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## Challenges Faced by Women Head Teachers in Public Primary Schools in Mbooni East District, Makueni County

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### Abstract

The general objective of this thesis was to investigate the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East District and suggest remedial measures to the challenges. This district is located in an arid and semi-arid region of Makueni County and has a total of 55 public primary schools. The participants of the study were a total of 24 head teachers and deputy head teachers, 8 members of the community (SMC/PTA) and one District Staffing Officer. The total sampled population was 33 participants. Two types of research instruments were used namely; questionnaires and interview schedules. The objectives of the study were to establish the ratio of head teachers per gender, identify the personal challenges faced by women head teachers and identify the external challenges faced by women head teachers in Mbooni East district. Stratified random sampling was used to select the respondents from the targeted population. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics where SPSS program (integrated student version for windows) was used. The study established the ratio of women head teachers to that of men was 1:6, the community was gender irresponsible, limited resources, negative attitudes of the society, reluctance in applying for the posts, disrespect and stereotyping by male counterparts, lack of role models, dealing with difficult teachers and SMC members as well as home-work conflicts. The report recommended that the government implements the new constitution on the gender policy, TSC to give equal priorities to all gender, strengthen INSETS, workshops and seminars to prepare teachers and newly appointed heads and deputy head teachers for administration and management and ensure good gender staffing.

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Recommendations for further research include an investigation into the number of female teachers who qualify for position of headship in accordance to the laid down policy and exploration of the reasons why they have not sought for the posts and if they have, what has hindered them; research on women perceptions of school leadership and a replication of the study on the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district.

**Keywords:** Women Head Teachers; Public Primary Schools; Personal Challenges; External Challenges; Initial Skepticism.

## **1. Introduction**

This chapter introduces the study and is composed of themes on the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, scope and limitations, assumptions of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework and operational definitions of terms.

## **2. Background of the study**

Gender disparity and Inequality in education is a glaring reminder of the failed objectives and missed targets in regard to equal access to education as expressed by the International Conferences, Conventions and Declarations which many countries including Kenya have ratified specifically; The Dakar World Education Forum (2000) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000 spelt out International commitments to guide the achievements of positive results for Gender Parity by 2005 and Gender equality by 2015 in primary and secondary; as well as in tertiary and administrative levels [1].

According to [10: 210-211], one valuable resource which tends to be underutilized in schools and educational offices are women. Women have both a right and an obligation to active participation in leadership. Researchers from different parts of the world [2]–[6] have given attention to the topic of women in educational leadership positions at various levels of the education ladder. The researched studies have concluded that women are under- represented in educational leadership, and that they face various challenges in their aspirations to attain and maintain these positions. The researchers also noted that women bring a special kind of leadership to the learning institutions. The teaching profession internationally, with the exception of a few countries, is dominated by women, but despite the large numbers of women in the profession, they are greatly under-represented in positions of management [2] . The report on gender equity of the American Association of University Professors, 2006, indicated that of the top twelve universities with the largest share of female tenured professors, only two consisted of an above 50% of women, namely 68.8% and 72.2%. The rest ranged from 37.5% to 48%. The bottom twelve universities had percentages of women representation ranging from 7.6 to 15.9 . In Kenya, only two women have been appointed to head public universities.

Gender gaps in public schools management in Kenya are also glaring [7]. The management of primary and secondary schools, including the appointment of head teachers, deputy head teachers, senior teachers and head of departments indicate the trend of male dominance. The composition and leadership of the Board of

Governors and Schools Management Committees show inequalities in gender representation in favour of men [7]. The disadvantaged workplace status of women is due to a set of historical, social, economic and organizational factors [8]. Although the reasons for the persistent and pervasive inequalities vary somewhat across national, cultural and occupational contexts, [5] revealed that common obstacles to the leadership of women included the choices the women make, namely some opt out of full-time professional work to keep home fires burning, and also gender bias in leadership opportunities. They referred to the fact careers are waylaid by gender stereotypes, also bias in evaluation and mentoring, gender differences in family responsibilities, and inadequate work place structures and public policies. It has been argued that women are often reluctant to run for public positions [9]. In a paper aimed at investigating the factors accounting for the lack of ambition among Greek female teachers in reaching managerial positions, [10] found that 94.1% of the female respondents had not applied for promotion.

Pont, Nusche and Moorman [11] attribute the hesitation to overburdened roles, insufficient preparation and training, limited career prospects, and inadequate support and rewards. Other researchers have identified low pay in comparison to job responsibilities, too much stress, too great a time-commitment, dealing with difficult parents, students and staff, internal and external political issues inherent within administrative jobs [5]. At times the disciplinary measures taken create new and more serious problems, which may include interdiction and a deduction in the teachers' salaries.

The educational analysis identifies two main types of instruments that embrace international commitment to gender inequality in education. These are International treaties and political commitment. Individual countries are expected to ratify treaties and give them legal backing that is enhanced through action by political leadership.

Some of the International treaties include, The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) that was adapted in 1989 and came into force a year later. Kenya is among the 190 countries that ratified it. This convention is unique because of its strong emphasis on clear measures for promoting Free Primary Education (FPE), Human Rights education, sex education, reproductive health and gender-responsive curricula. It is in this view that towards the 21<sup>st</sup> century, International frameworks for actions were developed translate, in practical ways, the declaration and the expressed political commitments on gender equality in Education [1]. The introduction of women studies, courses, gender studies departments, institutes, related centers and units as well as cross-cutting programs that emerged in various universities in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s was an important move towards legitimizing gender studies in academia. For example, in 1991 Makerere University started a women and Gender Studies Department in the Faculty of Social Sciences. After the university, a Private Institution for women in Sudan also established a Women studies unit. Notably, however, it is in South Africa where academia seems to have embraced gender issues in education. This is demonstrated by the establishment of various gender courses, centers, institutes and departments, such as the African Gender Institute (University of Cape Town). In Kenya, Kenyatta University established its center for Gender studies in 2001 [1].

Gender is a fairly new concept in Kenya; hence not a lot of studies have been conducted in the area. To date, no public university in Kenya offers a degree course in gender studies but studied as units in other courses. The

government, through the implementation of the NARC manifesto, has put a minimum of 33 percent representation of women in all sectors and particularly in decision –making positions. In spite of these noble initiatives and goals, pervasive marginalization of women in higher education, leadership and access to national resources persist. In education access of women to decision making position is minimal, so is representation of women,[1].

No specific studies have been done to show the challenges faced by women head teachers in the district. Therefore, study was intended to establish the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district.

### ***2.1 Statement of the Problem***

With virtually every aspect of education system under critical examination, it is important to establish the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools. The government of Kenya has a responsibility of developing manpower especially in women and creating talents capable of raising Kenya's international competitiveness through enhanced productivity at the microeconomic (industry) and national levels. Throughout the education system, learning will inculcate the use of knowledge in women to create wealth, improve social welfare and promote democratic management [12]. However, women have traditionally been poorly represented in leadership and decision-making despite being the majority in the teaching fraternity. This study therefore, intended to establish the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district.

### ***2.2 Purpose of the study***

The purpose of the study was to establish the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in a gender irresponsible society, a case of Mbooni East District, Makueni County, Kenya. The study was guided by three objectives.

### ***2.3 Research Objectives***

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To establish the ratio of head teachers per gender in public primary schools in Mbooni East district.
2. To identify personal challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district.
3. To identify external challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district

### ***2.4 Research Questions***

- 1) What is the ratio of head teachers per gender in public primary schools in Mbooni East district?
- 2) What are the personal challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni

East district?

- 3) What are the external challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district?

### ***2.5 Significance of the Study***

The study is useful to educational policy makers, teachers' employers schools management committees, class teachers, scholars, potential deputy head teachers as well as pupils in public primary school set-up. To educational policy makers GOK/MoE and teachers' employers, the study will be useful in recognizing the vital roles of class teachers. To class teachers, it will form a basis to motivate them. To scholars, it will contribute towards their existing knowledge on organizational structure of schools. To pupils, the study is of significance since they are beneficiaries of effective school management. Although there is considerable amount of research work focusing on women as a whole, little has been done about the women head teachers and how they managed public primary schools. In view of this, it is useful to undertake a study to examine the challenges being faced by women head teachers in the public primary schools in Mbooni East district and the effects of the challenges in heading this sector. The results of this study will be availed to the MoE and schools administrators. This may lead to employment of better approaches of appointing heads and prior preparations and training of the new appointees.

### ***2.6 Limitations of the Study***

The findings of this study were limited to women head teachers in public primary in Mbooni East district only. Thus, they cannot be generalized to other categories to heads such as men or in other categories of schools, namely private primary schools. It is also limited to the primary sub-sector as opposed to the secondary schools and tertiary sub-sector of education in Mbooni East district.

### ***2.7 Assumption of the Study***

This study was based on the assumptions that:

- i. Each selected school has a head teacher and deputy head teacher who will co-operate with the researcher in giving honest and reliable information
- ii. That the responded without fear or favor
- iii. That there are women head teachers in the district

### ***2.8 Scope of the Study***

This study was conducted among public primary schools in Mbooni East district. It is one of the districts of Makueni County, which is composed of four divisions with 55 public primary schools. The study focused on the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in Mbooni East district. This study confined to selected head teachers, deputy head teachers, county leaders and the District Staffing officer.

## **2.9 Operational Definitions of Terms**

**Gender:** This is the fact of being male or female. This refers to the socially, determined relation roles, responsibilities and entitlements for men and; boys and girls

**Head Teacher:** This is the teacher in charge of administration in the school.

**Gender Responsiveness:** Refers to action taken to correct gender imbalances

**Challenge:** This is something new and difficult which requires great effort and determination. It is to question of its truth and value. A challenge to someone is a questioning of their authority.

**Gender Parity:** This is numerical concept referring to equal number of girls and women; boys and men relative to their respective numbers in population.

**Gender Equity:** This refers to the practice of fairness and justice in the distribution of benefits, access to and control of resources, responsibilities, power, opportunities and services. It is essentially, the elimination of all forms of discrimination based on gender.

**Deputy Head teacher:** The second officer in command after the head teacher, can act on behalf of the head teacher.

**Gender Equality:** This refers to equal treatment of women and men; girls and boys so that they can enjoy benefits of development including equal access to and control of opportunities and resources.

**Empowerment:** This is a process through which men, women, boys and girls acquire knowledge and skills and develop attitudes to critically analyze their situations and take appropriate actions to improve their status or that of the marginalized groups in the society.

**Millennium Development Goals:** These are the eight international development goals that all 193 United Nations member states and at least 23 international organizations have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. The goals are:

- Eradicating extreme poverty and hunger,
- Achieving universal primary education,
- Promoting gender equality and empowering women
- Reducing child mortality rates,
- Improving maternal health,
- Combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases,
- Ensuring environmental sustainability, and
- Developing a global partnership for development.

### **3. Research methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter details the research design, the study population, collection, analysis and reporting of data, limitations, ethical issues and the expected outcomes. The chapter explains how the study was organized and brought to a conclusion (research design). It also covers the target population, sample selection, size and the research instruments used as well as data collection and analysis procedures.

#### **3.9 Research Design**

The study adopted descriptive research design. As pointed out by [13], descriptive design can be used to collect information about people's attitudes, opinions or habits. He further notes that descriptive designs are used to allow researchers gather, present and interpret information for the purposes of clarification. The design was chosen because the researcher seeks to establish the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in a gender irresponsible society. As pointed out by [14], descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact finding, but may often result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solutions to significant problems. The design is deemed most efficient in establishing the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools in a gender irresponsible and the impact on educational leadership towards a gender responsive society. The target population was the 55 primary schools in Mbooni East District as at December 2012.

#### **3.10 Location of the Study**

The study was carried out in Mbooni East district in Makueni County.

#### **3.11 Target Population**

All the public primary schools in the district made the sampling frame. The list of the schools which totals to 55 was obtained from the District Education Office in Mbooni East. The head teachers, deputy head teachers and SMS/PTA were then selected. The District Staffing Officer also counted in the population.

#### **3.12 Sampling Procedure and Sample size**

##### **Purposive Sampling**

Purposive sampling was used to pick the District Staffing Officer in Mbooni East district. This because the officer has the data on staffing of all the schools and the records per gender, academic qualifications and length of service of all head teachers and deputy head teachers in the district and has authority to comment on the same.

##### **Stratified Random Sampling**

Stratified sampling also referred to as proportional or quota random sampling is a technique that gives each member of the target population a known and equal chance of selection, while stratification increases precision without increasing sample size [15]. The technique involves dividing the population into homogeneous non-overlapping subgroups, that is strata, and then taking a simple random sample at a consistent percentage in each subgroup. In other words, this means to divide the population into  $N_1, N_2, N_3 \dots N_i$ , such that  $N_1 + N_2 + N_3 \dots + N_i = N$ . Then do a simple random sample of  $f = n/N$  in each strata. Stratified random sampling has the following benefits. First it ensures that a sample represents not only the overall population but also key subgroups of the population especially small minority groups. Second, stratified random sampling will generally have more statistical precision than simple random sampling. This is only true if the strata are homogeneous. If they are then, the variability within groups is lower than the variability for the population as a whole. The researcher stratified the schools into 4 strata based on divisions namely, Kalawa, Katangini, Kiteta and Waia. This formed the target population of 12 schools, each with two teachers, making a total of 24, and from the same schools, the researcher identified: 1 School Management Committee and 1 Parents Teachers Association representative.

**Sample Size**

Gay [16] recommends that when population is small (less than 1000 members), a minimum of 20% is adequate for educational research. The researcher stratified schools into four categories based on the four divisions in the district, namely; Kalawa, Katangini, Kiteta and Waia. According to Kathuri [17], the required sample size for a randomly chosen sample for finite population (in the case of the current study is 55 schools). It implies that 20% of 55 is 12 schools, but each school has a head teacher and a deputy making the total number of respondents 24, there was also two community leaders (SMC or PTA), a woman and a man from each division, then the DSO. This added up to a total of 33 respondents. They were selected at random as in the table 3.1

**Table 3.1:** Sampling Frame

| Division  | Total number of schools | Number of schools sampled | Total sampled |
|-----------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Kalawa    | 14                      | 3                         | 8             |
| Katangini | 14                      | 3                         | 8             |
| Kiteta    | 13                      | 3                         | 8             |
| Waia      | 14                      | 3                         | 8             |
| Total     | 55                      | 12                        | 32            |

$N = 32 + 1(DSO) = 33$

### **3.13 Research Instruments**

Two types of research instruments were used for the study namely; questionnaires and interview schedules. The researcher used structured questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire elements were both closed and open-ended. The questionnaires were administered to head teachers and deputy head teachers. The instrument was used to collect descriptive and inferential data pertaining to the challenges faced by women head teachers in public primary schools. The interview schedules were used to collect data from the District Staffing Officer (DSO) and the leaders from the community (SMC or PTA). This is a face to face inquiry where the researcher engages the respondent in a verbal discussion. The method has the advantage of giving the researcher the opportunity to rephrase the questions in case such are unclear to the respondent. The data is inferential.

### **3.14 Pilot Study**

It is important that the research instruments are piloted as a way of fine tuning them [18]. This is vital as it enables both the validity and reliability of the instruments to be determined from the sample. A sample is a representative of the population in which the researcher intends to generalize the results. Stratified, random sampling procedure was used in terms of the 4 strata of schools in Mbooni East, six schools were selected or the pilot study in the neighboring district of Mbooni West and did not participate in the main study. Mbooni West district was chosen because it is sister district and teachers in the two districts seem to share the same challenges.

### **3.15 Instrument Validity**

According to [19], validity determines whether the research instrument truly measures that which it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. The instruments for the data collection were subdivided as per the variables and objectives to ascertain whether the content was comprehensive and representative of the behavior domains that were measured. Content validity of the instrument was determined through expert judgment which involved discussing the items in the instruments with my Supervisors, Lecturers and Colleagues. The questionnaire was subjected to scrutiny and approval by senior staff members of the Kenya Methodist University Department of Education and Social Sciences. The validity of the instrument was discussed between the researcher and the Supervisors to ascertain both content and face validity.

### **3.9 Instrument Reliability**

Reference [24] defines reliability as the extent to which results are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population under study. It is measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials [20].

An instrument is considered reliable when it is able to elicit the same responses each time it is administered. Any random influence that tends to make the measurement different from occasion to occasion is a source of error unless the differences are such that they maximize systematic variance. Reliability is concerned with precision and accuracy. For research to be reliable it must demonstrate that if it were to be carried out on a

similar group of respondents in a similar content (however defined), then similar results would be found. Poor reliability degrades the precision of a single measurement and reduces ability to track [21]. A pilot study was conducted in 6 schools. Pre-testing of the instruments was done in the six pre-testing schools to check the reliability. Cronbach's reliability co-efficient was calculated using the data obtained from the 6 schools. A co-efficient of 0.7 was adapted as the minimum threshold as recommended by Frankel and Wallen [22] and Mugenda and Mugenda [19]. Cronbach's reliability co-efficient is recommended for survey. The pilot study results were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha and the following were the results:

### **Pilot study test results**

#### **First pilot study**

|                          |                                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grand Mean               | 3.7714                         |
| Reliability Coefficients | 20 items                       |
| Alpha=0.8220             | Standardized item alpha=0.9385 |
| N of Cases =             | 60.0                           |

#### **Second pilot study**

|                          |                                   |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Grand mean               | 3.2222                            |
| Reliability Coefficients | 20 items                          |
| Alpha=0.8033             | Standardized item alpha = 0.88819 |
| N of Cases=              | 60.0                              |

The results from pilot study were tested with the use of Cronbach's Alpha reliability test.

In Cronbach's test anything which is greater than 0.7 is considered to be reliable and as from study findings, both findings were above 0.7 is considered to be reliable and as from study findings, both findings were above 0.7 and thus the questionnaire was considered to be reliable.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

During data collection period, the researcher obtained official authority to collect data the locale, upheld highest levels of honesty and confidentiality to protect the identity of respondents. The researcher operated within stipulated time and duration.

### **3.11 Data Collection Procedure**

Authority to collect data was given by the National Council for Science and Technology. It was also copied to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer in Mbooni East District, who in turn gave their consent. The researcher then circulated the questionnaires to the head teachers and deputy head teachers of the sampled public schools. The instruments were collected in a week's time. Within the same week, interviews with the DSO, SMC and PTA members were also carried out.

### ***3.12 Data Analysis and Reporting***

Once the data was collected, it was edited to ensure consistency across the respondents. It was summarized, coded and then analyzed. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The data was tabulated and classified into sub samples for common characteristics with responses being coded to facilitate basic statistics analysis. The researcher used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (S.P.S.S version 10) to analyze the data. This package helped to calculate the correlation and regression co-efficient. The correlation coefficient enables to quantify the strength of the relation between depended variables [23]. Data was presented in tables, chart, graphs and any other appropriate presentation method.

## **4. Data analysis and discussion**

### ***4.1 Introduction***

This chapter deals with data presentation and the interpretation of findings. The data presented includes the background information of the participants, external challenges of women head teachers, personal challenges of women head teachers, the ratio per gender of head teachers, reports and observations from the interview schedules with women head teachers, the community leaders and the DSO. The data analysis and presentation is based on the responses to the items in questionnaires, semi- structured interviews, observations and field notes. The interview schedule can be found in appendix F. The experiences shared by the fifteen research participants are meant to contribute to the understanding of the nature of their experiences as public primary school heads.

The themes significant to this study include becoming a headteacher, the headteachers' work experience, personal challenges, external challenge as well as the strategies for enhancing the participation of women in public primary school leadership.

### **Gender Respondents**

Gender gaps in public schools management in Kenya are also glaring [7] hence the researcher sought to identify the gender of the respondents. There were 16 men (48.48%) and 17 women (51.51%) respondents. This indicates that there is a negligible variation in gender. Thus the findings of the study were not adversely affected by gender imbalance.

### **Age of Participants**

Most of the participants were aged between 36-45 years since they represented 45.5% of the total. Those who

were in the range of 26-35 years were only 2 giving 9.1% while between 45-55 years and above 56 years were 18.2% and 27.3% respectively. This shows that majority are between 36-45 years followed by those above 56 years. Considering the ages of the respondents they are officers with a wealth of experience in teaching and in encountering the challenges they have faced in the field or service. Especially those of ages between 36-56 years were in good position to express themselves through the questionnaires and the face to face interviews. Their reports indicate that in Mbooni East District women head teachers experience some challenges in executing their duties, which include, negative attitudes of the society that women cannot make good leaders in this case, head teachers, there is bias and discrimination during the exercise of appointing head teachers in the district, among others.

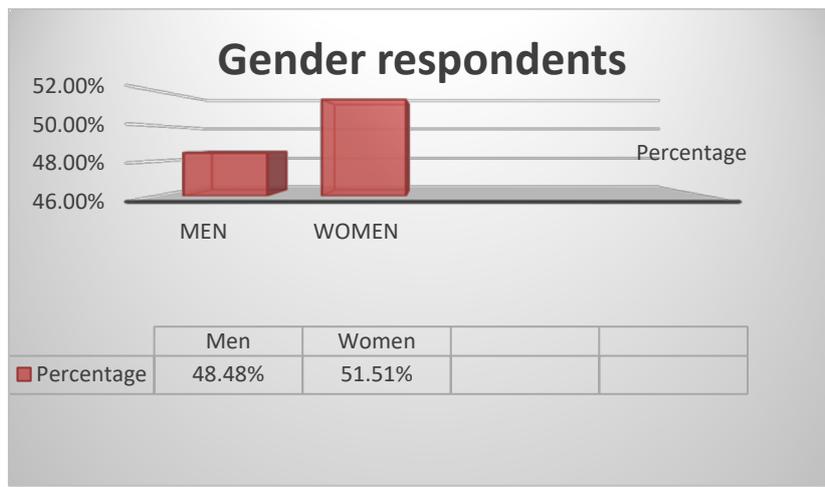


Figure 1

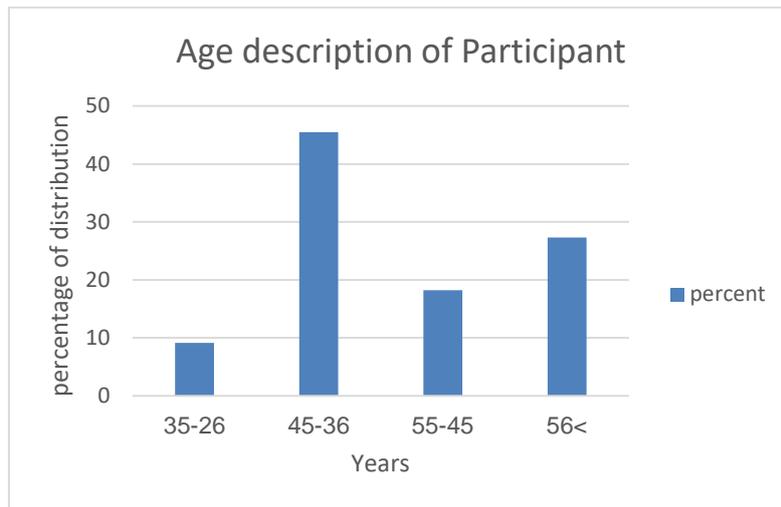


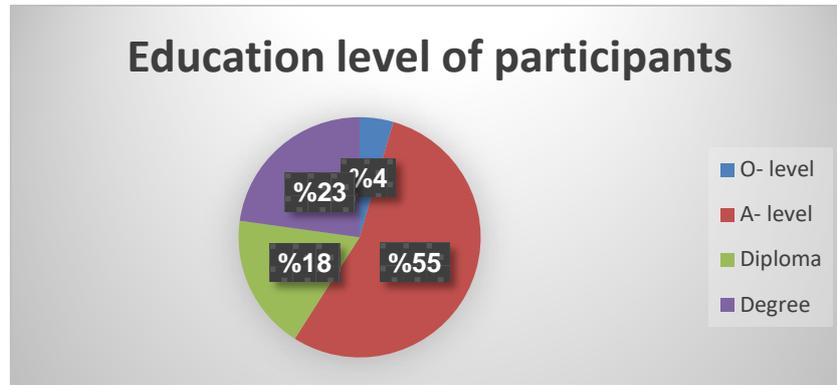
Figure 2: Age Description of Participants.

**Education level of Participants**

The social cognitive theory is important in understanding gender and leadership. It states that behavior, the

environment and personality/cognitive factors are important in understanding personality [24].

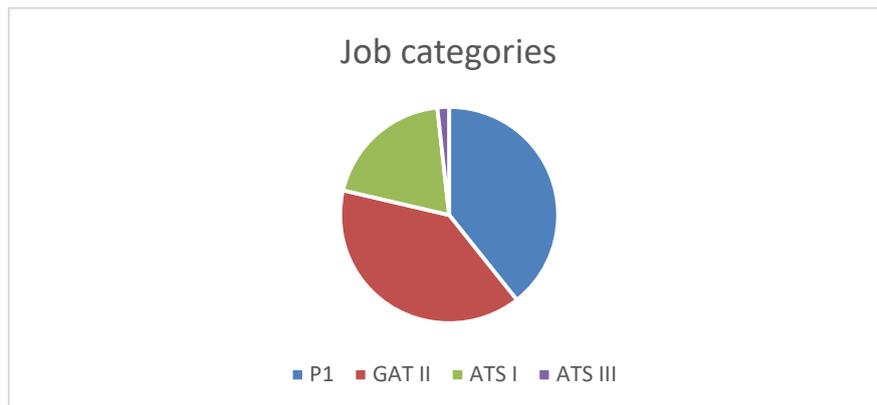
Amongst the participants, 12 people translating to 54.5% had acquired education up to A-level. Those who had acquired degrees were 5 giving out 22.8% while the least number of the respondents had 0-level form of education. Those with diplomas were 4 giving 18.2% hence showing that the respondents were well represented in obtaining the data from the field.



**Figure 3:** Education Level of Participants

### Job Categories of Participants

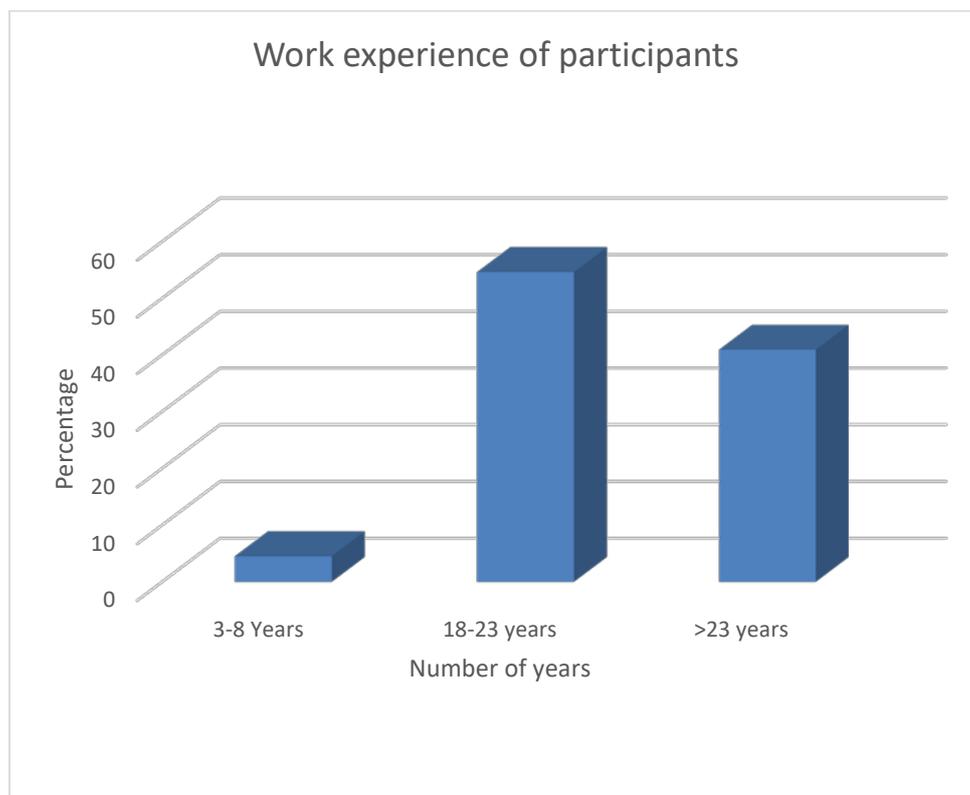
According to the respondents' information obtained, it clearly showed that those who had P1 and GAT II were 6 which was about 27.3% and 27.3% respectively. Those with ATS I were 3 being 13.6% while the least had ATS III being 4.5% this form of data clearly proved that most of the teachers in Mbooni East District had basic form of education which is very necessary for any development. The respondents confirmed that women head teachers especially those with low grades like P1 faced challenges of intimidation and mockery from other members of staff who have attained higher certificates of education especially Diplomas and Degrees.



**Figure 4:** Job Categories of Participants

### Work experience of Participants

Other form of information was obtained to analyze the experience of these teachers in their area of jurisdiction. According to the data collected and analyzed, majority of them had a working experience of more than 23 years who had about 40.9% while those with an experience of 8-13 years and 18-23 years were 4 in each category giving a total percentage of 54.6% while the rest was 4.5% between 3-8 years. According to this information, it is very evident that most of the respondents had a wealth of experience in the job. They cited challenges in accountability due to lack of managerial skills training, dealing with undisciplined pupils, limited resources especially with double enrolment after the introduction of FPE. Women face homework conflict and that the society has initial skepticism on women head teachers and always posing resistance whenever a new women head teacher is appointed or posted to the schools.

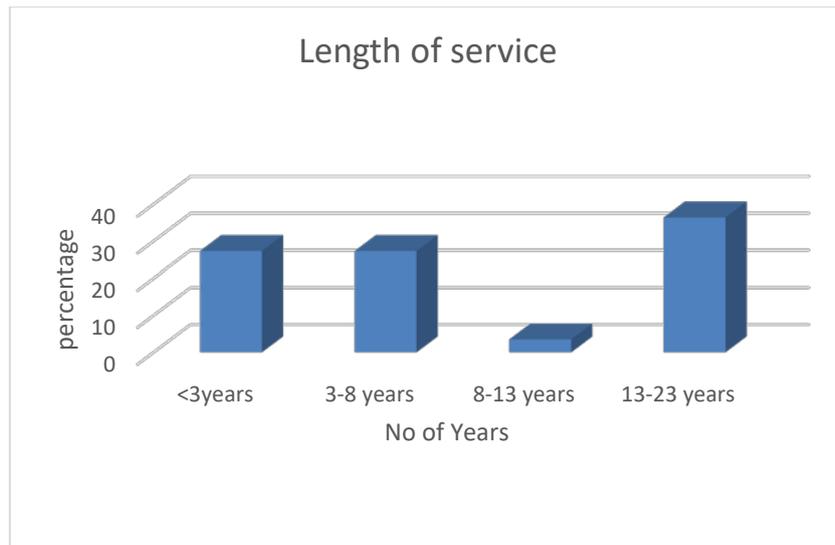


**Figure 5:** Work Experience of Participants

#### **Length of Service as Head teacher or a Deputy Head teacher**

Since the respondents were the head teachers and their deputies, there was the option of knowing for how long one has served as a head teacher or a deputy. According to the responses, most of them had being in the leadership position for almost 3-8 years and others below 3 years this was the total number of people. This was 27.3% in each category.

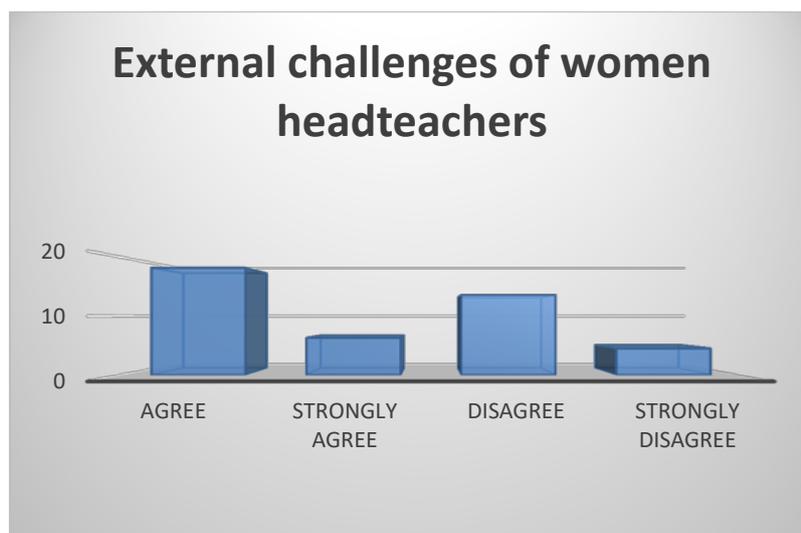
Those who had worked for over 18 years and more were 8 giving a total percentage of 36.4%. From this observation, it is clear that most of the respondents had been in the service for many years hence should be in a position to give a good account of the challenges faced by women head teachers and deputies.



**Figure 6:** Length of Service as Head teacher or Deputy Head teacher

**4.2 External challenges faced by women head teachers in Mbooni East district**

Gage, Mumma and Fritz [3], refers to the social role theory which explains how each gender becomes focused on whatever roles are available to them, based on the expectations of the society. Most cultures assign roles to gender. Marshall [25] noted that “women are traditionally excluded from management jobs because they are judged as less serious and less highly motivated than their fellow male employees”. According to the data obtained from the field showed that a greater number of the community had an initial skepticism on women’s school leadership. 63.6% strongly agreed that the society had this initial skepticism on women’s school leadership. 18.2% did agree while those who disagreed were 13.6% as compared to 4.6% who strongly disagreed.

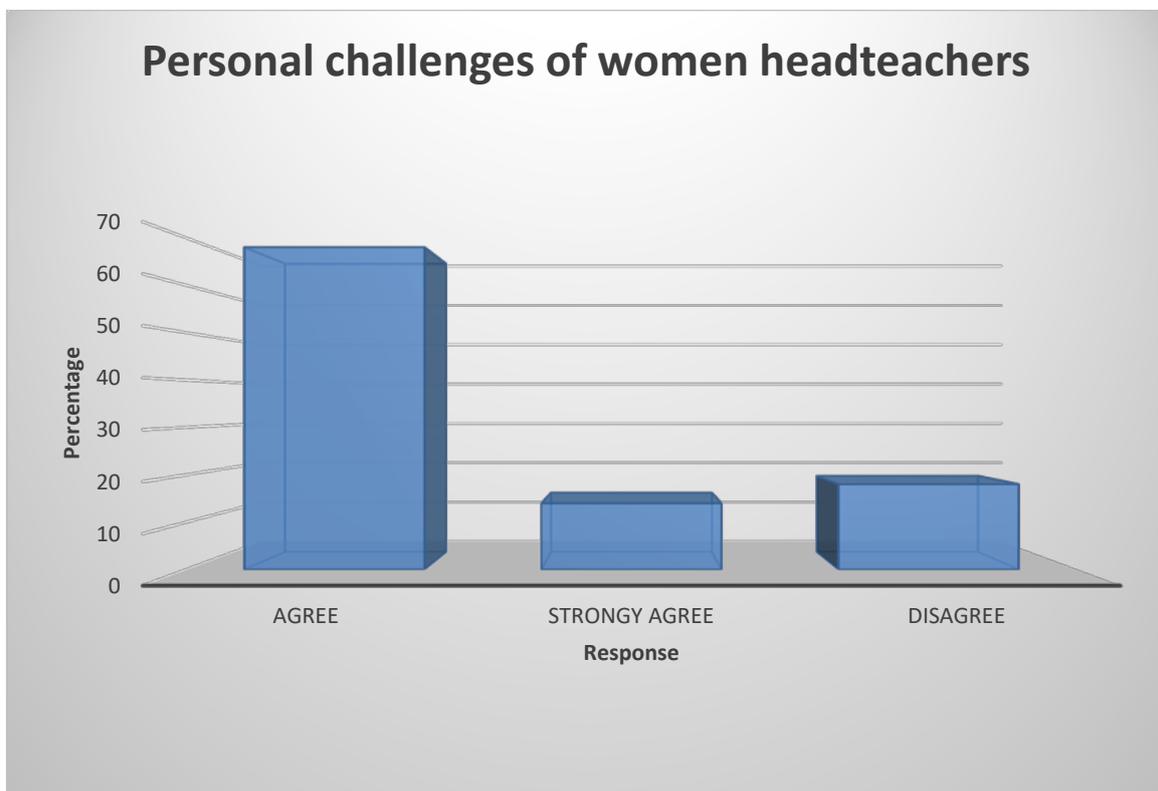


**Figure 7:** External challenges faced by women head teachers in Mbooni East district

The external challenges identified from the questionnaires include the initial skepticism of the society on women head teachers, stereotyping by male counterparts, handling indiscipline of pupils and difficult members of staff, overburdening by workload due to swollen enrollments and understaffing, gender bias and discrimination in appointments in favour of the so called strong gender, demonstrations by parents fueled by politicians, geographical movements, poor infrastructure and insecurity.

#### 4.3 Personal Challenges of Women head teachers in Mbooni East District

[26] uses the reciprocal determinism theory to explain the factors that affect learning. These factors are likely to affect women in their choices to become or not to become leaders. Often, women lack internal drive. Their reluctance to put themselves forward for promotions is attributed to a lack of ambition, among other factors [10]. The analysis of the data clearly indicated that women seem to be reluctant in applying for the top positions of headship due to personal challenges. This was close to 68% of the respondents agreed that women are reluctant for the top positions, 14% strongly agreed as 18% disagreed upon the statement.

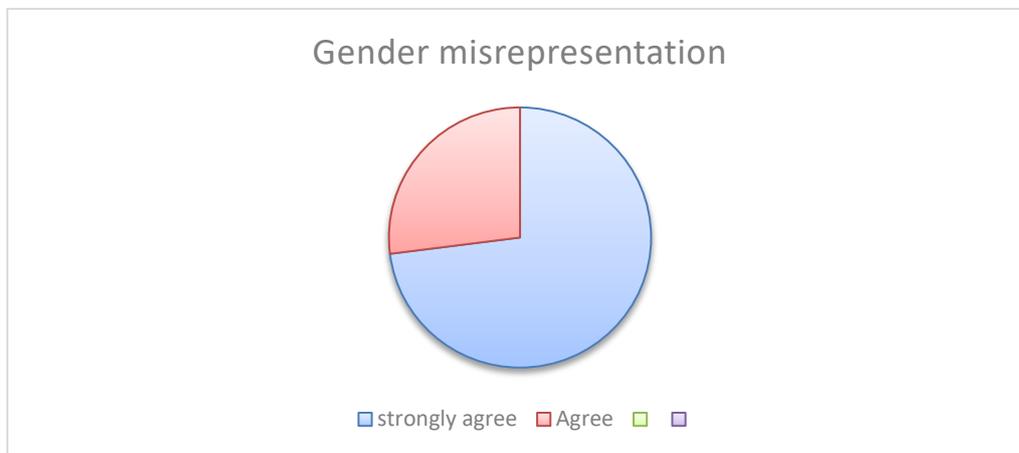


**Figure 8:** Personal challenges of women head teachers

In figure 4.8, the researcher wanted to establish the personal challenges faced by women head teachers in Mbooni East district. Increased cases of women head teachers declining or stepping down the post have lowered the self-esteem and efficacy of women head teachers, they struggle to balance within the tight schedules between work and social life, persevere home-work conflicts, incompetency in accounting and book-keeping due to lack of prior or on the job training, maternity leaves and child rearing.

#### 4.4 Gender Ratio of Head teachers in Mbooni East District

Women have remained restricted to low productivity and low paying jobs [27]. Hay [28] , states that, “the proportion of women in positions of responsibility and decision making in government, private and NGO agencies is too low to make meaningful impact”. The government, through the implementation of the NARC manifesto, has put a minimum of 33% representation of women in all sector and particularly in decision making positions. In spite of these noble initiative and goals, pervasive marginalization of women in higher education, leadership and access to national resource persists. In education access of women to decision making positions is minimal, so is representation of women [1]. Most of the head teachers in Mbooni district are male as compared to the female counterparts. 73% of the participants strongly agreed while 27% just agreed. Therefore, this suggests unequal representation across all the offices in the education sector especially in heading the public primary schools. They cited cases of biasness and discrimination against women in the senior appointments or deployment. In the case of deputy head teachers majority are also men and minority are women.



**Figure 9:** Gender Ratio of Head teachers in the District

In figure 4.9 the researcher indented to establish the ratio per gender of the head teachers in the district. It was established that the ratio of women heads to that of men was 1:6. This is because there were 10 women heads out of 55 head teachers in the district. The report indicates that the few women head teachers against such a big population is in itself a big challenge. It can cause personal challenges like unwillingness to participate in deliberations in meetings hence shelving important contributions, fear of intimidation and stereotyping by male head teachers as well as feeling of inadequacy before male counterparts. The external challenges faced included being compared to the male counterparts as weak and incompetent due to socio-cultural biases and attitudes.

#### Gender Ratio of Deputy Head Teacher in the District

The ratio per gender of the deputy head teachers is the same numbers as that of the head teachers, 1:6.

These deputy heads face similar challenges both personal and external as the women head teachers. Most of them decide to be contended by the second portfolio, being very reluctant to apply for the post of a head teacher.

In figure 4.10, the researcher wanted to establish the ratio per gender of the deputy head teachers in Mbooni East District. The results reflect poor gender ratio of women to men. This suggests that there are challenges in managing offices.

#### 4.5 Appreciation of women in their leadership in Educational Institutions

Appreciation of the women is a vital issue which should not be overlooked by all means. Upon the respondents, 4.5% of them strongly agreed that women are adequately appreciated. 18.2% of the respondents only agreed while those who disagreed were 63.6% of this shows that a great percentage of the community people do not appreciate the work done by women. The fact that 63.6% of respondents disagreed with the appreciation, it implies that women head teachers are despised and sabotaged by other members of staff, SMC/PTA members as well as members of the community.

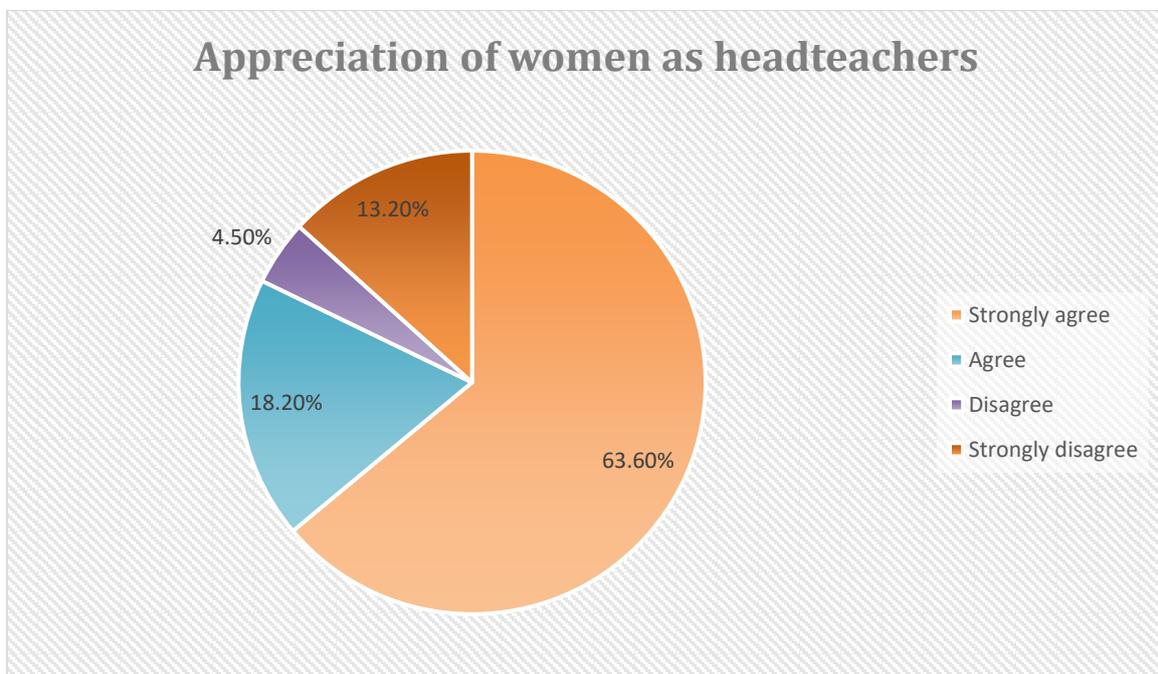


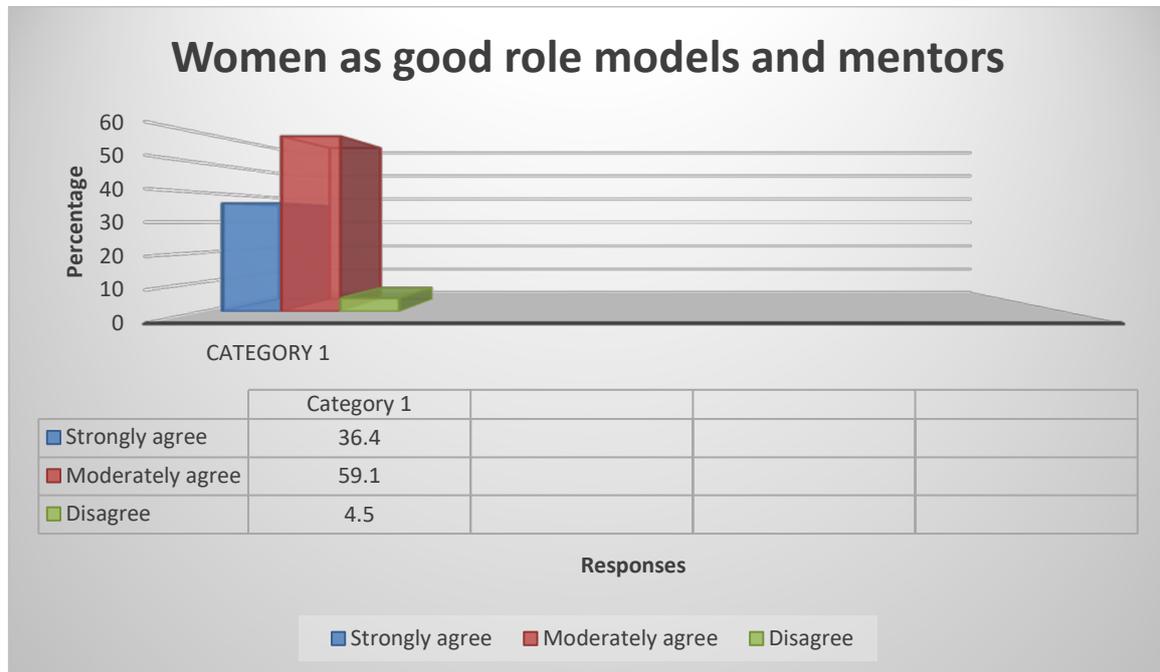
Figure 10

In figure 4.11, Researcher wanted to find out the attitudes of the community towards women head teachers. From the results, the society has initial skepticism towards women hence the negative attitudes towards the leadership of women.

#### 4.6 Women in Role modeling and mentorship

Women leaders are highly viewed as good role models and mentors to their students as compared to their counterparts. This is because of the fact that most of the women do act as mothers apart from being teachers professionally. From the interview conducted, 36.4% and 59.1% did strongly agree and moderately agree the fact that women do act as good role models and mentors. Only 4.5% disagreed giving out an insignificant percentage contrary to the opinion that women are good role models to their students. Women head teachers

play the noble role of shaping up young girls and those interviewed confirmed that fellow male counterparts envy them and at times incite community to rise against them. This has resulted in some of them stepping down and others declining the offer for fear of equal treatment.



**Figure 11:** Women as good role models and mentors

In figure 4.12, the researcher wanted to find out whether the women head teachers have any impact on the girls in their schools. It was established that the girls emulate the women head teachers and identify with them as their mentors in life. This is confirmed by the big population of women head teachers in the teaching profession.

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