropriate for males. Employers hold negative stereotype views about women's abilities and competence, unmotivated feminine characteristics, and deficient in ideal characteristics [30]. Five-year Review of the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action held in the General Assembly argues that men and women who hold the values that consider women managers to be inferior to men, are more likely to create difficulties for women managers [2]. Women are judged in terms of physical appearance while secretarial skills and characteristics relevant to the executive positions are ignored [9]. Some gender researchers believe that
differences between the sexes have often been exaggerated [17, 18]. Women in workforce who face discrimination leave their jobs in order to change employers, start new business, work part time, job share or stay at home to be full time homemakers [39]. Women need to be seen to work harder than their male colleagues if they want recognition and career success [36]. These are some cultural influence that tends to discriminate among women:

1. Men work well under pressure.
2. Men in general are stronger than females.
3. Men are more reliable than women are.
4. Men are more intelligent than women are.
5. Men work harder than women.
6. Men should not be instructed by women.
7. Men must always respect men.
8. Men carry more authority than women do, even if they both have the same title.
9. It is disrespectful to argue with men.
10. Women who assert themselves do not get marriage partners.
11. A woman's place is in the kitchen.
12. Women are not made to lead.
13. To be assertive is to be un-feminine.
14. The family suffers if the women concentrate on her career.
15. Successful women end up in divorce. The above issues raised has pushed women against the wall, by preventing them not to take leading roles in the socio-cultural environment [36].

Society believes that investing in the girl's education is wasteful since it benefits the family into which she marries than her own family. Further, the loss of valuable time while in school instead of helping out at home through farming or selling of wares is not beneficial to girl's family [3]. In addition, the deeply rooted social and cultural beliefs of most African societies have failed to perceive the crucial significance of involving the talents of females in the process of development. Hence, girls are exempted from education while the male counterparts are encouraged to have education. The socio-cultural attitudes towards girls and women affect their access to education which affects their status and role in the corporate arena [32]. Traditionally women are supposed to prepare for a domestic career of being a wife and a mother. Work should only be considered as a form of support to the man. These negative attitudes and traditional stereotype towards women has been and still is a major impediment to progress for professional working women, particularly, for those in management. It also serves as an explanation why women continue to be under-represented among managers.
Despite suitable qualifications [37, 43]. A study on gender and race differences in leader behaviour preferences in South Africa published in the Women in Management Review journal posit that where women are well qualified and experienced, the predominance of males in management has resulted in a culture in which male behaviour patterns are perceived to be the norm, and women often find it difficult to be accepted as equals by their male colleagues [22].

The term culture has a wide range of interpretations depending upon the discipline from which it is considered [16]. Culture is the total of the inherited ideas, beliefs and knowledge which constitute the shared bases of social action. Anthropologist also considers that the requirements for culture (language use, tool making and conscious regulation of sex) are essential features that distinguish humans from other animals [20]. A research conducted on Foundations of American Education: Becoming Effective Teachers in Challenging Times, states that culture provide the blue prints for how people think, feel and behave in society [19]. A culture imposes rules and order on its members by providing patterns that help them know the meaning of their behaviour [20]. Carl Rogers did not raise cultural ideas in his humanistic approach. Nonetheless, women were considering the cultural values to manage their challenges by taking into consideration the locality or the location of the school. And also talking about how parents nurture their children and that what children are taught in the home is what they practice. On the other hand, parents do not understand their wards in their stages as adolescents, but only to engage them in domestic activities.

The double role played by women as managers and as homemakers, places an enormous stress on them. This assertion was supported by a book titled “Leading and Managing People in Education” state that the twin demands of career and family affect both men and women, but it is women who most often carry the major responsibilities within the home [5]. A research conducted on the topic “Knowledge construction in collaborative enquiry among teachers” believes that giving birth is a challenge to women, because it interrupts women service and gives men an unfair advantage [44]. An article reports on some of the findings of a wider life history study of the factors affecting the career decisions of 40 female secondary school teachers including 10 female head teachers. As part of this, insights were sought into why women continue to be proportionally under-represented in secondary headship posts in UK secondary schools, Interview evidence indicated that the majority of female teachers in the study harboured a set of negative perceptions of school leadership and rejected headship as a career option. In this article, I contrast these negative perceptions with the positive picture of headship painted by the female head teachers. The head teachers in this study were driven by a strong sense of values relating to pupil achievement, and saw
themselves as agents of change who needed to occupy positions of power in order to enact their principles to maximum effect.

In 2006, women constituted 57 percent of the secondary teaching workforce in England and Wales, but just 36 per cent of secondary headships were held by females [24]. Women are not, it seems, progressing to secondary headship in great numbers, either because there are still too many barriers to progression for women, or because they are opting out, choosing not to pursue senior positions. This study sought to understand some of the reasons why some women aspire to and achieve headship positions, while others seem to choose classroom-based careers to motivate themselves in order to reduce the stress they face in their challenges. Positive psychology, like the humanistic approach, focuses on enhancing human potential and affirmed that women are motivated in their work place as leaders they improve upon their work which led to tangible rewards [10, 21].

Self-actualization or reaching one’s full potential is achieved through congruence between self-image and ideal self; higher sense of self-worth is reach when our behaviour is consistent with our self-image as well as our ideal self which Self-empowerment in women [13, 42]. They further state that poor women in poor countries are celebrating new powers and setting out to change their own lives and those of their people. Ghanaian women want to earn enough money so that they could feed, clothe, and generally take better care of their children [12]. This presupposes that women have that inner potentiality to develop and make a better living.

Intrinsic motivation can be facilitated by increasing workers’ perceptions of competence and expertise through the use of positive feedback [41]. They continued by saying that external rewards which produce an increase in extrinsic motivation, can also enhance worker performance. They gave example that, external rewards are important to the worker. A journal published titled “Change, Talk and Sense Making” also postulate that though people work for reasons that are related to both intrinsic and extrinsic. They explained further that the degrees to which intrinsic versus extrinsic factors dominate in determining peoples work performance is not clear [41]. In all when the perception of “you are a woman” is eliminated, and women are motivated they would work effectively [25].

3. METHODOLOGY
The researchers used purposive sampling technique because they had sole interest in a particular phenomenon that is female leaders in second cycle schools. In purposive sampling the researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon [8]. Researchers picked the respondents from each school according to the higher order of position i.e. the Headmistress, the Assistant Headmistress, Senior House mistress and House mistresses. This helped the researchers to identify that women were underrepresented when they rise up on the leadership ladder. In all 15 females occupying leadership positions in the schools were selected for the study. The schools selected were Oyoko Methodist Senior High School (OMESS), SDA Senior High School (SEDASS), Ghana Senior High School (GHANASS), Koforidua Technical Institute (KOTECH), Nana Kwaku Boateng Senior High School (OBOSS) and New Juabeng Senior High School (NJUASCO). The schools and the respondents were coded as OMSAH 1, OMSSH2, and OMSH3, for school 'A'. SEDH 1, SEDH 2, SEDH 3, and SEDH 4 for school ‘B’. GHAH, GHAH 2, GHAH 3, for school C. KOSH1, KOSAH 2, KOSH 3 to represent school D. KTH 1 for school E. and NJBSH 1 for school F. The participants' own words were used by the researchers to support the argument raised during the interview on the challenges facing women leaders in education. Semi structured interview guide was used to collect data for the study. The researchers analysed the qualitative data manually through the use of the thematic approach. Themes that were extracted from the interview correspond to Carl Rogers' humanistic person centred approach were; inherent potentialities, support, motivation, power relation, INSET, cultural dimension, and guidance and counselling.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section present findings and discussions on the challenges females face in leadership in education. Respondents were female leaders who were drawn from six SHS in the New Juabeng Municipality. They held positions like House mistresses and Senior House mistresses and Headmistress and assistant headmistress. Respondents have been in their current positions as leaders at most 8 years while others have been in their current positions for less than a year. The data were analysed based on following themes: inherent potentialities, support, motivation, power relation, INSET, cultural dimension, and guidance and counselling

4.1 Inherent Potentialities (IP)

Inherent potentialities according to Rogers [31] are a person's ability to expand, extend, become autonomous, develop, and mature. He says maturity is the tendency to express and activate all the capacities of the organism, to the extent that such activation enhances the organism or the self. Fromm (1992), states that we have an innate tendency to grow, develop,
and realize our potentialities. This is our major task in life, our ultimate and necessary goal. During the interaction with female leaders in education it came out clearly that women face a lot of challenges. These challenges are from the home and work place. However, they have the potentialities to manage their homes, their time of teaching and their ability and time to manage the students for better achievement.

Female leaders face a lot of challenges and these challenges are from the home and work place. However, they exhibited their potentialities in managing these challenges. The respondents pointed out that they have potentialities to manage the home and to manage the students as well as their time of teaching. One of the key potentialities of managing these challenges that they mention was time management. This is what respondent OMSSH1 said, “You schedule your time; you have to take care of your family members in the home as well as managing the school”. In support KTH1 said; “The challenge is having a family and taking care of other students, being at home on time, checking that all things are done on time, you have to manage the home and also manage the affairs of students”. However, the interviewees who were assistant headmistresses also said that they use planning as a potentiality for better management. For instance, interviewee GHAH1 supported that, “managing a home is a bit of a challenge but planning is everywhere......I told you I will be getting my family members, so that day I decided that if it's no work it's time for home”.

The issue of I.P. was further given a booster during the individual interaction where respondent KSH1 said,

“We are trying to do the three together, managing the family and then the teaching as well as the housemistress work. You close from class you make sure you have something down before you go for class so you have to wake up at 4:00 a.m. to get the kids ready for school, then you get something down for them, then you rush to class, after class if you don't have anything doing you have to rush to the market (school D)”.

Another respondent contributed that in some instances where she has to combine works of other colleagues, she uses her inherent potentialities to devise a strategy to manage the challenges she faces. She said that;

“Once we are not having house mistresses around and you are the only person around all the houses will come to you for exits so you will not have enough time to do your cooking. You will be there and the
students will be coming one after the other so I have told them we have the various house prefects so I have informed them that if you want to go home or if you want to obtain exeat you should write permission, give your card to the house captain and she will in turn bring it to me than all of you coming to my house one after the other”.

As indicated in the responses above women's time constraint phenomenon is in no way limited to the African woman but also almost all women on the face of the globe. Time budget studies have shown that women generally have longer hours of labour and therefore far less hours for leisure than do men in their households in both the Western and developing world [23]. Despite their longer hours of work, they are burdened with domestic duties than their male counterparts probably because it is traditionally considered as pan of women's chores. Customary use of women's time imposes significant physical and time burdens on them and also restricts commitments in their official duties, which inadvertently leads to the recording of a higher productivity for men than women [11]. From the excerpts the conclusion is that IP is crucial in identifying challenges and managing them. The respondents were of the view that inherent potentialities are an important factor.

In conclusion, women have actually expressed their views about the inherent potentialities that it contributes a lot to managing their challenges. This is in tune with the assertion made on human needs by Carl Rogers that every individual is dynamic and therefore has the potential to change a behaviour or to solve a problem. In sum, respondents have come out to talk about how they use their inherent potentialities to manage the home, deliver their duties as teachers in the classroom, to manage their roles as house mistresses by monitoring the students, and planning in order to manage their work well and be cautious of time management, women need motivation to enable them resolve their issues.

4.2 Motivation

Women express their motivation as a tool in managing the challenges they face as both intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically, women expressed that they are motivated when they see that their students are utilizing what they have taught them and when their employers identify what they are doing and appreciate them.
They are motivated by Maslow's basic needs of security, for instance staying in bungalows, receiving token from parents and when they see that the work they have done or what they have taught the students are yielding good fruits. However, one raised an opposing view that allowances do not mean that you can divide yourself at all times. Some intrinsic motivation expressed by respondent (KTH1) a house mistress that;

“you are motivated when you see that the efforts you are putting in is coming out you see that, the time you used to advise the student, teach them personal hygiene, they are making good use of it you are motivated that at least you are helping the girls to be responsible women that they have to be in future”.

Another respondent added that;

“.... you are motivated by receiving encouragement from other people, and the chaplain who walked to me in my house and spoke to me and said ‘ take heart you know some people it’s all because of envy so when you see that picture clearly you just get up and move on’. (KSHD l) a head mistress”.

With the need of intrinsic motivation expressed by respondents, intrinsic motivation can be facilitated by increasing workers’ perceptions of competences and expertise through the use of positive feedback. Further, OMSH2 a house mistress added her voice that; Motivation is not always needed when she said by some comments made by some parents. Example, ‘madam may God Bless you. The following are some extrinsic motivation expressed by the respondents; Respondent SEDH1 also a house mistress was motivated extrinsically when she said; sometimes, we are being dashed something small, so that also urges you that at least as a house mistress you are getting something than the other teachers so why not do the work well. Respondent OMSAH1 an assistant headmistress contributed by saying that; ‘may be our source of motivation is staying in bungalows.

A study on “gender and race differences in leader behaviour preferences in South Africa” posit that when women are motivated in their work places as leaders they improve upon it [21]. The excerpts brought to fore that parents giving token to House mistresses and Senior House mistresses are slight differences in motivational issues concerning House mistresses and Headmistresses. Moving a step higher on the ladder of leadership is where novelty comes in and that is where headmistresses get their motivation by being encouraged by other people.
Once you move up, people try to undermine your work. This is in tune with Carl Rogers ideas represented on the wheel which states that one needs to be motivated towards self-actualization, one has the power for self-understanding, when one expects too much of motivation and problem sets in personal power diminishes. Women are motivated to work, however they do not expect to satisfy all the hierarchy of needs of motivation before they work, all they wish for is to work to perfection.

In conclusion, motivation is very crucial. The sources could be personal or from other people, ones' objectives in her position as a leader is a source of motivation whereas words of encouragement from other people either from work place, home or any other persons motivate women to work better. Besides support is another means by which women manage their challenges.

4.3 Support

Female leaders in education have expressed the need for support and that when they are supported they work better. They expressed that they get their support from among themselves and the home, whilst the headmistresses have expressed that they also get support from the home, church, staff members, and people ahead of them. They talked about the fact that these sources of support give them encouragement and besides when there is peace in the home you have sound mind to do the work. These are some quotes from house mistresses; (SEDH 3) said that; “Yes, we get support from other colleagues, other house mistresses or staff. We do joint inspection and other things so sometimes when a child is not responding to you; you could direct that person to another person to see to it or to the senior house mistress”.

A book titled Career counselling for women states that counsellors can provide support to help women managers cope with work and family issues and conflicts.in support KTH1 also a house mistress said that; “I have said this to the head that at least they should get a car, they have a small bus and it should be near the school, the driver should stay around so that in case of anything we can fall on him”[45]. Adding her voice, another headmistress KSHD I said; “You will get support in case you are an assistant headmistress you will get support from your immediate boss who is the headmaster, if I face a similar challenge 1 have to get support from my municipal director”. She further said that; “I was getting support from teachers in general; words of encouragement letting you know that you are doing the right thing” (KSD1). She counteracted that some people do not appreciate her work and instead they discourage her. This is what she said;
"in my position as an assistant headmistress people spoke against my work, not appreciating the work that I was doing and even saying that I was doing nothing which was a big blow because I was working so hard and everybody saw it, but out of jealousy and envyness of few people I was reported to the board chairman that I was doing nothing. It was heart breaking. After, people came by saying be encouraged, don’t be discouraged”.

Ironically, when women assume leadership position people are suspicious that the woman was put in power for other reasons; perhaps affirmative action, sleeping her way up or favouritism as if she was the CEO’s pet [38]. This causes jealousy, rivalries, and hesitation within the team to follow her lead. Some members in her team go to the extent of reporting suspicious activities to the authorities if she isn’t 100% on her game from the start, and logging her mistakes to get her out of there and put someone who really deserves it in charge. However, GHAH1. counted her submission where she said; “You know our work when it comes to money; teaching and money are two poles apart. But we have the love for the job and we have the encouragement”. This count shows that money does not necessarily support women to work but it is just for the love of it. To buttress this idea GHAH1 had this to say; "If you have peaceful home, you have people who are always ready to encourage you ...... so you have your family members and friends encouraging you to move on. We have other colleagues and even that encouragement alone is enough”. Although Carl Rogers have spoken about individuals having inherent potentialities that lead to motivation and self-actualisation women have still expressed the crucial need for support. However, when there is no peace in the home or all persons tend against you then that power in you will diminish as Carl Rogers puts it, so when this awareness is created whether there is support or not one can do her work effectively. In support to GHAH1, SEDH1, said;

“I think when you have been entrusted with that position and you have accepted it definitely you have to do it; you have to do the responsibilities attached to it. There is an adage that states that two heads are better than one. No matter how best one can work she still needs a support for an effective outcome”.

In conclusion, women have expressed strong desire for support and that when home support as well as support from work place they work effectively On the other hand, when women rise high on the leadership ladder some people especially fellow women tend to undermine them instead of supporting them. And they put up this behaviour due to sheer resentments. From
the above it could be concluded that women are discouraged if they are not supported at their positions as leaders yet they do their best to move ahead.

4.4 Power Relation

Power relation is one's own authority, control, or influence over people and even oneself, altering self-concept, attitude and self-directed behaviours [31]. Female leaders have expressed the use of power relation to manage their challenges. They also came out with the views of recognising the changing trends of life the trend of power that one exerts over a person some years back will not be effective in today's world. Notwithstanding, when one way of using power does not work they quickly change to a better way as Rogers said that human beings are not static. The following are some comments made by the house mistresses;

“Trends are changing; perhaps we need to look at how we also find changing methods to address the changing trends because children of today are not like children of yesterday. If it is a matter of punishment you see the person has begun and she has to end somewhere, I just have to cut it, because it depends on how the person also works, I say ok tomorrow come....so after some time I will say ok don't go and do that again” (JBSH1).

GHH2 also added her voice by saying that;

“We have time schedule for instance I have told them that early mornings between 6 and 7 I also see to my kids, I prepare them for school so if ...... unless it is an emergency, if it is not emergency and you come I will shout at you and tell you to go and come later which they have understood”.

Respondent SEDH 1 also made an assertion that when students are not responding to their duties you have to put measures in place and said;

“The students have rosters that they follow but they will not, they will want you to chase them before they do their work. When it happens that way you have to put your feet down and get some measures in place by giving them some punishment”.

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SEDH 1 made a counter claim that using your power over the students to change their unwanted behaviour does not always mean you should insult them or punish them. She expressed that talking to them politely sometimes works better because the children tend to understand you. This is what she said: ‘......... I have learnt to talk to them politely and also not to shout at them’. Respondent OMSAH1 an assistant headmistress narrated a scenario that;

“Red cross students wanted to go on a programme but they did not ask for permission, meanwhile they sent a letter to the headmaster who signed but they did not give me (as an assistant headmistress domestic) neither a letter nor the names of those going not even the senior house mistress .......’ so then you are not going’, said the senior house mistress. If we don't insist on our right they will overtake us but if we insist on our right, then the right thing will be done”.

Respondent KSHD1 made similar comment that but continued to say that some of their male counterpart are mostly against the punishment they give their female students; they think the punishment giving them is unfair or too much for them. She made the assertion that; “.... Colleague teachers stand against some of the punishment given. Some of them strongly feel the punishment you are giving them is not fair because most of the male teachers have interest in some of the girls” KSHD1 also commented on individual differences that some people never adhere to one on one interaction of correcting mistakes. That such people are ignored when they refuse to take advice and refer them to do what was expected of them before they are giving what they need. This is what she said;

“......... some people when you talk to them it even worsens the situation so sometimes you just ignore them, after maybe you have issued a letter once you ignore the person then when the person needs something then you tell him or her, go and do what you were supposed to do that time before you come back. Some will go and will not come back but others will go and correct the situation”.

Women who manage students exerts more power on them than the head mistresses who work with persons of their age or even older than they are, they use more of strategy to manage their subordinates. In conclusion, power relation used by women is in a way of a try and error type; however, female leaders should take into consideration individual differences in most cases when they expect power. I believe this knowledge would help distribute the required power to an individual.
4.5 Cultural Dimension

Anthropologist considers that the requirements for culture (language use, tool making and conscious regulation of sex) are essential features that distinguish humans from other animals. Culture provides the blueprints for how people think, feel and behave in society. A culture imposes rules and order on its members by providing patterns that help them know the meaning of their behaviour [9]. However, strategic management and planning represent a "radical culture shift for schools" that previously "focused on short-term tasks" and adopted a "culture of dependency" [40]. The cultural perspective is looked at in three dimensions; that is the culture of the school beliefs system, the vicinity in which the school is located, and parents' beliefs of nurturing their children as well as their economic background. Carl Rogers did not raise cultural ideas in his humanistic approach. Nonetheless, women were considering the cultural values to manage their challenges by taking into consideration the locality or the location of the school. And also talking about how parents nurture their children and that what children are taught in the home is what they practice. On the other hand, parents do not understand their wards in their stages as adolescents.

The following are some house mistress' comments that prompt what happened. Respondent OMSH 2 made a claim by emphasizing on the people they are living with that because they are farmers and do not have much value for education and also not able to make enough funds to support their wards education. This is what she said;

"The people we are working with in connection with the students, their background, they are coming from farming communities and most of them are peasant farmers planting from hand to mouth, so making it difficult for them to get money to pay for their wards fees and other needs. Some parents are also not educated and do not see the need to spend much on their wards education".

She further said that the children learn from their parents and that they also do not see the essence of putting in effort in their education. This is what she said; "The children from their background don't see the reason why they should also put in any effort to achieve a specific goal" (OMSSH1). This is in relation to parents' illiteracy, students' inability to pay fees and buy books, and lack of funding resulting in low levels of resourcing of schools as some of the problems facing principals in Kenya [32]. These problems also pertain in Ghana notwithstanding New Juabeng Municipality. Respondent GHH2 said that parents are failing in bringing up their
children in the sense that they think children of today are rude and this makes the girls live the way they want. She said due to that she comes to the level of the students by understanding them. This is what she said; “Sometimes you find it difficult controlling them or being with them because sometimes they feel they are too rude, disrespectful but when you come to their level you know what they think. I for one I am free with everybody so they share with me”. She added that; “Parents are failing especially mothers; we are not doing what we are supposed to do”.

The cultural perspective again reflected in the school by stating gender disparity in the school community by saying that;

“I think it is automatic and it's also safer. Once it is a co-educational institution, crossing carpet leads to a whole lot of things even we are in a society where a lady is close to a boy it's something and a boy closer to a girl it's also something. That is why we call it foster parents so that the females must be in charge of the girls because girls have their peculiar problems” (NJBSH1).

Respondent KTH1 emphasised that; My work is actually for the ladies alone, there are house masters who are there for the boys so mine is for the ladies alone. Responding to this question a head mistress commented that; “in our traditional set up sometimes back, older persons take up higher positions and not younger ones”. Nevertheless, if you are a younger person and given a higher position then you need to accord them the respect and see them as elderly. This is what she said;

“Initially, even in our traditional set up those older than you if you accord them the respect and they also see you as someone younger than them ...... when it comes to position they should have been given but I saw that it depends on the way you carry yourself about”.

Leadership is by age nor qualification [20]. The practice of selecting/appointing head teachers using seniority rather than qualification appeared to be the effect of age factor in the Ghanaian context. In Ghana an elderly person controls, advises and makes decisions for a young person. A young person is considered too inexperienced to control and make decisions for an older person. Doing that is tantamount to disrespect, Ghanaian tradition tends to index wisdom to age; hence the views of children are suppressed in matters of decision making. Also decisions
approved by the elderly in most African societies are unquestionable. This age factor prevents most young professionals from ascending to leadership positions in most organisations in Ghana [20].

Ultimately, head mistresses and house mistresses made slight differences in using culture to manage challenges. As house mistresses are considering the cultural dimension by enforcing the distinction between male and female roles headmistresses are also looking at the cultural differences as being able to understand and respect the elderly since in their cultural settings elderly persons are supposed to be given a higher position and not the younger ones. The headmistress came out that no matter what, when there are elderly in a work place you need to respect them and see yourself as someone younger than they are that will bring effective management of challenges; whilst the house mistress came out that you need to understand the girls as adolescents and how they perceive things, this is what she said:

“......... Initially even our traditional set up those older than you if you accord them the respect ........ and they also see you as someone younger than them .......... when it comes to position they should have been given. But I saw that it depends on the way you carry yourself about. This assertion was made during the individual interaction” (School C).

It would be concluded that gender disparity can never be eliminated from our societies so far as we continue to live with the opposite sex. A house mistress made an utterance that parents are failing, but I think it is totally not the fact that parents are failing but the means to cater for the children in this modern world is posing all these problems.

4.6 In-service Training

Another important theme that came out strongly was the issue of INSET. Most of the respondents expressed much interest in the use of in-service training to manage their challenges. Unfortunately, almost all of them have not benefited from such training in relation to managing their challenges in their positions as leaders but rather consult each other for assistance or using individual experiences, but there are a few who have had some form of training but not directly related to either the house mistress ship or headmistress hip. Others have said they have had nothing at all. They have enumerated the importance of INSET as adding more knowledge to one's own existing knowledge, besides, it serves as a refresher of mind. Unfortunately, the kind of INSET that they have had is not directly related to managing
challenges as house mistresses or headmistresses this is what respondent QMS AH 1 expressed as follows; “The in service training that we have attended was the one of maintenance and I think it’s in order because with my work we have to see to it that the school buildings and other buildings are maintained so I think that one is in my favour”.

She further states that; In service training provides knowledge and as we know knowledge is power. This confirms that in-service training adds up to knowledge and knowledge is power, although what she has had is not directly related to her work she has benefitted. Another house mistress also said; “Oh yes, in service training is necessary, knowledge doesn't spoil anything, adding more to it so if there is any new way of handling them better, if there will be workshop organised for us I think it will be good”. JBS 1 also said;

“I wouldn't say I have really gone through any formal in service to handle house issues but what I have attended are based on academic, a few administrative stuff, what I have got is just those experiences over the years from the assistant house mistress”.

In sum, female leaders have expressed interest and necessity to have in service training since it adds up to existing knowledge. Unfortunately, women have expressed lack of in-service training, so they build their knowledge by learning from friends.

4.7 Counselling

It seems most of the respondents have only heard of counselling but as to how effective it could be done is actually not known to them therefore some of them have expressed interest that when there is the opportunity to attend an in service training on counselling she will participate. So she said; “I will like to attend a workshop that has to do more on counselling the teenagers who are in delicate stage to know how to approach them to help them solve their problems” (OMSAH1). The respondents have accepted the fact that what they do is not counselling but advice giving since they have professional counsellors. This is what one said;

“I think it is mostly an advice that we give because we have professional counsellors, so when we talk to you once or twice and I see that you are not responding then I hand you over to the guidance and counselling coordinator” (OMSAH2).
In conclusion; women have expressed the need for guidance and counselling, they can request for internal workshop with the counselling coordinators so that they can have some basic knowledge in counselling to aid their management of challenges.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

Women do not recognise that they have inherent potentials to deal with challenges they encounter whilst working yet the study came out to show that they were managing the challenges they face unconsciously. It emerged from the study that women leaders in education are not taken through in-service training and therefore lack new skills to manage their challenges. It is therefore recommended that female in leadership positions in education should be taken through in-service training. Female leaders should be given in-service training related to their work at least every quarter of the year. Both men and women still hold the misconception about women that they do not need therefore, there should be continues education for both male and female in order to arrest the misconception about women.

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