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Full Length Research Paper

Assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance

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The study is based on the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance of students in schools. This simply means that the individual talents of everyone in school needs to be maximized for the effective benefit of the school, students, parents, and the society at large. It is therefore obvious that principals should apply numerous administrative strategies that suit the individual secondary school to enhance educational development in the nation. The instrument used for the study is a self-designed research questionnaire.

Key words: Academic performance, strategies, educational development.

INTRODUCTION

The administrative strategies adopted by principals in schools would have a far reaching impact on the students' academic performance as they are regarded as raw materials in the school system. Principals are the major actors in an administrative process in the school setting and are often expected to provide the enabling environment, equipment and facilities for effective teaching and learning. Principals should be able to encourage individual teachers to be innovative. They should also be able to establish measureable key performance indicators for each innovative project in the learning situation. They should always continuously communicate with the staff on the benefits of improvement in the school system. They should be able to help the students to overcome fear of failure because it is important to create favourable school climate that fosters academic success. These positive school environment are characterized by strong administrative leadership strategies, high expectation for students' achievement, challenging appropriate curricular and instruction, an orderly environment, ongoing systematic evaluation of students' progress, and shared decision making among general education of teachers, administrators and parents (Ortiz, 2001).

As the principal occupies a very significant position in the school system, for him to be effective, he needs among others: drive, energy, vision, personality and management in conflict resolution technique. This means that such a person has to create an environment in which members can cooperate with one another. However, work groups usually have a tendency to compete for limited resources, power and status, to the extent of disrupting the cooperative efforts. Besides internal conflict, management also faces conflict from external forces. These may include government, trade unions and economic

conditions (VanWyk, 1989).

It is therefore necessary that principals should apply various administrative strategies that suit the individual secondary schools to enhance educational development in the nation. Griffin (1994) states that a principal's public and professional reputation will depend more on the standard of stability in his school than on any other single factor. Therefore, since the principal is the architect of the success or failure of any school depending on the administrative strategy adopted, it is imperative to assess the instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance in secondary schools in Delta State.

Research question

To guide the study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What is the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve students' performance?
2. Would there be any difference in the administrative and instructional strategies adopted by the school principal?

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Mohlabe (2011) opined that leadership effectiveness is not an easy thing to accomplish; without great strategies, great results will never be the desired result. The author identified some strategies which include vision consciousness, valuing people, building a strong team leaders, knowing and embracing your values, listening effectively, communicating effectively, being a catalyst of change, being a good motivator, not being afraid to take hard decisions and develop your leadership. The office of the principal requires not only experience but educational qualification. Consequently, for a principal to be able to influence the school system such a person should be experienced and possess educational training. Okereka (2008) states that most principals have the qualification of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Masters Degree (M.Ed) in Administration, Curriculum, Guidance and Counseling, etc. Others have degree certificates and diploma in education. These categories of principals' administrative strategies are regarded as professionally skilled. Nakpodia (2006) principals' administrative strategies are classified into seven and the most desirable among them is the democratic administrative strategy.

According to the author, a professionally skilled principal is one that possesses the pedagogical training in the field of education with emphasis on child psychology, moving from simple to complex while planning the curriculum, as

well as administrative knowledge. The non-professional principals lack the rudiments in the field of education.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The study was a descriptive survey. This design allowed a systemic collection of data on the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance in public secondary schools in Delta State.

Sample and sampling procedure

The target population was all the students, teachers and principals in public secondary schools in Delta State in Nigeria. A sample of two thousand, nine hundred and forty (2,940) was drawn from the target population by simple random sampling. That is, 30% of school personnel were used for the study.

Research instrument

A self-designed structured questionnaire was used to get information from the respondents. The first part of the question was to sort information of the respondents' demographic attributes, while the second section sorts to determine the assessment of instructional and administrative strategies applied by principals to improve academic performance. The factors considered were teachers' professional level as a factor for principal's improvement on academic performance; even the administrative strategies were also considered. Simple percentage and analysis of variance were used to analyze data.

Research question one

What is the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve student's performance?

The research question was to ascertain the difference between skilled and unskilled principals in the adoption of administrative strategies as applied to improve student's performance. The data analyzing the question are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 shows that the principals with Masters of Education Degree in Educational Administration had a mean score of 3.69. This was closely followed by principals who are holders of Bachelor of Education degree with other options having a mean score of 3.65.

Other components such as Bachelor of Arts (B.A) with the Post Graduate Diploma in Education and Year of experience in the profession have a mean score of 3.50 and 3.43, respectively.

The qualification of principals in the schools for effectiveness in the appropriate use of administrative strategies is graphically presented in Figure 1.

Research Question two

Would there be any difference in the administrative strategies adopted by a school principal?

The research question was to ascertain if there is any difference in the administrative strategies adopted by a school principal. The data analyzing the question are presented in Table 2.

Table 1. The qualification of principals for adoption of appropriate administrative strategies.

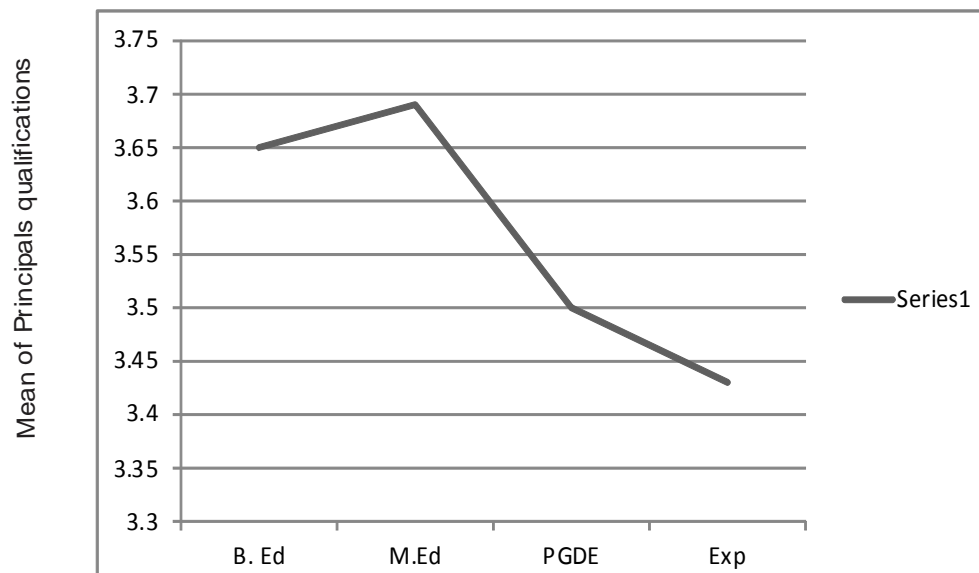| S/N	Variables	Principals	Teachers	Student	Mean
	No of Respondents	**287**	**1362**	**1291**	
Principal's Qualifications					
1	B.Ed, (Option?)	3.54	3.60	3.80	**3.65**
2	M.Ed (Admin.)	3.60	3.66	3.82	**3.69**
3	B.A PGDE	3.52	3.57	3.45	**3.50**
4	Years of Experience	3.52	3.35	3.42	**3.43**
	Mean	**3.55**	**3.55**	**3.62**	**3.57**

Source: Adapted from the field Data.

Figure 1. The qualification of principals.

Table 2 shows that the use of autocratic administrative strategy by principals had a mean score of 3.41 while the democratic administrative strategy used by principals had a mean score of 3.82. The components, Laissez-faire and Pseudo-democratic administrative strategies had a mean score of 3.50 and 3.43 respectively while the nomothetic, idiographic and transactional administrative strategies had a mean of 3.30, 2.66 and 2.39 respectively. The analysis is further carried out graphically as shown in Figure 2.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

In Nigeria, the posting of principals as school admini-strator depends on a number of factors such as years of experience, seniority and acquisition of educational quail-fications such as the Bachelor of Education and spe-cialization in another subject area (B.Ed) or a single honour with a post graduate degree in education (PGDE). This is in agreement with Okereka (2008) who stated that most principals have the qualifications of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) and Masters Degree (M.Ed) in Administrative, Curriculum, Guidance and Counseling. He regarded these principals as professionally skilled. The strategy adopted by a school principal goes a long way to determine the success or failure of the school. This was corroborated by Nakpodia (2006) who sees the democratic administrative strategy as widely considered the most desirable because the principal emphasis is on listening, accepting, trusting, creating, motivating, advising and encouraging. Mohlabe (2011) also agreed as the author listed some leadership strategies which are: vision consciousness, valuing people, building strong team leaders, knowing and embracing your values, listening effectively and communicating effectively.

Table 2. The adoption of appropriate administrative strategies in schools by principals.

| S/N	Variables	Principals	Teachers	Student	Mean
	No of Respondents	287	1362	1291	
Principal's Qualifications					
1	Autocratic	3.34	3.40	3.50	3.41
2	Democratic	3.60	3.66	3.82	3.82
3	Laissez-faire	3.52	3.57	3.45	3.50
4	Pseudo-democratic	3.52	3.35	3.42	3.43
5	Nomothetic	3.12	3.38	3.39	3.30
6	Idiographic	2.52	2.13	2.34	2.66
7	Transactional	2.43	2.35	2.40	2.39
	Mean	22.05	21.84	22.32	22.51
		3.15	3.12	3.19	**3.22**

Source: Adapted from the field data.
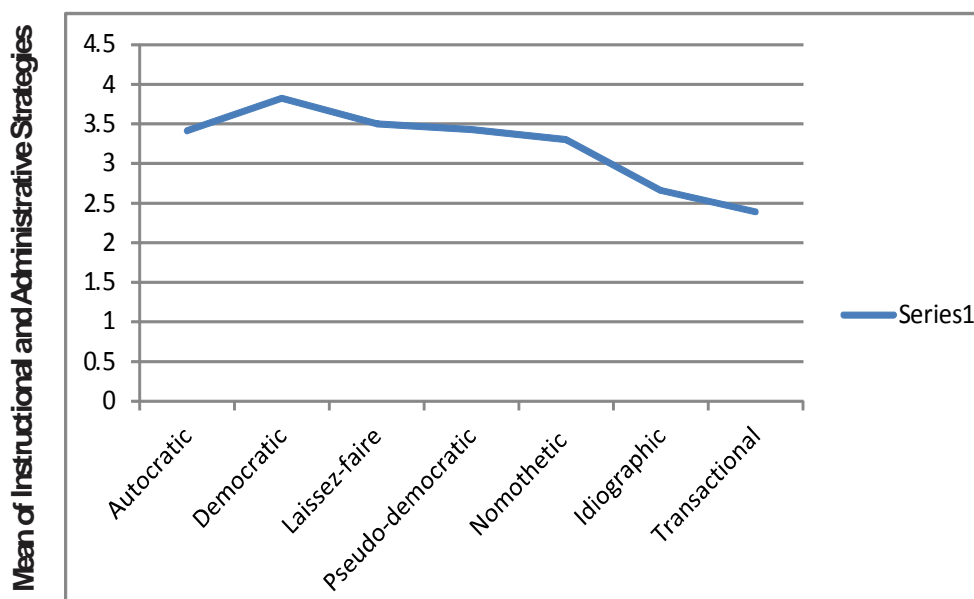
Figure 2. Instructional and administrative strategies of principals.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendations have been made based on conclusions drawn in the research:

1. The principals should ensure that the goals of the national policy on education are achieved through adequate supervision of instructions in the school, carrying the teachers and students along.
2. The principals should explore the instructional and administrative strategy that is most suitable for the school as the situation may demand as there may be no one good strategy for all time, and the improvement of educational performance of students.

Conclusion

It is obvious that various instructional and administrative strategies may be desired in various circumstances, locations and settings. The principal as the helm's man should be creative enough to utilize the strategy which may create a conducive learning atmosphere for the school.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Women aspiring to administrative positions in Kenya municipal primary schools

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Even though female teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools are majority and highly qualified, they fill fewer administrative positions than men. This study assesses the extent of women's participation in leadership positions, society's perception of female leaders, selection criteria of educational administrators, and barriers that affect or hinder them from participation in leadership positions. Findings of this study reveal that gender socialization, beliefs in meritocracy, and the influence of patriarchy create a cycle of discrimination that disadvantage women in career advancement. Further, the existence of gender barriers disproportionately harms women's advancement to senior positions of school administration. Finally, the study proposes remedial solutions to improve their involvement and participation in educational leadership.

Key words: Teachers, positions, primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of educational opportunities in Kenya has contributed to the increased proportion of women entering the paid workforce. Women now have more varied career opportunities bringing about the "feminization" of semi-professions like teaching, social work, nursing and library science. As is the case in Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean, and Canada the majority of teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools are female. Studies by Wilson (1997) in many developed countries, women form the highest proportion of elementary and secondary school teachers. Further up the educational ladder, the percentage of female teachers decreases, and are likely to be found teaching subjects traditionally considered feminine, such as home economics, literature, and art

(Weiler, 1995; Bell and Chase, 1993; Hoffman, 1981; Apple, 1986).

Although women represent the majority of teachers in these countries, they occupy the lower ranks of the profession and are generally controlled and supervised by men. It can be argued that the feminization of teaching has not meant more power or prestige for most women who are teachers. Women continue to be well represented in low-status teaching jobs, while men dominate the powerful positions of school management (Wilson, 1997; Regan and Brooks, 1995; Compton and Sanderson 1990; Acker, 1994). In Kenya, the notion that primary teaching is a suitable and most appropriate career for women has been gaining ground that today they make

Table 1A. Teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools.

Municipal	Male teachers	Female teachers	Total	% Male teachers	% Female teachers
Nairobi	1789	3120	4909	36	64
Thika	550	914	1464	38	62
Mombasa	920	1050	1970	47	53
Nakuru	810	886	1696	48	52
Eldoret	450	668	1118	40	60
Kitale	151	307	458	33	67
Kisumu	700	950	1650	42	58
Total	**5370**	**7895**	**13265**	**40**	**60**

Table 1B. Deputy head teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools.

Municipal	Male deputy head teachers	Female deputy head teachers	Total	% Male Deputy head teachers	% Female deputy head teachers
Nairobi	143	57	200	71	29
Thika	41	27	68	60	40
Mombasa	62	53	115	54	46
Nakuru	44	39	83	53	47
Eldoret	39	33	72	54	46
Kitale	24	20	44	55	45
Kisumu	48	37	85	56	44
Total	**401**	**266**	**667**	**60**	**40**

up the vast majority of school teachers in municipal primary schools by a large margin, but when it comes to high-ranking school posts of administration, they are dominated by men. For instance, women con-stitute over 60% of the teaching staff in municipal primary schools (and over 50% of national populations), but fewer than 20% are administrators. The teaching profession in schools is characterized by a two-tiered system where women comprise 60% of the teachers, but only 42 and 45% of deputy head teachers and head teachers respec-tively (Ombati, 2009).

Statistical data as shown in Tables 1A, B and C. indicate that in the municipal primary schools of Nairobi and Thika, women are equally represented in admini-strative leadership and teaching positions. In other municipalities, there are variations in the extent to which women are represented in headship with some munici-palities practically matching that representation while others lag behind.

Women have made little progress in gaining leadership roles in these schools. The supervisory and administrative positions continue to be filled by men, many of who have little teaching experience. The discrimination against women in the teaching profession is a clear manifestation of bias that they experience in the labor force (Young,

2004). The lack of representation of women in school administration in Kenya means that the skills and qualifications they posses are not sufficiently utilized. Growing literature documents that female educational administrators tend to conduct more unscheduled meetings by others, be more consistent presence in the school, and keep more abreast of instructional programs than men (Riehl and Byrd, 1997; Adler, 1993; Powell, 1993). Women's leadership styles have been shown to be more transformational, participative, and inclusive than the leadership styles of their male counterparts. These qualities combine to create a leadership style that is inclusive, open, consensus building, innovative, colla-borative, collegial and meticulous, according to Evetts et al. (1990). Women also bring to the exercise of leadership an arsenal of strengths, which increasingly are consistent with the current reform efforts in school leadership, governance, and instructional improvement (Eagly and Carli, 2000; Marshall, 1992).

Studies have identified emotional stability, extraversion (outgoing), openness to new experiences, agreeableness and conscientiousness as traits that make women more suited for leadership than their male colleagues (Tallerico and Blount, 2004; Marshall and Olivia, 2005). Despite these attributes, women are less likely than men to be

Table 1C. Head teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools.

Municipal	Male head teachers	Female head teachers	Total	% Male head teachers	% Female head teachers
Nairobi	130	70	200	65	35
Thika	38	30	68	56	44
Mombasa	60	45	105	57	43
Nakuru	43	40	83	51	49
Eldoret	37	35	72	51	49
Kitale	25	19	44	57	43
Kisumu	45	40	85	53	47
Total	**378**	**279**	**657**	**57**	**43**

Source: Unpublished statistical reports from the municipal primary schools of Nairobi, Thika, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kitale and Kisumu 2000/ 2001.

recruited to run for administrative positions, are more likely to be discouraged from running, and are less likely to consider themselves "qualified" to run—even though they are qualified as male candidates. The dearth of women in educational leadership roles—and in whole fields—creates the perception that they do not belong to positions of prominence and power. Therefore, this study examines the barriers that female/women encounter to reaching their full potential in administrative positions in Kenya municipal schools. The study also suggests possible strategies that can enhance women's equal access and full participation in leadership positions.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted at the municipal primary schools of Nairobi and Thika in Kenya to determine obstacles that prevent women from advancing to administrative positions. This qualitative study used interviews with head teachers, deputy head teachers, female teachers and Ministry of Education personnel. Pseudonyms have been used to conceal the identity of the institutions and persons interviewed. Focus group was also conducted on purposively chosen individuals to seek clarification on issues that had arisen during the interviews. Analysis of documents and statistics was done to provide descriptive illustration of women's participation in teaching and administrative positions.

The study findings reveal that women's representation in school administration is still far from proportionate to their representation in the teaching force. The lack of proportional representation in management position is rooted in the workplace culture that defines who is an appropriate candidate for administrative position, the belief that women are inherently unsuited to administrative work due to their early socialization, workplace culture, lack of women mentors and family commitments conflicting with job. However, before presenting the results in detail, selection criteria used to recruit candidates to leadership positions are examined.

Selection of head teachers or principals

Public schools in Kenya are managed by a head teacher or the principal and are assisted by one or more deputy head teachers or principal according to size. These groups are responsible for supervision of education in their respective schools. These positions ideally are filled by teachers advancing within the administration. Traditionally, qualified candidates seeking these positions apply and are interviewed by the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) or agents of the organization a vacancy. Although promotion procedures to senior positions are in theory clear and gender neutral, evidence and informal conversations with women teachers suggest otherwise. Those interviewed for the study indicated that the selection or promotion procedures to senior positions in Kenya public schools are carried out in an ad-hoc manner and seem to be dictated by whim, favoritism, lobbying and other unclear methods. The promotion procedures clearly were subject to abuse because it was not surprising to find administrators with little experience. Perhaps this could explain why some women teachers lamented.

Miss Kibe: Hiring to high positions is based on whom you know rather than what you know in school management (Teacher, Guka Primary School in Thika).

Miss Amina: Most heads are known to have secured their appointments due to the influence of "tall relatives." This system is rotten. I am just a classroom teacher yet some kids I taught the other day are head teaches (Teacher, Milima Primary School in Nairobi).

When educational officers for Nairobi and Thika were questioned about the criteria used in promoting teachers to head teachers, they seemed to indicate that promotion procedures were not spelt out to ensure promotion of qualified candidates in a transparent manner.

Mr. Farah: Appointment to some positions like deputy or head teacher is subject to availability. However, there are no clearly spelled procedures to ensure that a qualified teacher is promoted at the right time (Municipal Education Officer at Thika)

Mrs. Muna: The procedures we rely on to appoint head teachers are defective. They are subjective and encourage nepotism and corruption (City Education Officer at Nairobi).

When asked to account for their promotion, head and deputy teachers offered contradictory responses.

Mrs. Hamisi: Those who are complaining with the way head teachers are appointed do not understand that on top of academic qualification and teaching experiences criteria such as accepted by the community, conduct and personality matter (Headmaster, Hania

Primary School in Thika).

Mr. Guda: I was appointed through the right channels to this position. The Kenya
Union of Teachers could be making a lot of noise if appointments were not
Transparent (Deputy, Njema Primary School in Nairobi

Mrs. Were: I have distinguished administrative experience having served as a deputy and classroom teacher for a long period of time. However, there is a lot to be desired in the way appointment is done (Headmistress, Merinda Primary School in Nairobi).

Mrs. Mugo: Mediocre people have been appointed due to loyalty and kickbacks. I know some of them (Headmistress, Kago Primary School in Thika).

Mr. Murungi: You will be surprised to find out that without the
 "invisible forces" some of us would not be where are. Some of us in these positions will not agree that the system is rotten (Deputy, Bendera Primary School in Thika).

According to Eshiwani (1993) and Maranga (1993), candidates recruited to the headship position do not need to take a formal management course. Irrespective of gender, an effective classroom teacher of considerable experience should automatically be considered fit for appointment as a headmaster or headmistress without undergoing any kind of formal training in the field. The way in which promotion is made n Kenya decimates against women based on sex, marital status, and having young children to care for. Studies have established that many women attempting to transition to leadership positions face hidden barriers that make senior position difficult to attain (Young, 2004). For example, women may not understand the need to position themselves for promotion by taking on responsibilities in their schools, volunteering for activities, and seeking the advice and patronage of senior administrators, instead may believe that academic qualifications and extended service will be enough (Marshall, 1992; Coleman, 2001; Young and McLeod, 2001).

When asked why teachers aspire to senior positions in school administration, teachers provided these responses:
Mrs. Lado: When one is promoted to be a head teacher, he /she get a salary increase that goes with that position (Teacher, Kiboko Primary in Thika).

Miss Mzee: Headships in Kenya area source of affluence. Heads fleece schools. I have yet to see a school head that looks miserable. It is a position with great benefits (Teacher, Simba Primary School in Nairobi).

Mr. Owino: We are a power unto ourselves. We exercise our power not only on those we control but also we have a big say on what goes on local politics (Headmaster, Malaika Primary School in Nairobi).

Mrs. Mwenda: Headship means power. It means being the chief decision-maker. You also gain recognition for what you are doing (Headmistress, Mogumo Primary School in Thika).

These responses confirm the view that the position of a school administrator is a source of power, prestige, status and greater monetary rewards. Since school administrative positions represent the logical step for upward career mobility, the positions are attractive and many teachers aspired to obtain them. According to Shakeshaft, administration's benefits are not only limited to pecuniary rewards (1993). School administration is a source of

recognition, respect and authority, as well as the opportunity to have a greater voice in decision-making. In addition, for many teachers, the chance to "escape" the classroom may be the most attractive reward that administration has to offer. However, those recruitment procedures disproportionately favor men seeking senior administrative positions that carry the most responsibility and influence and highest salaries (Grogan and Brunner 2005; Shakeshaft, 1993).

RESULTS

Bias and discrimination

Although women have taken great strides professionally and socially, they are often subtly and consistently denied full access to the same opportunities as men. Overt discrimination, reliance on false and negative stereotypes, and subconscious bias have prevented women in Kenya municipal primary schools from obtaining fair treatment in hiring, evaluations, and promotions in employment. Much as laws have been passed to provide equal opportunities at the workplace, women still hit a lower glass ceiling than men. Discrimination in the workplace comes with many different faces. In its most basic form, it involves outright exclusion of women, based solely on gender. Women have been largely excluded from "good old boys "networks traditionally of individuals who hold power in an organization (Wit, 1990; Compton and Sanders, 1990; Shakeshaft, 1989). The presence of a "good old boys" network may encourage action (i.e., actively and deliberately providing information and assistance to males in the network regarding job opportunities), or inaction (i.e., actively and deliberately withholding vital information from women that keeps them outside the political "knowledge" loop). It also may result in a form of complicity (i.e., awareness that there are forces at work that benefit certain individuals with no steps taken to challenge or interrupt them). As a consequence, if a "network" exists (which may be largely hidden, but have visible effects), it may serve as a disincentive and keep those on the outside (mostly women) from entering or trying to advance in leadership. Women are often at a disadvantage in penetrating these powerful networks because informal meetings happen in secretive "locker rooms" beyond their reach. In the United States, for example, studies have noted that as a result of networks, whether real or imagined, women believe that they have little chance for advancement into administration. Brown and Ralph have noted that such exclusionary practices have discouraged women from aspiring to positions of leadership because they believe that it is sponsorship more than ability that matters (1996). Davidson and Cooper also suggest that certain established traditional male institutions have developed exclusively male customs and traditions that perpetuate the "good old boys" networks and safeguard them from female intrusion (1992). Ozga observes the exclusion of women from these networks because of the

difficulties associated with breaking into them (1993). The interviewees spoke of the exclusively "male bonding" that takes place after work hours, during sporting events, and in clubs and bars. In these meetings, male managers conduct significant amount of business and made useful amount of contacts; women, however, are excluded are from these meetings and the associated benefits.

Discrimination against women in the wage economy in Kenya goes back to the establishment of colonial rule. Through colonization, capitalism intervened in the existing social economic order. One of the consequences of the new system was that the value of traditional women's labor was reduced considerably because the home and the work place were separated. The state and industrial concerns reserved most urban wage labor for men. From then on, women were controlled in two ways. They were controlled through traditional means in rural areas, but also now through the colonial laws that determined that women had no rights to the ownership of land or control over the produce they cultivated.

Several aspects of the study reveal that women have a harder time becoming senior teacher, have fewer support structures, and do not fit the "image" of leadership, all of which have a negative impact on their ability to advance. Discrimination against women in education and employment has resulted in the establishment of a legacy that has not been easy to overcome. According to the view of some members in the focus group discussion, integrating women into leadership will require the following:

Miss. Rutto: Vacant leadership positions ought to be made known. This is the most perfect method of attracting potential candidates. Also, fair procedure for selecting eligible candidates should be established (Deputy Headmistress, Nyota Primary School in Nairobi).

Mr. Kamau: There is a need to develop good policy guidelines that are based on academic and professional qualifications, experience, job performance, discipline, public relations and professional qualifications. Women should also be represented in the selection process (Headmaster, Ngazi Primary School and KNUT Executive Secretary of Nairobi Branch).

Mrs. Mwenda: Teachers need to be constantly evaluated to ascertain their competence in handling administrative tasks. Evaluation tests, which would keep teachers keep abreast with professional competencies and development, are ideal. This could also provide additional criteria for promotion (Headmistress, Kago Primary School in Thika).

Mrs. Muna: The Education Ministry through the inspectorate unit should also streamline inspections of teachers to keep records of the performance of teachers in the field with a view of making recommendations for promotions. The inspectors need to be given resources to visit schools and see what really happens in the classrooms and gauge teachers' abilities. There is also a need for the Ministry of Education to formulate a fair method of establishing teachers' abilities beyond relying on the head teacher's recommendations.

One can deduce from these responses that a considerable amount of change must occur if women are to have equal opportunities in leadership in Kenya. The Ministry of Education and Teachers' Service Commission of Kenya needs to establish guidelines for the selection and promotion of school administrators. According to Miss Rutto and Mr. Kamau, standards and criteria for promotion should be a matter of public knowledge and should allow for the broad participation of various groups in decision-making. Mrs. Muna and Mrs. Mwenda suggest the need for clear strategy to promote deserving teachers and to ensure that high standards are maintained in the profession.

Socialization

The absence of women in administrative positions in schools can also be attributed to their socialization. Gender socialization, which in Kenyan societies starts from birth and continues into adulthood for both boys and girls, prepares children for adult roles as wives [in the case of the girls] and male heads of households [in case of the boys]. As children age, their gender roles or differences grow. While boys learn to eschew the domestic arena, and girls are taught the public spheres not their rightful place. The women interviewed in this study capture these differences.

Mrs. Lado: I grew up knowing that women cannot move far from their home in search of work because they have the primary responsibility for caring for children and for performing most of the household chores (Teacher, Kiboko Primary School in Thika).

Miss Mukami: Well, let me put it this way, the girls who grow up boasting and arguing like boys, they get themselves a really bad name. You are discouraged from being independent minded because that is a trait of boys (Teacher, Milima Nairobi Primary School in Nairobi).

Mrs. Sinda: The children of these days are so different from our days. My daughter always argues with me why she should be the one doing everything and her brother does nothing. If the brother helps, well, it is all right, but if he is outside playing around with his friends, she gets pissed if I keep asking for her hand again and again. She engages the brother in soccer a competition something- I could not dream doing at her age (Teacher, Ngazi Primary School in Thika).

The traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes regarding the role and status of women in society are still prevalent; making it difficult for women to disengage from the cultural and traditional requirement least they get ostracized. The gender demarcation and differentiation of lines of work are obvious in the organization of most schools where girls and boys are assigned different responsibilities. In Thika and Nairobi schools, it was observed that domestic related duties such as sweeping the classroom, cleaning, picking up garbage or handing out books and supplies were mostly assigned to girls. In contrast, boys were assigned responsibilities that necessitated a measure of authority or control. These tasks included monitoring the classrooms, taking roll call, running errands for the teachers, and serving in some kind of leadership roles such as prefects or head boys. One can argue that the way in which responsibilities are assigned in Kenyan schools causes students internalize the assumption that the girls' primary roles and ambition are to be wives and mothers while boys are to be leaders.

By the time children reach adulthood, they have already experienced so many instances of gender discrimination and inequality, that most of them take it as a "normal" part of life. The socialization to which girls are subjected causes them to lower their educational and occupational expectations, which explains why they end up being confined to the private sphere with diminished accesses to public life and leadership positions. Bem (1993) points out that not only do cultural expectations for masculine and feminine traits differ but, they are at polar opposites; masculinity is associated with action, decisions and strength, whereas femininity is associated with passivity, fragility, and vulnerability (1993). As authority and decisiveness are traits associated with leadership, it follows that men are often viewed more positively as leaders than women. Women are usually pressured into becoming complacent. Interviews with education officers in Nairobi and Thika municipal councils revealed that most female teachers never struggle to get promoted. "They waited to be looked at whenever a chance arose," said Mr. Farah Olade, Education Officer Thika. For example, Miss Misoi of Vitabu Primary School in Nairobi thinks that the men in her school ought to apply first for headships before she does. She said, "In my thinking, men are the ones who need to be head teacher first. For me, time is not ripe to start imagining headship respon-sibilities."

Perhaps the societal expectations of how women will behave as administrators led some senior female school administrators to complain that they were given fewer chances to make mistakes than men, especially during the early days of their appointments. They noted that the novelty of their gender wears off after a year or two, when the "Amazons" (nickname for headmistresses in Nairobi) prove the doubting Thomases wrong by being effective administrators.

Mrs. Mwenda: You know very well that few women are running schools. You attend meetings where people do not even realize there is a woman there until much later. I have been addressed as 'mister' and it takes long time to be addressed appropriately (Headmistress, Mogumo Primary School in Thika).

Mrs. Were: I have encountered a lot of prejudice during my career as the head teacher. I can recall being mis-taken many times as the secretary. People come to my office asking if I can allow them to see the headmaster. An interesting encounter is when somebody found me seated in the reception area and thought that I was the headmaster's wife waiting for him to come out (Headmistress, Merinda Primary School, Nairobi).

Mrs. Ochieng: It is sometimes seen as inconceivable for a woman to be a head teacher. Questions of how you will be able to enforce discipline (among other things), more especially to the male students, who are seen as the most difficult group of students to deal with, are asked (Headmistress, Suswa Primary School in Nairobi).

The conclusion that one can draw from these responses is that management structures in Kenyan schools are not gender neutral. School administrations at all levels reinforce the "great man" model that women have to confront in order to become administrators. The "great man" model often portrays leaders as heroic, mythic, domineering, authoritative and assertive. The "great man" model is an intractable obstacle for women seeking positions of influence because of the mismatch between the qualities traditionally associated both with women and leadership. That is why when a woman becomes a leader, she is expected by society to fail, thus "proving" that women are incapable leaders (Tallerico, 2000; Coleman, 2001; Gupton and Slick, 1996). According to Marshall, the self-fulfilling prophecy" on part of the society labels women as failures (1992). "We know she is incapable. Let's just see how she goes about failing," said Mrs. Mugo of Kago Primary School when she was appointed as the Headmistress of General Kago Primary in Thika. Meanwhile, men, who are associated with attributes of physical strength, readily given the right to command, control and manage schools (Marshall and Kasten, 1994; Skrla, 2001). The very same behavior, then, can serve to enhance the esteem in which men are held, and diminish the esteem held for a woman. According to Mrs. Tonga, Deputy Head Teacher of Lima Primary School in Nairobi, "…not many of us dream of becoming school heads given the double standard by which we are judged."

Society continues to rate men higher than women on most of the qualities associated with leadership. What is assertive in a man seems abrasive in a woman, and female leaders risk seeming too feminine or not feminine enough. On the one hand, they may appear too "soft"-

unable or unwilling to make the tough calls required in positions of greatest influence. Those imitating the "male model" are often viewed as strident and overly aggressive or ambitious. Women in most cultures are expected to be compassionate, nurturing, and to put their own needs aside on a regular basis. If a woman is not compassionate and adopts masculine behavior, she is considered a bad woman. Studies have confirmed that women are rated lower as leaders when they adopt authoritative seemingly masculine styles, particularly when the evaluators are men, or when the role is one typically occupied by men

Since men have dominated leadership positions for many years, "society's views of the characteristics of effective leaders" often align with traditionally male characteristics, explained Mrs. Mugo, the Headmistress of Kago Primary Primary, Thika. She was of the view that educational officials do not associate character traits that are mostly possessed by women with strong leadership ability and therefore do not encourage women to pursue leadership opportunities. Zeda, the Headmaster of Baraka Primary School in Thika was of the opinion that school administrations at all levels-reinforced the male-centered bias that women who could make great leaders "did not even see themselves in a particular role" and will pursue leadership positions.

Absence of role models

Women are highly visible as teachers of young children. However, as children progress to higher educational rungs, the percentage of female teachers' decreases (Wilson, 1997; Weiler, 1995). The invisibility of women as role models to older students can be accounted for by a number of structural problems. These include high levels of illiteracy among women, lack of self-confidence, negative societal attitudes towards women in leadership and the lack of resources to seek office. In the top decision-making levels of the public and private sectors, women are greatly underrepresented. The invisibility of women in top decision levels prompted Miss Kibe, of Guka Primary School in Thika to lament.

"In and out of the home, it is a man's world; they dominate the political field; they dominate the organized economic field; they dominate the church; they dominate the military; they dominate the civil service - no wonder there is so much talk about women empowerment."

The under representation of women in senior positions in the Ministry of Education illustrates the general extent to which women are excluded from its decision-making positions (Table 2).

The United Nations Development (UNDP) Human Development Report (Table 3) indicates that Kenya's performance with respect to women's participation in

leadership or politics in the African region in 1998 was dismal even when compared with countries such as Ethiopia and Rwanda emerging from conflict and war. Research studies have established that under-represen-tation of women in decision-making positions has denied other women sufficient role models (Adler et al., 1993; Pigford and Tonnsen, 1993). There is no doubt that without the presence of a sufficient number of successful women in administrative positions, women might assume that only truly exceptional females can assume leadership roles.

It may be argued that women lack the patience to walk the long and narrow path to administrative positions."With the struggle you have to be involved in before becoming a head, sometimes it is pointless to waste all your time fighting for what you might not be. Many of us are just content with what we are," Mrs. Mate of Ngata Primary School in Nairobi remarked, for example.

The few women who enter into school administration face problems of isolation and loneliness. Female head and deputy head teachers lament.

Mrs. Were: In this position, the worst compliment one can get is to be totally ignored. If you're not strong enough, you could suffer an inferiority complex as a result of being ignored completely, especially on account of being a woman (Headmistress, Merinda Primary School in Nairobi).

Mrs. Mugo: Sometimes you may feel lonely. But, at the same time, being a woman headmistress, it can be a privilege and an advantage if you use it in the right way. You are more conspicuous and, therefore, you can get easier access to the people you need to work with (Headmistress, Kago Primary School in Thika).

When asked to give suggestions as to how the number of women in administrative positions could be increased, the respondents suggested affirmative action. "Deliberate efforts such as setting aside some vacancies for women need to be introduced if women were to advance to leadership," Mrs. Chege of Lena Primary School sug-gested. Mr. Zeda, Deputy Headmaster of Jamuhuri Primary School, also supported the application of affir-mative action as a way of getting women into school management. But the Thika Municipal Education Officer, Mr. Farah, and Miss Mukami of Primary Nairobi School opposed the use of affirmative action. "Affirmative action will water down the academic and professional promotion standards because women will be favored," Mr. Farah said. Affirmative action has often been mistaken to mean, among others things, promotion of mediocre people on the basis of their ethnicity, gender, creed and geographical location. Miss Mukami, for example, was of the opinion that unfair privileging will place wrong people in positions for which they are not qualified. However,

Table 2. Representation in senior positions in the Ministry of Education.

Administrator	Male	Female	Total	Female %
Permanent Secretary	1	0	1	0.0
Deputy Secretary	4	0	4	0.0
Undersecretary	3	0	3	0.0
Senior Assistant Secretary	3	0	3	0.0
Total	11	0	11	0.0
Professional	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Female %**
Director of Education	1	0	1	0.0
Senior Deputy Director of Education	4	1	5	20.0
Deputy Director of Education	17	2	19	10.5
Assistant Director of Education	53	19	72	26.4
Senior Education Officer	66	18	84	21.4
Total	**141**	**40**	**181**	**22.1**

Source: "Kenya National Scorecard 1998: Indicators of Development in Education." Prepared by Forum for African Women Educationist Kenya Chapter- FAWEK, 1999.

Table 3. Women participation in leadership and politics in African region.

Country	Government leaders %	Ministerial level %	Sub-ministerial %
Kenya	6.9	0	8.8
Uganda	11.2	13.2	9.8
Tanzania	11.8	12.9	11.1
Rwanda	14.5	5.0	20.0
Ethiopia	13.7	5.0	16.0
Sierra Leone	10.0	9.1	10.5
Namibia	15.6	8.3	16.5
South Africa	15.6	14.8	15.9

Source: UNDP. Participation of Women in Leadership and Politics in African Region. The United Nations Development Human Development Report 1998.

affirmative action guarantees women protection from inherent discrimination and ensures their realistic partici-pation in school administration. All this begins with revisiting the education system. If it was colonial education that set in motion social disparities and practices, then it should be post colonial education, which should reverse negative perceptions. It is by reviewing the education system that the needs of the African woman may be realized. Mrs. Chege of Lena Primary School also suggested that affirmative action programs are necessary if the number of women in school administration is to increase.

In countries such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and the Netherlands, affirmative action measures and pre-ferential treatment of women have resulted in an increased number of women in administration. In these countries, women account for 30 to 40 percent of the parliamentarians. This has been known to bring about substantial changes in employment policies that are beneficial to female workers (Wilson and Iles 1999). In Portugal, the rotational program, in which management positions rotate around different school positions has served to improve women's chances of permanent promotion into those positions

According to Gituto and Kabira, embracing affirmative action policies can increase women's participation in political parties, trade unions and civil society organi-zations (1999). A number of countries that surround Kenya have adopted affirmative action policies to some extent. For example, in Uganda and Mozambique, governments or ruling parties reserve 30 percent of the seats in the national, regional and local assemblies for women. Lessons can be learned from these countries if substantial changes are to be introduced in Kenya. But

inasmuch as the constitutions of Mozambique , Ethiopia, South Africa and Uganda all provide for equal rights for men and women, as does the current Kenyan constitution these provisions are contradicted by concessions to customary law, the perpetuation of highly discriminative civil and penal codes, religious laws and the absence of family laws among other legal measures (1990, 1993, 1995).

Work-family demands

Women face difficulties in employment because in many developing economies, they are generally responsible for domestic duties including caring for children and elderly relatives, taking care of the household, gathering water and firewood, and tending to the family garden, among other daily chores. Studies on women in leadership suggest that women find themselves torn between enormous demands of administration and societal expectations for women in terms of family responsibilities (Tanaka, 1995; Young and McLeod, 2001). This tension is in part the result of a gender norm, which values men at work (the breadwinner) and women at home (the caregiver). The result is that women, much more than men, must figure out how to balance family responsibilities and make choices about what will be "given up" in order to pursue leadership positions. The responses below reveal how family responsibilities adversely affect women in their careers.

Mr. Owino: I have tremendous respect and regard for women. I have said many times that I would not want to be a woman if there was such a thing as re-incarnation. I would love to be a man all over again! (Headmaster, Mailaika Primary School, Nairobi).

Mrs. Mwakisa: Between a program to be attended and my family, they get the first preference. It is very hard work attending to two obligations at the same time. You cannot give 100 percent of your input to both (Teacher, Jimbo Primary School in Nairobi).

Mrs. Kaburi: Children, husband, and illness. Too much work and not enough time to think and dream of anything. The physical and emotional demands of my family have to be attended to first (Teacher, Mugo School, and Thika).

Mrs. Ochieng: The nature of school leadership is such that it extends well beyond official working hours. Few women are able to justify their spouses and families why they need to be away from the safety and comfort of their homes well after 4: 00 p.m. (Deputy Headmistress, Suswa Primary School in Nairobi).

The responses reveal that the combined responsibilities

of family and career are a challenges and a disadvantage to women. Mrs. Were, Headmistress at Merinda Primary School in Nairobi, for instance, had to wait until her children were grown before venturing into a headship. Mrs. Ochieng of Suswa Primary School recalls how she often shortcuts staff discussions and demanding assignments so that she can rush home and attend to the family. The strict division of labor commonly observed in most parts of Africa causes women to concentrate more on family matters than their career. "My position is not easy; it requires a high level of flexibility and long hours that often stretch into evening. Most times, I leave the office without completing my assignment to attend to my spousal responsibilities," said Mrs. Mwenda of Mogumo Primary School in Thika. Perhaps a day in the life of the Murungis' (a teacher couple) in Bendera Primary School in Thika Municipality of Kenya and a South African female teacher illustrated how women are confronted with concurrent responsibilities (Table 4).

The observation of Mrs. Mwakisa of Jimbo Primary School in Nairobi demonstrates the challenges faced by many women who have to maintain a balance between responsibilities at home and at work. With a bag full of books, 45-year-old Mrs. Mwakisa, a mother of five returns home from school at 5:00 pm. Meanwhile her husband Mr. Mwakisa, a teacher in the same school, stays back and attends to assignment until 6: 00 pm. He then heads straight to a local pub to lounge with friends. When he comes home, he expects the wife to have attended to the family routine, and completed the household chores. Mrs. Mwakisa rarely learns current affairs, except through her husband. She rarely listens to the radio nor has time to read the daily newspaper, let alone finish the assignments she carries from school on time. It is as if the newspaper and radio are the property of the husband. The scenario may play out slightly differently elsewhere, but the basic observation of the double burdens borne by women with careers is similar across the various parts of the country. There is no doubt that the double burdens borne by women are an opportunity cost in their career work and progression to higher positions.

Mrs. Sinda: My children are sick. I cannot report to work; my husband is sick, I have to attend to him; the maid goes without notice, I miss report or come to school late and leave early. Poor woman! Who bothers to know my contribution to the family? (Teacher, Ngazi Primary School, Nairobi).

Mr. Farah: When a woman is still at the age of child bearing and nursing, promoting her to headship is inviting problems. Soon you will be receiving excuses that I cannot attend school because of sickness in my family, the maid has left, and other related excuses (Municipal Education Officer, Thika).

Mrs. Lado: Women are more affected by home and family

Table 4. Time spent in career and family responsibilities.

Time	South African woman teacher	Kenyan female teacher	Kenyan male teacher
3:30 a.m.	I wake up and study	Asleep	Asleep
4:30 a.m.	I make fire and warm water for my husband and children	Asleep	Asleep
5:00 a.m.	I start cleaning the house and sweeping the yard	I wake up; light the stove, warm water for my children and husband.	Asleep
5:30 a.m.	I wash the children and also wash myself	I prepare children for school (e.g. washing and dressing them)	I wake up, take a bath and dress
6:15 a.m.	I make breakfast for my family	Making breakfast for the family	I take breakfast
7:00 a.m.	We have breakfast	I see children off to school.	I leave for work
7:25 a.m.	I dress the children	I clean the house and utensil	At work
8:05 a.m.	The children and I walk to school	I soak clothes and attend to my chicken	At work
8:30 a.m.	School starts and continues until 2:00 p.m	I take a bath, dress and go to work	At work
2:00 p.m.	I do the following day's work, i.e. marking children's homework and making preparation for the following day, until 3:30 p.m	I come back home, check and feed my chicken, have lunch and go back to school	At work
3:25 p.m.	I walk back home and arrive 4.00 p.m.	I go back to work	At work
4:15 p.m.	Wash the dishes we used for breakfast.	I come back from school, wash clothes and go to get my children from the bus stage	At work
4:30 p.m.	I make fire and prepare supper	I help my kids with their homework and attend to my kitchen	I am at the social place
7:00 p.m.	We have supper	Prepare dinner	At social place.
7:30 p.m.	I wash the dishes	I have dinner and wash utensil	I arrive home and have dinner
8:00 p.m.	I wash the children	I prepare children to go to bed	I watch T.V. and look at the day's newspaper
8:35 p.m.	I help the children with schoolwork	I attend to my schoolwork, mark student papers	I do my job assignment.
9:30 p.m.	We go to bed	I warm water for my husband's bath	I take bath and retire to bed
10.00 p.m.	Asleep	I take bath and retire to bed	Asleep

Source: Modified from Davies, L., (1996). Teacher Education: Gender and Development: Global Perspective of Teacher Education. " in Oxford Studies in Comparative Education.

responsibilities than men. We cannot be flexible as men; this counts in promotion (Teacher, Kiboko, Primary School, and Nairobi).

Women are more likely to take on greater responsibilities for their families, taking parental and dependant-care leave, spending more time with the children and performing household tasks. This also has a significant influence on career development for women. When there is a promotion to a headship, men are likely to be the beneficiaries (Skrla, 2001; Brown and Ralph, 1996; Hunter, 1993; Loder, 2005). Dual responsibilities make women, but not men, appear less competent and less available to meet workplace responsibilities. The term "working father" is rarely used and carries none of the

adverse connotations of "working mother."

Women experienced more tension between the time demands of job and their family responsibilities. They find themselves torn between enormous demands of administration and societal expectations for women in terms of family responsibilities (Coleman, 2001; Loder, 2005; Reskin and Padvic, 1994). This tension is in part the result of a gender norm, which values men at work (the breadwinner) and women at home (the caregiver). The result is that women, much more than men, must figure out how to balance family responsibilities and the demands of work (Andrews, 1993; Tanaka, 1995). This is captured well in the remarks of Miss Mosoi of Vitabu Primary School in Nairobi, "At this point in my life, the last thing that I can yearn for is to be a headmistress. I am in

a steady relationship and my concern at this time is to get married. The truth is that I imagine losing my boyfriend if I am promoted and then transferred from Nairobi."Similarly, Mrs. Lado of Kiboko Primary School turned down a promotion transfer to a rural school because of family ties.

During in-depth interviews, respondents lobbed for onsite daycare centers, comprehensive policies that enable women to balance work and family responsibilities, modern conveniences to make household work easier, flexible working hours and socialization of men to help with domestic responsibilities as a way of achieving balance.

Mrs. Sinda: We need affordable quality day care centers where we can drop kids in the morning and get them in the evening instead of depending on these unreliable country/village (maids) side girls (Teacher, Ngazi Primary School, Nairobi).

Mrs. Lado: The answer is provision of childcare facilities to those of us with infants (Teacher, Kiboko Primary, and Thika).

Mrs. Kaburi: Our burdens will become somehow lighter if we were to afford washing machines, vacuum cleaners, automatic food cookers and other modern conveniences that make housework easy (Teacher, Mugo Primary School, Thika).

Mr. Zeda: Women's ability to balance work and family will depend heavily on employer attitudes, the presence of flexible workplace policies; child cares cost and availability, and access to time off for family emergencies (Deputy Head Teacher, Baraka Primary School, and Thika)

Mr. Owino: Establishing of comprehensive policies that enables women to balance work and family responsibilities (Headmaster, Mailaika Primary School, and Nairobi).

Miss Rutto: Encouraging sharing family responsibilities and avoid observing the strict traditional gender division of labor if they are to live up to modern challenges (Deputy Headmistress, Nyota Primary School, and Nairobi).

In Ireland, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, the provision of day care centers, adoption of comprehensive policies and availability of modern conveniences and support from men have enabled women to balance work and family responsibilities more easily (Wilson, 1997). This is worth trying in Kenya if women are to participate equally in employment.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This study establishes that women are majority teachers in Kenya municipal primary schools but hold fewer positions in school administration. Findings reveal that gender-related factors often deter women from entering school administrative roles and impede their career advancement. These factors include lack of role models and mentors, male-centric attitudes about what constitutes leadership and family responsibilities tend to fall mostly on women. Other explanations include societal beliefs surrounding gender socialization; patriarchy, meritocracy, and lack of a pipeline between teaching and administration positions. It is argued that equal participation of men and women in school administration will make schools more representative of the composition of society; it will also make schools more accountable and transparent, and ensures that the interests of women are taken into account in policy-making. From an equity perspective, this situation requires strategies, policies and regulations, research, training, networking and advocacy to promote the status of women in education and leadership positions.

Conflict of Interests

The author have not declared any conflict of interests.

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Full Length Research Paper

Orientation impact on performance of undergraduate students in University of Cape Coast (Ghana)

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Orientation is widely conceived to encompass activities that support the transition into educational institutions. The University of Cape Coast, Ghana places a premium on orientation for fresh year students and yet the impact of such programmes on students' performance remains a difficult thing to determine. This study, therefore, focuses on finding out the impact of orientation on the academic performance of students. The study used the descriptive survey design and multiple sampling procedures to select 250 Level 200 students from the university. Data were collected primarily through questionnaire. The results revealed among other things that orientation programmes provide fresh students with good academic information regarding academic programmes, policies and regulation that enhance students' learning. Also, it came out that participation in orientation significantly and positively impacted their academic performance. The outcome also showed that a significant difference existed in the mean Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) scores of students who participated in the 2012 orientation programme for fresh students and those who did not. Based on these findings, a recommendation was made for organisers to plan orientation programmes geared towards helping students to maximise learning.

Key words: Students' orientation, UCC, CGPA scores.

INTRODUCTION

Orientation can be considered as any effort by an institution to help students make a successful transition from their previous environment into the collegiate experience (Upcraft and Farnsworth, 1984). The goals for such programmes may include academic preparation, personal adjustment, and increasing awareness of students and parents during the transition process (Perigo and Upcraft, 1989; Cook, 1996). Although orientation programmes have been part of the higher education landscape for more than a century, it was not until recent decades that these types of programmes have gained

popularity and numbers. Strumpf et al. (2003) found that, between 1980 and 2000, more students and parents were attending orientation programmes. Hunter et al. (2003) estimated that 74 per cent of the institutions of higher learning within the United States have an orientation course or first-year seminar. Institutions of higher education realize the value of these programmes in addressing transitional issues for the many types of students enrolling in higher education.

Some studies attributed the higher Cumulative Grade Point Averages (CGPAs) of student participants due to

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chance (Sidle and McReynolds, 1999), while some studies found non-participants to have earned higher GPAs (Prola et al., 1977; Mark and Romano, 1982). Suffice it to say that the literature on orientation programmes and courses yielded varied results as it relates to the impact on academic performance (Nadler and Miller, 1997). Despite the broad recognition of their potential, institutions of higher learning in Ghana such as the universities struggle with little success in transitioning students through orientation. Studies in the United States, however, have placed the first-year retention rate for community colleges at slightly less than 50 per cent (Rode, 2004). Perhaps the challenge of public universities to successfully transition and retain students in the university environment has much to do with the kinds of students that are enrolling in these institutions. In the USA, Community-college students are often first-gene-ration and lower-ability students (Cohen and Brawer, 2003).

Some years back, the University of Cape Coast, Ghana offered no pre-enrollment orientation programme or intervention that gave new students an overview of the university. At that time, students had two methods by which they could enroll in courses at the university: they could only self-advise, and or they could visit an advising office (Student Affairs Section) to receive information about placement testing and programme requirements. With only these avenues of entry into the university, research has shown that as a result, students often lacked comprehensive information regarding curricula requirements and had a limited understanding of course requirements (Gentry et al. 2006; Booker, 2006). Again, students who opted to participate in orientation were often faced with long queues at both the designated venues for the orientation and registration of students (Hollins, 2004). Students also lacked important knowledge about institutional policies, services, courses and resources on campus that could aid them in a successful transition into the university and ultimately help them achieve their academic goals. If orientation programmes (which, target fresh men and women) are so important, then what is their impact on the academic performance of students? It is in a quest to seek answers to these glaring questions that the researchers have been motivated to put this study into being.

Statement of the problem

Perhaps one of the most under emphasised strategies for achieving student success within the university is the development and implementation of orientation for new students to the university environment. The University of Cape Coast, like other public universities have always made orientation a core item for fresh year students. Despite the importance of orientation to the new

students, literature on the subject is very scanty if not unavailable especially in Ghana where the subject of orientation is virtually swept under the carpet. In other words, very little research has been conducted in the Ghanaian context to show the effects of new-students' orientation programmes on students' academic success. The knowledge gap created provided the researchers the sufficient impetus to conduct this study. The primary purpose of this study was to explore impact of orientation programme on students' academic performance (CGPA) in the University of Cape Coast.

Research questions/hypotheses

In order to delve into the subject under study, a research question and two research hypotheses were formulated.

1. What are students' views on the significance of the orientation programme for fresh students in the University of Cape Coast?
2. H_0: There is no significant correlation between partici-pation in students' orientation programme and academic performance of students.
H_1: There is a significant correlation between participation in students' orientation and academic performance of students.
3. H_0: The mean CGPA scores of second year students who participated in the 2012 orientation programme were not statistically different from the mean CGPA scores of students who did not take part in that orientation programme.
H_1: The mean CGPA scores of second year students who participated in the 2012 orientation programme were statistically different from the mean CGPA scores of students who did not take part in that orientation programme.

Significance of the study

The outcome of this research has significant implications for designing and implementing strategic support inter-ventions for fresh year students in our tertiary universities. This material would provide insight into university authorities and the public relation unit on the rudiments of efficient organization of orientation programmes for undergraduate students. Again, the current study could be potentially beneficial to undergraduate students in particular and graduate students in general since it would expose them to the importance of participating in orien-tation programmes. The study would also serve as a framework for evaluating the success or otherwise of future orientation programmes for students in tertiary institutions. Finally, this study would provide an excellent starting point and an appropriate literature base for
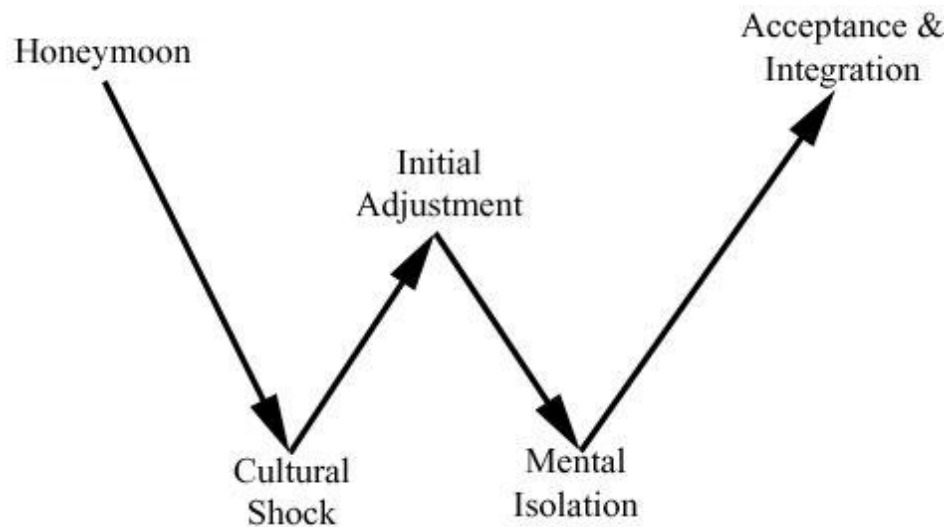
Figure 1. The W–Curve Model showing process of students' adjustment to new learning environments **(**Zeller and Mosier, 1993).

those who wish to further interrogate other dimensions of students' orientation in Ghana and elsewhere.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The W-curve

The W-Curve is a predictable pattern of stages which occurs when a person experiences cultural shock. This is based upon research done with students studying abroad. Zeller and Mosier (1993) found that the W-Curve could also be applied to first-year college students and the phases they go through in adapting to a new culture. It is normal to have the ups and downs of the W-Curve, and knowing about this may help make the transition easier. At the first signs of culture shock, some first-year students may think this means they have made a mistake about going to college or university or that they have chosen the wrong institution. With time this doubt in their minds gets cleared with orientation. If they see that this is just part of a journey that everyone goes through, they may be better able to take it all in stride as shown in Figure 1.

The honeymoon

Honeymoon starts before students first arrive on campus (ie., school packets, housing assignments, orientation and moving away from parental oversight). Overall feeling here is often characterised by one of excitement and positive anticipation. It is common for students to begin to

have some feelings of homesickness mixed in with all of the fun and energy of a new beginning.

Culture shock

At this stage, the newness of the college culture begins to wear off. Students then begin to deal with the reality of all the adjustments (that is, roommates, eating in a cafeteria, and the diversity that comes with meeting people from different backgrounds and cultures). Academic adjustments that are unfamiliar territory of the college classroom, large lecture classes, unclear guidelines for note taking and studying, and unfamiliar and somewhat distant faculty). Routine tasks become problematic chores (that is, where to go shopping, get a haircut, or receive medical attention). At this point, homesickness may increase (that is, maintaining strong ties to their home community, going home on weekends, staying in constant contact with friends from home, and continuing a romantic relationship). This is a period of positive change, and a period of intense personal conflict and anxiety.

Initial adjustment

First-year students experience an upswing as they have successfully managed many of the issues that have come their way. Overcoming the culture shock which is achieved largely through orientation brings about a sense of well being. Students fall into a routine as they gain confidence in their ability to handle the academic and

social environment of campus life. Orientation helps them at this stage to regain some sense of control and normalcy in their lives. Conflicts and challenges may still continue to come and go, but students would now be feeling more in the swing of things until they experience the phase of mental isolation.

Mental isolation

At this juncture, first-year students relapse into a sense of isolation as they compare new culture and home culture (that is, especially after students go home for an extended break between semesters). They experience strong feelings of homesickness. They feel caught between two worlds and not totally belonging in either place. The new college environment is still not as comfortable as home, and home is now not as familiar as it once was. The initial euphoria of the entrance into the university dissolves as the realities of campus life surface (that is, not all professors are friendly and helpful, not all living-group peers are potential friends, and everything is not as great as publicity brochures and admissions staff may have indicated). They may feel their beliefs and values systems being challenged, and they may not be able to adapt or integrate the new values of the university cultures. First-year students must seek resolution to this second cultural shock, move from feelings of isolation, and join new university cultures. This requires integrating values and beliefs of their home culture with their new university environment.

Acceptance, integration and connectedness

As students become more involved in campus opportunities as a result of orientation, they gain some history with new friends, get to know some faculty and staff members, they begin to feel a true connection to the campus community. They begin to have a balance and realistic view of the university; they see and integrate the good experiences with the challenges. The original home culture becomes somewhat foreign where there is less dependence on parents and former peers. A true sense of acceptance, integration, and connectedness occurs when students have successfully adapted to their new learning environment through orientation. The question one may ask is "what is the impact of orientation then on student success?" The ensuing pages of this study would attempt to handle this issue.

Impact of orientation on student success

Very little research has been conducted to show the effects of pre-college, new-student orientation programmes

on student success as defined by academic performance and student retention, and even fewer studies have examined the impact of these programmes on the success of students within the community college. However, Busby et al. (2002) found that students who participated in new-student orientation programmes generally performed better academically than students who did not. Perhaps this conclusion could be explained by the notion that students who participate in orientation programmes are more likely to miss fewer classes, participate in more extracurricular activities, talk with faculty and staff about personal concerns, become friends with those whose interests were different from their own, and attend lectures or panel discussions (Gentry et al., 2006). In general, students who participate in new-student orientation programmes are satisfied with them (Bumgarner et al., 1997; Booker, 2006) and believe that the programmes provide good academic information and develop personal relationships (Nadler and Miller, 1997).

Over the past twenty years, numerous studies have been conducted to examine the impact of an orientation course on students' experiences in college. Much of the research on this type of intervention focused on participation in these types of courses and its relationship with academic performance, as well as student retention and/or persistence. In terms of the impact of orientation courses on academic performance, mixed results have been found. Several studies have found significant differences in grade point averages (GPAs) between students who participated in orientation courses and those who did not (Yarbrough, 1993; Brunelle-Joiner, 1999; Starke et al., 2001). Other studies attributed the higher GPAs of participants to chance (Boudreau and Kromrey, 1994; Stewart, 1997; Green and Miller, 1998; Sidle and McReynolds, 1999), while some studies found non-participants to have earned higher GPAs (Prola et al. 1977; Mark and Romano, 1982). Suffice it to say that the literature on orientation programmes and courses yielded varied results as it relates to the impact on academic performance. The majority of studies examining the impact of orientation courses on student retention found higher retention rates for participants in these courses, whether statistically significant (Boudreau and Kromrey, 1994; Green and Miller, 1998; Sidle and McReynolds, 1999; Hollins, 2004) or by chance (Yarbrough, 1993; Stewart, 1997; Brunelle-Joiner, 1999).

About 16% of students who enter a four-year institution leave during the first year or do not return for their second year (Horn, 1998). Most students who leave do so only temporarily, as, 64% return to a college within 6 years, but these students are generally at a disadvantage in that they either experience a longer time to degree or are less likely to earn a bachelor's degree (Choy, 2002). Clearly, stopping out, dropping out, or transferring out has a negative impact on the cost of higher education and degree attainment rates. Institutions have developed an

array of first-year attrition intervention programmes, such as orientation programmes for first year students, to encourage student success in the first year. A large body of literature indicates that orientation programmes for first year students have a positive impact on their academic and social integration, key concepts of persistence proposed by Tinto (2006-2007). For example, researchers have shown that seminar participants earn, on average, higher grades in other first-year classes and are less likely to be placed on academic probation (Cannici and Pulton, 1990; Chapman and Reed, 1987; Davis, 1992; Fidler, 1991; Williford et al., 2001); they have higher frequencies of participation in campus activities or services (Cannici and Pulton, 1990; Davis-Underwood and Lee, 1994; Fidler, 1991); and they report more out-of-class connections with faculty members (Davis-Underwood and Lee, 1994; Fidler, 1991). Other studies have investigated how students' characteristics impact the outcomes of orientation programmes for first year students.

The current content of students' orientation at the University of Coast

The University of Cape Coast, as a routine, exclusively devotes one week for orienting their new student entrants (University of Cape Coast, 2012). Virtually, the programmes lined-up are packed with connoisseurs in the various fields; ranging from the academic to the administrative staffs in the university who address the fresh men and women. The first day is devoted to the opening ceremony where the chairperson, usually the Vice-Chancellor or the Pro-Vice Chancellor, the Dean of Students and the Registrar address them. On this day, the freshmen/women are addressed on a wide range of issues touching on overview of communicative skills, energy conservation in the university, health services, academic programmes, policies and regulations, and a question time. On the subsequent days and sessions, topics such as 'succeeding in the world of learning, regulations for junior members (students), sports, disability services, campus security services, dating on campus are often shared with students (UCC, 2012). Again, topics which touch on the structure of the university/channels of communication, the university policy on sexual harassment, immigration requirements for foreign students, library services, counselling services in the university, issues about the student loan scheme, speeches by student leaders (Students Representative Council, Graduate Students Association of Ghana, Ghana National Association of Teachers on Campus, Local NUGS among others where the university anthem is taught. Finally, the remaining programmes touch on the overview of faculties, schools and academic departments. These sessions are addressed by their respective officers found in the various

sections of the university. At any point in time, students are allowed to pose questions to which the resource persons and facilitators respond (UCC, 2012).

Objectives for student orientation in the University of Cape Coast

The university administration expects that during orientation programme, new students would be provided with the necessary information and assistance that help them to succeed academically and develop their personality. It is also the aim of the university to expose new students to the wide range of issues that would face them as students of this institution including safety and health matters. Orientation sessions are to again provide students the opportunity to meet one another and develop new relationships, from which could emerge new friends who may turn out to be peer counselors and who can share their experiences thereby serving as an important source of support and information. Finally, orientations are organized to purposively introduce new students to the variety of student services available on and off campus so that they are able to navigate the university and its environment on their own (University of Cape Coast, 2012).

In conclusion, it can be said with absolute certainty that the above objectives largely inform the selection of topics which are dealt with during orientation programmes. At the end of the day, it is expected that new students feel, and indeed, be adequately prepared to face the challenges of their stay in the university right from the commencement of their programmes of study.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The researchers used the descriptive survey design to enable them examine the current characteristics of the issue under study. The rationale for the use of this design was to afford them the opportunity to determine the nature of orientation programmes as it pertained in the university.

Population

The target population for the study comprised Level 200 students in all the public universities in Ghana. The accessible population consisted of second year (Level 200) students in the University of Cape Coast. These students were chosen since they were deemed still fresh students who can vividly recall memories of some of the activities that they were taken through as part of orientation, their inauguration and integration into the university system.

Sample and sampling procedure

Two-hundred (250) second year students were sampled from the

University of Cape Coast. This sample size was obtained after using multi-stage sampling techniques. In the first place, a purposive sampling procedure was employed to sample students from eight faculties/schools which run undergraduate programmes. These were; School of Business, School of Medical Sciences, School of Biological Sciences, School of Physical Sciences, School of Agriculture, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Social Sciences and Faculty of Education. Schools and faculties that run only post-graduate programmes such as; the Faculty of Law and the School of Graduate Studies and Research were excluded from the study. Second, disproportionate quotas were given to each school/faculty to get the student number. Finally, purposive sampling was used to get 250 students from the eight faculties/ schools.

Instruments

Basically, a questionnaire was used as the major tool for data collection. The items of the questionnaire were carefully carved to encapsulate the variables of interest to the researchers to obtain the needed quantitative data from respondents. The survey instrument was appropriate for the study because it provided researchers the opportunity to conceal the identities of the respondents thereby revealing realities on the ground as far as organization of orientation for fresh students was concerned. Regarding the source of the secondary data (CGPAs), students were required to provide their registration numbers on the questionnaire which enabled the researchers to check their actual CGPAs from the students' Records and Management Information System (SRMIS) of the University with the help of the system's analyst at the section. The instrument was purposively pilot-tested at the University of Education, Winneba, a sister university in the central region on 100 second year students as a measure to improve its content validity and reliability. A Cronbach's alpha test which was run yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.76, a figure that was indicative that the individual items of the survey instrument were internally consistent in measuring the constructs they are supposed to measure.

Data collection procedure

The quantitative data were collected by the researchers in the University of Cape Coast with the help of three research assistants in the University of Cape Coast. These research assistants, having been trained on the rudiments and the rationale for the study, were engaged to collect reliable data for the study. The researchers organised the data, edited and analysed them.

Data analysis

To assess the impact of the programme on academic performance, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Inferential tools such as the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and a t-test were calculated using SPSS version 20. The former was used to find the relationship between participation in orientation and students' academic performance and the latter was also employed to compare the mean CGPAs of second year students who participated in the study and those who did not.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Biographic description of respondents

Profile of student respondents in respect of their sex,

age, schools/faculties/departments and their CGPA ranges was provided in the descriptive analysis as presented in Table 1.

Out of the 250 students selected, 85(34%) were from the Faculty of education, 42(16.8%) from Faculty of Social Sciences, 37(14.8%) from School of Agriculture, 31(12.4%) from School of Biological Sciences, 25(10%) from School of Physical Sciences, 24(9.6%) from Faculty of Arts and 6(2.4%) from the School of Medical Sciences. The participants in terms of gender were made up of 149(59.6%) males and 101(40.4%) females. With reference to age, 206(82.4%) were below 30 years whereas the 44(17.6%) were 30 years and above. In terms of their participation in the 2012 orientation pro-gramme, 167(66.8%) intimated that they participated in the said programme even though 83(33.2%) did not participate for various reasons. Their CGPAs were determined based on the interpretation provided by the Division of Academic Affairs of the University. Here, 14(5.6%) had their CGPAs between 3.6 – 4.0 (first class), and 53(21.2%) of them had theirs ranging between 3.0 – 3.5 (second class upper division). Then 149(59.6%) of them had their CGPAs ranging between 2.5 – 2.9 (second class lower division). Of the total, 31(12.4%) had their CGPAs ranging between 2.0 - 2.4 (third class), and three (1.2%) between 1.0 – 1.9 (pass). The picture this paints is that at least the students had acquired the necessary experiences to be able to contribute meaning-fully to the study. This is so because at least for the purposes of academic categorisation, it can be said that 216(86.4%) of the students the researchers dealt with were above average and good students who could easily state whether the orientation impacted their academic work in any way.

Research question 1

In soliciting students' responses on the significance of orientation programmes, the views were dissenting. For instance, a majority of them 199(79.6%) strongly agreed with the assertion that orientation provided fresh students good academic information regarding academic program-mes, policies and regulation that enhance student learning. The same number again agreed that orientation gave new students opportunity to fraternise and develop personal relationships in the university and that it gave students insight into ways of succeeding in the world of learning. Again, 215(86%) agreed that indeed orientation provided students the opportunity to ask questions that bordered them and so it helped fresh students get accu-rate information on all matters including that of security on campus. However, 79(31.6%) also opined that orien-tation programmes afforded them the opportunity to gather information on activities of student leaders and on religious activities on campus though on that same

Table 1. Bio-graphic description of respondents for the study.

Bio-data	Frequency	%
Faculty/School		
Faculty of education	85	34
Faculty of Social Sciences	32	16.8
School of Agriculture	37	14.8
School of Biological Sciences	31	12.4
School of Physical Sciences	25	10
Faculty of Arts	24	9.6
School of Medical Sciences	6	2.4
Total	250	100
Age		
Below 30 Years	206	82.4
30 Years and Above	44	17.6
Total	250	100
Gender		
Male	149	59.6
Female	101	40.4
Total	250	100
CGPA Scores		
3.6 – 4.0 (1st Class)	14	5.6
3.0 – 3.5 (2nd Class Upper)	53	21.2
2.5 – 2.9 (2nd Class Lower)	149	59.6
2.0 – 2.4 (3rd Class)	31	12.4
1.0 – 1.9 (Pass)	3	1.2
Total	**250**	**100**

subject, 171(68.4%) disagreed with the statement. Then 242(96.8%) of them agreed that orientation helped them to be abreast of the university anthem in their quest to become proud members of the new institution (university).

Finally, 193(77.2%) of the students agreed with the statement that orientation programmes went a long way to improve the academic work of students who became committed to them even though 47(18.8%) disagreed with that view with 10(4.0%) of them being neutral on the matter. Clearly the finding showed the extreme impor-tance students viewed orientation programmes.

This outcome dovetails into the broader objective of the university for instituting orientation for fresh students which say among other things that orientation in the University of Cape Coast is organised to purposively introduce new students to the variety of student services available on and off-campus so that they are able to navigate the university and its environment on their own (University of Cape Coast, 2012)

Hypothesis 1

Table 2 portrays the correlation findings from the students. The hypothesis for this part of the study sought to find out whether there was a relationship between participation in orientation and academic performance denoted by students' CGPA scores.

Testing was done at .05 significance level (2-tailed, non-directional hypothesis). From Table 1, the outcome shows there is a significant variation in the academic performance of students who participated in orientation programmes and those who did not. Mathematically, $r(250) = .74$, $p < .05$; suggesting that there was a strong positive significant correlation between participation in orientation and CGPA score of students ($r = .74$, $p = .002$). By implication, students who participate highly in the orientation programme are likely to have high CGPA scores and those who do not participate in orientation programmes are also likely not no to have high CGPAs. This means that a relationship existed between partici-pation and performance in terms of CGPA score. Thus, students who participated fully in the 2012 orientation programme were likely to record high CGPA scores than their counterparts who did not. On the other hand, because of the strong positive relationship between participation and performance, students who do not take part in orientation may likely not do well academically. Contrary to the findings of study by Sidle and McReynolds (1999) which attributed higher CGPAs of students to chance, the finding of this research has shown that the relationship is not and cannot be by chance. In contrast to this finding, Prola et al. (1977) and Wright et al. (1982) in their study some decades ago, found non-participants to have earned higher GPAs. In this case, the relationship between participation in orientation and GPA level was negative.

Hypothesis 2

This hypothesis was analyzed by comparing average CGPA scores of second year students to ascertain whether those who participated in the 2012 orientation programme had similar CGPA scores with those who did not take part in the orientation for that year. The emphasis was on the statistical significance in variations or other wise of their average CGPAs and Table 3 was used for this purpose. The t-test was used and the statistical testing was done at .05 alpha level.

It can be seen from the table that, the mean CGPA score of participating students in the first category (M = 2.86) was greater than the mean CGPA score of the non-participating students (M = 2.14). This difference was significant at the .05 level ($t(246) = 12.148$, $p = .033$); suggesting that the impact of the orientation on the parti-cipating students has been positive and it is translating in

Table 2. Correlation between student participation in orientation and CGPA scores after a year.

Variables	N	Mean	SD	*R*	*Sig.*
Students' Participation	250	3.62	1.94	.74	.002*
CGPA Scores	250	2.93			

* *p* <.05; Note**:** Items on the questionnaire were merged, N = Sample size; SD = Standard Déviation; *r* = Correlation coefficient.

Table 3. Comparison of mean CGPA scores of participating and non-participating students in the 2012 orientation programme.

	Category of students	N	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	*Sig.*
CGPA (Score)	Participant	167	2.86	22.76551	12.25786	.033
	Non-Participant	83	2.14	29.11501	18.81305	

higher CGPA scores for them. The conclusion here is that there was a statistical difference in the mean CGPA scores of second year students due to their participation or non-participation in the 2012 orientation programme in the University of Cape Coast. This finding concurs with the research by Busby et al. (2002) who found that students who participated in new-student orientation pro-grammes generally performed better academically than students who did not. Again, this outcome lends support to the assertion by Gentry et al. (2006) that students who participate in orientation programmes are more likely to miss fewer classes, participate in more extracurricular activities, talk with faculty and staff about personal concerns, become friends with those whose interests were different from their own, and attend lectures or panel discussions.

Conclusion

Over the past twenty years, numerous studies have been conducted outside Ghana to examine the impact of orientation programme on students' academic performa-nce. Much of these researches focused attention on the type of intervention that students' were given and whether they participated in the types of programmes they were offered in the university. It is better late than never that this research is now hitting our academic books. Conclu-sively, one cannot but agree that orientation programmes impact students' academic performance. In the past, mixed results have been found with several studies also coming out with significant differences in grade point averages (GPAs) between students who participated in orientation courses and those who did not (Starke et al., 2001).

In sum, results of this study are consistent with the literature on the topic of orientation and academic per-

formance. Students who participate in orientation tend to have higher CGPAs than students who do not. The study also showed statistically significance similar difference to the findings in the literature. Students who participate in orientation do perform better academically than students who do not participate in some orientation programme, and this is statistically proven to be so and not due to chance. Perhaps much of the impact can be attributed to students becoming exposed to a myriad of activities and also exposed to reliable places where they could easily assess vital academic information for their studies during orientation programmes. Also, managers of universities should restructure contents of student orientation programmes well so as to maximise student learning. During orientation, students should be connected with faculty and staff of the university in a manner that engenders comfort and confidence in them in trying to seek assistance when needed.

Implications for university management practice

The current study has some major implications in im-proving university management practice. These have been put together as follows:

1. In the first place, orientations for first year students play a critical role in determining the extent to which students are able to go as far as academic work is concerned. Hence, University Managements Councils (UMCs) in Ghana should put in mechanisms to sanction students who do not participate in such programmes. This sanction should clearly be documented in no uncertain terms in the admission letters of students.
2. Second, University Management should also endea-vour to make orientation programme sessions as attractive as possible. Proposals should be written to

some beverage-producing companies and other organisations to solicit sponsorship for such events.

3. UMCs must again put in place processes and procedures to evaluate each orientation programme session to ascertain whether programme objectives have been or are being achieved. The process, would afford Management the opportunity to bring on board new suggestions from students and faculty to improve subsequent orientation sessions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Many studies have suggested that the infusion of some suggestions into the orientation programmes of fresh students would go to improve their impact on student learning. The syntheses of these ideas have been collated and put by the researchers as follows:

1. Since student participation in orientation programme has positive impact on their academic performance, management of universities in Ghana should spend time to carefully plan each orientation programme. In planning orientation programmes, all activities should be geared towards helping students to maximise their academic attainments. The venue, topics, speakers, etc must be planned way ahead of time.

2. Evaluation and feedback are important in the development of any orientation programme. Evaluation allows participants to play an active role in providing feedback. This feedback can then be used to improve the content, structure and focus of future programmes. It is important that the purpose of the evaluation form is always fully explained and discussed. Organisers should use multiple methods of communication during the orientation programmes for fresh students.

3. Faculty should make as many positive student connections as possible during the orientation process. Students require at least one person who takes a professional interest in them as this makes a critical difference in their success at the University.

4. In universities with dispersed campuses such as the University of Cape Coast, an efficient and reliable transportation system must be put in place to convey students to and fro orientation grounds as a way of easing the pain they may go through in getting to the grounds.

5. Students should be provided with reference materials and other souvenirs at orientation programmes to facilitate assimilation and comprehension of topics discussed. Students can also refer to these materials as and when the need arises.

6. Further, giant screens and other technological innovations should be employed to reduce the boredom that usually characterised orientation programmes in our tertiary institutions in Ghana.

Limitations of the study

As a characteristic of any research, this paper has limitations worth noting. In the first place, the population from which the research sample was drawn consisted of only students from one institution – University of Cape Coast. The results from this study may therefore provide just a template on which to base further research since it cannot be applied to the general population of university undergraduate students. Second, only a small percentage sample of the student population in the University of Cape Coast was included in this study. Therefore, the results of the analysis may not accurately reflect the situation as it pertains on the ground. Finally, it must be noted that the makeup of the population of university students changes each academic year due to graduation, attrition and admission. In order for the recommendations based on the study to remain valid, the impact of orientation on the population of this study must be re-evaluated after every two years (for instance) to ensure that any changes within the population as regards the impact of orientation on students' performance are reflected in appropriate changes in the interventions that are offered. If patterns within populations could be discovered through continued evaluation, then, it may be appropriate to put in place apt and workable organisational frameworks to make students' orientation programmes more beneficial to students. These are but some of the discernible limitations associated with this study.

Conflict of Interests

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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