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THEME: RE-ENGINEERING EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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*THEME: ‘Re-Engineering Education for Sustainable Development*

**Sub-themes:**
- Enhancing quality in education
- Educational reforms and governance
- Research, innovation and knowledge transfer in education
- Application of ICT in education
- Resource mobilization and utilization in education
Organizational Barriers Influencing Female Mobility in Secondary School Management in Machakos, Isiolo and Meru Counties, Kenya

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Abstract

The issue of women under-representation in management positions in all sectors including education has aroused scholarly interest globally in recent times. Statistics from the Teachers Service Commission of Kenya (2010) revealed that only 1,178 (24.5%) of the 4,800 public secondary schools in Kenya were headed by female principals. This is way below the minimum of 30% allowed by the Constitution of Kenya of 2010. The purpose of the research on which this paper is based was to identify the organizational barriers and coping strategies that influenced female mobility to principalship in Meru, Machakos and Isiolo counties. The key objective of the study was to identify the organizational barriers faced by secondary school female principals in these counties. The study employed descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 825 persons. A sample size of 400 respondents was used for the study. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS. The major finding of this study was that organizational practices, culture, lack of mentoring, tokenism and “old boys” networks that locked out female counterparts were the main organizational barriers that secondary school female principals encountered as they ascended to principalship in the three counties. Further the study further found that additional training and female principals remaining focused on their work were among the coping strategies that were embraced to overcome the barriers encountered. The study recommends embracing the policy of gender mainstreaming to counter organizational cultures that are characterized by male dominance and discrimination against women so as to increase women visibility in top level positions in school management in Kenya.

Key Words: School management, gender discrimination, organizational cultures, secondary education, gender mainstreaming