RESEARCH ARTICLE

INFLUENCE OF BACKGROUND CHARACTERISTICS OF FEMALE PRINCIPALS AND THEIR DEPUTIES TO THEIR UPWARD MOBILITY IN KENYA.

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Manuscript Info	*Abstract*
……………………. 	…………………………………………………………………… This study analyzed how the background characteristics of female principals and their deputies might have affected their upward mobility to management positions in the education sector. Specifically, the study objectives were; established whether there is a statistical significant difference between the age of female principal's teachers' and their upward mobility, determine whether there is a statistical significant difference between gender and career mobility of female principal teachers, and determine whether the level of education of female principal teachers was a hindrance to their upward mobility. With a sample size of sample size of 376 (n) respondents, comprising of; 76 female principals, 78 male principals, 178 deputy female principals,22 sub-county education officers, and 22 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules to collect requisite data. The study established that there was no statistical significant difference between; age, gender, and level of education on upward mobility of female principal teachers. The study recommends that there is no justification for administrative or legal measures to insulate female principals against their background characteristics in enhancing their upward mobility to principalship.

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Introduction:-
Background to the Study;-
The high school principalship is an intricate and a demanding position. Today's principal must be conversant with effective decision making, hold strong financial, operational and political leadership skills. In addition the principal must also be equipped with the pre-requisite skills that are critical for improvement of curriculum and instruction (Dana and Bourisaw, 2006). Research has revealed that school principals currently work in environments full of hardships and hence they must be ready to balance administrative teams, school boards, community members, labour unions and family obligations therefore making it a challenging position. In addition the principal must also be prepared to delegate authority to subordinates with specific duties and supervise the implementation of the delegated function (Expertise and Sharp 2004, Patterson, 2007).

Principals are in charge of public secondary schools, and just like in the corporate world, most of these positions are male dominated. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2000), the principalship is regarded as being the most male

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dominated executive position of any profession in the United States (Glass, Bjork and Brunner 2000).The same trend is observed in other countries as UNESCO (2011) alludes that women as school principals across countries are few and there is a clear pattern to show that proportions of female teachers decreases as one climbs up the education ladder. The report further highlights the reason for the low women representation as being unable to balance management work with domestic responsibilities and unsupportive institutional climate. This concurs with Hoff and Mitchel, (2008) whose study revealed that women in leadership are faced with the dilemma of balancing the societal expectations of women regarding their family responsibilities with that of leadership in a work place. Alston's (2000) observed that in probing the history of hiring in administration, it clear that those women who aspired to higher levels in educational organizations still remained at a disadvantage.

Literature Review:-
Rossener, (1995) notes that there has been a marked increase in the number of women now serving on senior positions but their absolute number is still small. Rossener further asserts that, it appears the need to actually strive and reach the top for the sake of being at the top, prestige, awe and power it gives may be more important to men than women. The study further highlights that men will continue to have access to the organization elevators while women are forced to take the stairs. This means that by the time women climb up the stairs men have already positioned themselves hence locking them out of senior positions. McGee banks, (2007) further underscore that female leaders may face a dilemma that finds imbalance between leadership and expected gender roles. Coleman (2003) laments that although the number of women is higher in education compared to men internationally; most of the administrative ranks still remain a preserve male gender. This notion is made clear as research has revealed that some female head teachers perceive themselves as less capable leaders compared to their male counterparts (Kariuki, 2007). Women are still not accepted as equals when they reach senior positions and hence attitudes within the organizations are major constraints to women in management. Humbly and Shaw, (1996), Kamau, (2004) and Humbly (1996) goes further to point out that attitudes for both male and females need to change in order for females to be afforded same opportunities and that implies that female leaders work from a point of disadvantage within organizations. This is further put into perspective through a research conducted on expatriate career aspirations and revealed that women are steered from an early age into sex stereotyped occupations and roles, Whitaker and Lane(1990). Historically these occupations have been structured at the lower and middle levels of the organizations for women while for men are structured in top echelons, Brien, (2011).This confirms an earlier assertion that women have moved from the clerical basement to the managerial mezzanine but the door to the executive suite still remain largely closed (Rossener, 1995). This allegory is a clear indication that female leaders in modern organizations are denied access to senior management positions and that is why this study came in to explain if the reason for their disadvantage could be explained by prevalence of organizational barriers within organizations and if their background characteristics would hinder their upward mobility.

Wickham (2007) argued that to fully understand the principalship in high schools around the world and the leading gender within it, it was imperative to review the original structure of teaching profession so as to shed more light on it. Internationally, men dominated the teaching profession in the early 1800s and they worked by themselves in schoolhouses throughout the world. However by the mid-1800s, there was a change in trend in educational employment that developed in line with the emergence of female teachers in the U.S.A. Local and state officials created the domain of school administration, a dominion reserved from the beginning for men. Men were viewed as authority figures that controlled the efforts of women just as it was the norm in the home environment (Blount, 1998). Later in the 1800s, the proportion of male to female teachers was nearly similar, although by the early 1900s, women were the majority in all the teaching positions. The climax came in 1920s, with an overwhelming 86% of all school positions held by women and a meagre, 14% were in the custody of men. (Blount, 1998,Ella Flagg Young, (as cited in Blount, 1998) assumed the principalship of the Chicago Public Schools in 1909 and declared that "Women are destined to rule the schools of every city and Nation," (Blount, 1998 as cited in Wickham, 2007).

Wickham (2007) further reports that, as male administrators took more control in education globally, male teachers became uncomfortable doing women's work and either abandoned teaching or sought alternative ways to penetrate the male dominated world of administration. This confirms an earlier assertion that despite the differences in the ways in which women were represented in positions of educational leadership, what became the trend is that educational leaders were primarily male Riley, (1994). Obura (2011) commenting on women under-representation in Kenya underscore that it is a global experience and avers that the pace of raising the proportion of women in leadership is near to the ground, intermittent, and for it to be reversed it will require a stimulus to attain the goal of equity (Obura,2011: 5).This means that there could be existing a myriad of barriers which deter women from

becoming educational leaders and as Eveline (2005) points out that female teachers are always struggling with one obstacle after the other whenever matters of leadership come their way. This also agrees with an observation recorded in one of the local Kenyan daily newspapers, Daily nation, that it has taken women one hundred years to get to leadership positions and it will take them another one hundred years to achieve their equality with men (Daily Nation, of 15th of march 2014).

 A similar sentiment was expressed in America that it would take several generations for women to achieve proportional representation at the top of USA business and the period may be longer for other nations(Fortune Marketing Research Report, Deloitte and Tunes LLP,1990).In an attempt to shed more light on women under-representation in school management, Wallace and Banos, (2011) observes that gender equality in educational management is not restricted to countries on the rise but it is also a universal phenomena, women are not able to attain upward mobility in management positions in public and private sectors in the numbers expected and this can be attributed to their engagement in production and work experiences. This means that women are unable to balance the tasks or are overburdened by the responsibilities and this negatively influences their upward mobility.

Hence the causes of under-representation of women in educational management are not identical in different cultures and schooling systems but are a products of multifaceted interaction between cultural understanding and gender roles, national policies, organizational structures and pressure from the global community that are context specific Sperandio, (2011). This implies that the countries that are able to put the appropriate mechanisms in place will be able to close in the gender gap as far as elevating women in educational leadership is concerned. For instance in the 1990"s in Uganda, the government adopted the Affirmative Action Policies that were intended to enhance women's participation in educational leadership, like the Ugandan Constitution of 1995, policies of expanding tertially institutions and increased funding for girls to facilitate their entry into the universities. In the Kenyan context, the policy of girl's re-entry to save the girls who would otherwise drop out of school is a step in the right direction. This was anticipated to reduce the disadvantages that female leaders encountered hence boosting the shrinking pool of women rising to senior management positions. Ironically, Kagondia (2011) laments that the mechanisms have not translated into gender parity at management levels and observes that some of the major causes for the imbalance are male dominance in recruitment agencies, women self limitations, fear of responsibilities and lack of self esteem, (Kwesiga, 1992; Kagondia, 2011).A similar scenario was encountered in India where regardless of the national gender and women empowerment policy being enacted and entrenched in the constitution, the situation has remained the same.

In Nigeria, being a highly patriarchal society where men dominate all spheres of women's lives Olojede, (2004) established that like in other male dominated societies, the social relations and activities of Nigerian women are governed by patriarchal systems of socialization and cultural practices which favour interests of men above those of women. This scenario is effectively replicated in Kenya hence the issue of under-presentation is prevalent here and therefore study confirmed that biased organizational practices played a critical role in locking women out of management positions hence relegating them to the periphery in organizations regardless of whatever educational qualifications they possessedWithin Kenya's education sector, the situation is not different as statistics from the TSC, (2010) reveal that out of 4800 public secondary schools found in Kenya only 1,178 secondary schools have female principals translating to only 24.5%.This was the same in (2013) where it was confirmed that female teachers are still lagging behind in terms of management positions, TSC image, (2013). This is despite the provisions of the new Kenyan Constitution which provides that no more than two-thirds of either gender may occupy leadership positions (Kenyan Constitution, 2010). This has not been functionally implemented because it is explicit that the process of its implementation is located within a history of considerable marginalization of women. A study done by Obura, (2011) found that despite the high numbers of female teachers in secondary schools, very few attained leadership positions. The study further found out that in the ministries, women comprise 27% of those reportedly involved in policy making, decisions, shaping and originating the policies with the highest concentration being at middle and low levels, Obura(2011). Obura, further advises that female visibility in senior management positions raises the morale of female staff in the ministry of education but no strategic action has been taken by the woman or anyone to maintain a positive change and hence the status quo.

Despite the fact that laws have been enforced to protect women from discrimination across nations as they advance through the layers of education leadership, there has been a insignificant increase in the number of women placed in the positions of school leadership worldwide (Yoder, 2004).This justifies the undertaking of this study which sought

to explain the reason for under-representation through examining The influence of background or demographic characteristics on female teachers upward mobility.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study:-
The purpose of this study was to examine how the background characteristics of principals and deputy principals and their level of education influenced upward mobility of female teachers to the position of principal. The study addressed itself to the following objectives;
1. Established whether there is a statistical significant difference between the age of principals female teachers' and their upward mobility
2. Established whether there is a statistically significant difference between gender and career mobility of principals female teachers
3. Determine whether the level of education of female principal teachers was a hindrance to their upward mobility.

Research Design and Methodology:-
This study employed descriptive survey design embracing both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The target population for study was 825(N) persons comprising of; (248) female principals, (260) male principals, 263 female deputy principals, 22, DEOs and 22 Quality Assurance and Standard Officers. A sample size of 376(n) respondent was used for the study. Stratified random sampling was used to select the schools according to the following strata: girls' public secondary schools, girl's private secondary schools, and public and private mixed secondary schools. Data were collected using questionnaires and interview schedules. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically while quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Research Findings and Discussion:-
This study first sought to establish the age of the principals and deputy principals fall. The results are reported in Figure 1
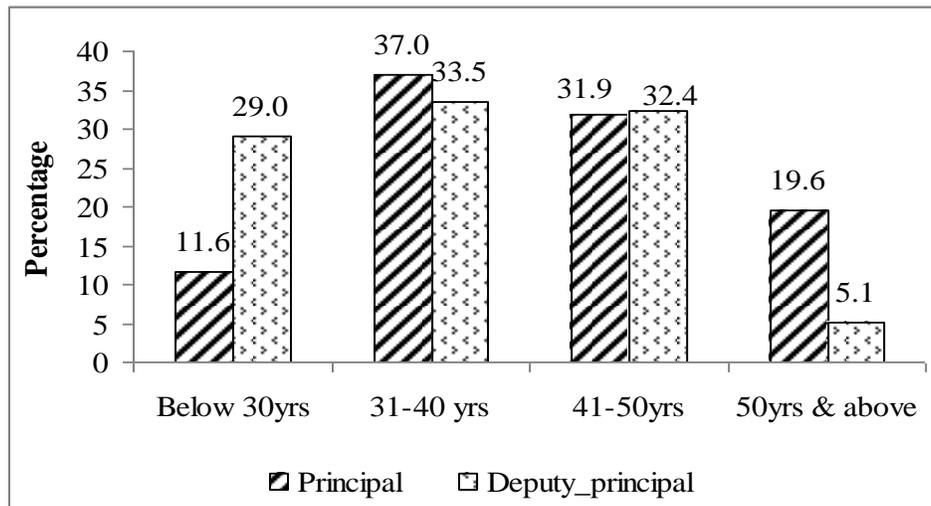

Figure 1:-Age of the principals and deputy principals

Figure 1 reveals that 51(37.0%) of the principals and 59 (33.5%) of the deputy principals were aged between 31 and 40 years while, 44 (31.9%) principals and, 57 (32.4%) deputy principals were aged between 41 and 50 years. Those who were aged more than 50 years constituted 27(19.6%) principals and 9(5.1%) deputy principals respectively. Figure 4.1 also shows that the age blanket that had the highest number of principals and deputy principals was between 31-40 years. Among the principals in this category, there were 23(45.1%) females and 28(54.9% males respectively. This shows that female principals were few in number.

To establish whether the age of principals and deputy principals had any influence on the upward mobility of female teachers to the position of principal, ANOVA was used to compare significance of differences in means between the age of the respondents and the career mobility for female teachers within the organization. This is shown in Table 1.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Biased recruitment process against the female teachers hinders female teachers upward mobility	8.095	3	2.698	1.403	.245
Selection criteria which is gender specific and not qualification specific hinders female teachers upward mobility	13.269	3	4.423	2.191	.092
Intimidating interview panels where the male gender is favoured hinders female teachers from rising to managerial position	12.690	3	4.230	2.189	.092
Biased promotion criteria where female principals are disadvantaged hinders female teachers upward mobility	1.419	3	.473	.268	.849
Biased screening and short listing process where female teachers are left out despite their qualification hinders female teachers from rising to managerial position	3.565	3	1.188	.626	.600
Interviews conducted far away from the schools where female teachers may be unable to attend due to work family conflict hinders female teachers upward mobility	1.435	3	.478	.231	.875

Table 1:-ANOVA on age and career mobility

The ANOVA on age and career mobility indicates that all the p-values were above the level of significance (0.05). The p-values were ,.245, .092,.092,.849,600,.875 and therefore the study established that there was no statistically significant difference in means between the age of principals female teachers' upward mobility. This implies that age was not a barrier to career mobility of female teachers.

The study also sought to find out the gender of the principals involved in the study. This is shown in Figure 2.
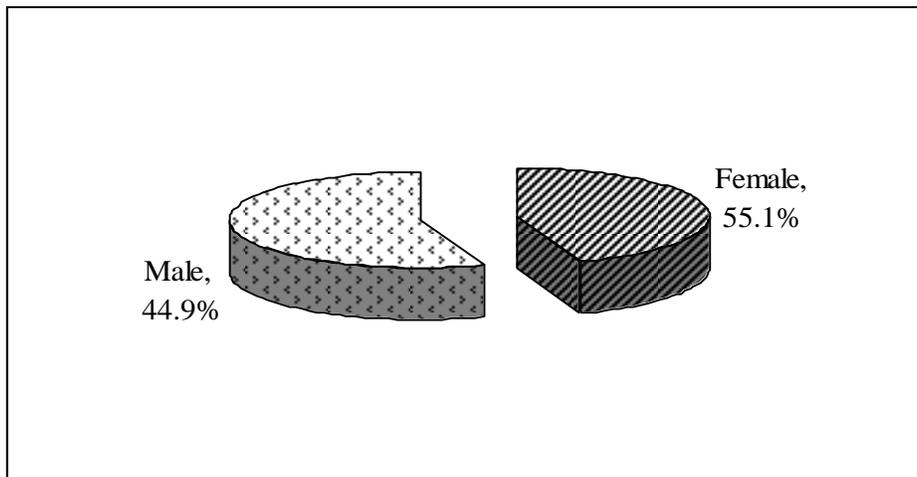

Figure 2:-Gender of the principals

On the aspect of gender, 76 (55.1%) principals who participated in the study, were females while 62 (44.9%) were males. Though the study was focusing on female principals, it was important to rope in the male principals to capture their perceptions on how organizational barriers affected female teachers' upward mobility in school organizations. To establish the significance of differences in means between gender and upward mobility of female teachers, ANOVA was used. This is shown in Table 2.

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Biased recruitment process against the female teachers hinders female teachers upward mobility	.745	1	.745	.382	.538
Selection criteria which is gender specific and not qualification specific hinders female teachers upward mobility	1.101	1	1.101	.530	.468
Intimidating interview panels where the male gender is favoured hinders female teachers upward mobility	1.601	1	1.601	.806	.371
Biased promotion criteria where female principals are disadvantaged hinders female teachers upward mobility	4.066	1	4.066	2.360	.127
Biased screening and short listing process where female teachers are left out despite their qualification hinders female teachers upward mobility	2.105	1	2.105	1.119	.292
Interviews conducted far away from the schools where female teachers may be unable to attend due to work family conflict hinders female teachers upward mobility	.016	1	.016	.008	.930

Table 2:-ANOVA on age and career mobility

Table 2 shows ANOVA for gender and career mobility of female teachers. The p-values, .538, .468, .371, .127, .292, and .930 were all above the level of significance of 0.05 and therefore the study established that there was no statistically significant difference between gender and career mobility. This indicates that gender of the principals was not a barrier to female teachers' upward mobility. The TSC has provided policy guidelines that have outlined the minimum requirements for a teacher seeking to be considered for promotion. The requirements are: academic and professional qualifications, special merit on work performance and performance in National examinations (TSC, 2005).There is no instance in the policy where gender has been given due recognition.

The study sought to establish the level of education for the principals and deputy principals because level of education is a key criterion used to make decisions on who gets to management positions (TSC, 2005). The principals and deputy principals' level of education is shown in Figure 3.
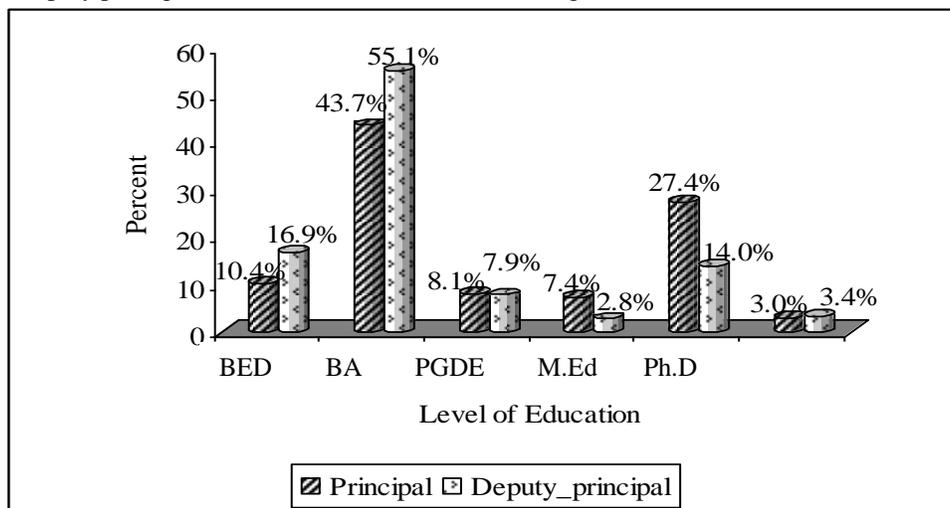

Figure 3:-Level of Education of the principals and deputy principals

Figure 3 shows that, 59 (43.7%) of the principals and 98(55.1%) of deputy principals had B.Ed. degree as their highest level of education. Further the table shows that there were 4, (3.0%) principals who had PhD and 2 (2.8) deputy principals who had PGDE as their highest levels of education.

The researcher sought to establish the level of education by gender to determine which level of education had the highest disparity by gender. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3:-Principals' level of education by gender

Level of education	Female		Male		Total	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Diploma	8	12.9	6	8.2	14	10.4
BEd	23	43.5	38	43.8	61	43.7
BA/PGDE	4	6.5	7	9.6	11	8.1
BSc/PDGE	4	6.5	6	8.2	10	8.1
MEd/	17	27.4	20	27.4	37	27.4
PhD	2	3.2	2	2.7	4	3.0
Total	**61**	**100.0**	**74**	**100.0**	**135**	**100**

Table 3 shows principals' level of education by gender. It is clear from the table that the level that had the highest holders was BEd as indicated by 38 (43.8%) of male and 23(43.5%) of female principals respectively. Table 4.3 also shows that the level that had the least holders by gender was PhD, as indicated by 2(2.7%) males and 2(3.2%)) females respectively. This table also indicates pattern that in all the levels of education attainment the male gender was more than the female gender save for the PhD level where the genders were equal.

To establish whether there was any significant relationship between gender of the principals and their level of education, a Chi-Square test was run and the results are captured in Table 4.

Table 4:-Chi-Square tests between gender and level education

	Value	**df**	**P-value**
Pearson Chi-Square	1.283	5	.937
Likelihood Ratio	1.289	5	.936
Linear-by-Linear Association	.127	1	.721
N of Valid Cases	135		

The p-values, 0.937, .936, and .721 were all greater than the level of significance of 0.05, and this implies that there was no statistically significant relationship between gender of the principals and their level of education. The level of education was not a hindrance to upward mobility of female teachers. This however contradicts a view shared by many DEOs who emphasized that acquisition of higher levels of education was an advantage to female teachers who wished to be promoted.

To establish whether the level of education had any influence on female teacher's upward mobility, ANOVA was used to compare the significance of differences in means between the respondents' level of education and career mobility .This is captured in Table 5.

Table 5:-ANOVA on level of education and career mobility

	Sum of Squares	**df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**P-value**
Biased recruitment process against the female teachers upward mobility	17.481	5	3.496	1.849	.108
Selection criteria which is gender specific and not qualification specific on female teachers upward mobility	8.494	5	1.699	.817	.540
Intimidating interview panels where the male gender is favoured hinders female teachers upward mobility	32.515	5	6.503	3.571	.005
Biased promotion criteria where female principals are disadvantaged on female teachers upward mobility	14.425	5	2.885	1.703	.138
Biased screening and short listing process where female teachers are left out despite their qualification on their upward mobility	25.203	5	5.041	2.840	.018
Interviews conducted far away from the schools where female teachers may be unable to attend due to work family conflicts on female teachers' upward mobility.	11.174	5	2.235	1.106	.360

Table 5 shows that the Analysis of variance for all the recruitment practices except one level of education and career mobility had p-values,.108, .540, .138, .018, and .360 which were all greater than the level of significance, 0.05. This indicates that from a principal's perspective, there was no significant difference between the level of education and female teachers' upward mobility. However, the recruitment practice on the intimidating interview panels where the male gender was favoured compared to the female gender had a P-value of .005 which was less than the level of significance of 0.05.This means that there was a significant difference between the level of education and the fact that intimidating interview panels influenced female teachers' upward mobility. This finding confirms Mwebi and Angelik, (2008) who assert that discriminatory and unethical recruitment practices within organizations deterred many women from applying for leadership positions and female teachers expressed that they encountered problems in all stages of the process of recruitment.

Conclusions and Recommendations:-
Conclusions:-
The background characteristics of; age, gender and level of education in principals and deputy principals were found not to be significant hindrance to the upward mobility of female teachers to principalship.

Recommendations:-
Currently, there is no need for administrative or legal justification to insulate female principals against their background characteristics to enhance their upward mobility in principalship

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