

Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Educational Leadership**Positions at Elbethel Private Academy**Befekadu Zeleke^{1*} and Biniyam Asfawossen²

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Abstract:

Female representation in school leadership is not just a matter of demographic parity; it is believed to be a strategic necessity for creating diverse, inclusive, and high-performing educational environments that reflect the communities they serve. Unfortunately, females are often underrepresented in school leadership. This Study explores factors that affect women's participation in leadership positions at Elbethel Private Academy in Addis Ababa. A descriptive survey design was used to carry out the Study. Data was collected from teachers, school principals, and human resource managers using questionnaire. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings of the Study indicate that organizational factors, such as a lack of support from senior management and limited recruitment practices for attracting female candidates hinder women's participation in leadership positions. Family responsibilities, including marriage and parenting, also affect women's ability to engage fully in educational leadership roles. Economic factors, such as financial barriers and disparities, pose challenges to women's representation. Women's self-perceptions, fear of success, and attitudes toward work-family balance influence their leadership participation. Additionally, success in higher education plays a crucial role in encouraging women to apply for top leadership positions, while addressing historical inequalities in educational opportunities is necessary. Understanding and addressing these factors are essential for promoting gender equality and empowering women in educational leadership.

Keywords: *Gender, Leadership, Sex stereotypes, Women empowerment,*

Background of the Study

Historically, leadership position has been considered as a sole province of masculine concept. Until very recently, women have not been given opportunities to become leaders, such conceptualization of leadership as a masculine province has been concretized because of the nature of the workplaces and organizational atmospheres that reflect traditionally masculine

values of competition, aggression, and achievement (Heilman et al., 2024). According to Nater et al. (2024) the activities of leadership becomes traditionally associated with masculinity. In this regard, women's possibility of assuming leadership and managerial positions seemed to be confounded by sex case stereotypes. Gender imbalances in workplaces are global truth even though the depth varies between the developed and developing countries. The global picture is evidence of men outnumbering women about 20:1 ratio in senior management levels (ILO, 2018). The reason would be either equal opportunity goes unnoticed by decision makers, or is not an issue of concern. Women bear almost all responsibility for meeting basic needs of their family, yet are systematically denied the resources, information and freedom of action they need to fulfill these responsibilities. The vast majority of the world's poor are women. Two-thirds of the world's illiterates are female. Of the millions of school age children not in school, the majority are girls.

Despite their significant contributions in productive, reproductive, and managerial roles, women continue to be underrepresented in public life, particularly in positions of leadership and decision-making. Recent studies indicate that entrenched gender norms and institutional biases still limit women's visibility and participation in governance and leadership structures (Heilman et al., 2024; UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Contemporary research further shows that societal expectations continue to position men as primary actors in the public sphere, while women's leadership remains undervalued or questioned, leading to their exclusion from key decision-making bodies (Eagly & Nater, 2020; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2023). As a result, both structural barriers and persistent cultural attitudes contribute to the limited representation of women in policy-making and governance institutions.

Most research shows that the exclusion of women from power positions is associated with traditional stereotypes that link leadership to masculinity. Empirical studies demonstrate that women leaders are often evaluated through biased lenses and portrayed as less suitable for leadership roles, reinforcing their underrepresentation in political and decision-making spaces (Brugnoli et al., 2022; Leavy, 2020; Nater et al., 2025). Consequently, women are frequently excluded or overlooked in policy reforms and democratic governance initiatives.

Review of Related Literature

Several factors account for women under representation in leadership positions including women in educational leadership positions. Although there are different ways of classifying these factors, the following are considered in this Study.

Socio-cultural barriers

One of the major challenges limiting women's access to leadership positions in schools is rooted in socio-cultural structures that reinforce gender divisions. Contemporary research indicates that deeply embedded cultural norms in many societies continue to assign distinct roles and responsibilities to men and women, often positioning leadership as a masculine domain (Heilman et al., 2024; Eagly & Nater, 2020). These gendered expectations are particularly evident in many developing countries, where social institutions and cultural traditions prescribe

appropriate behaviors based on gender, thereby constraining women's leadership aspirations and opportunities. As a result, leadership roles are more frequently associated with men, while women who pursue such positions may face social resistance, including negative judgments, reduced social acceptance, and pressures related to family and marital expectations (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Such socio-cultural barriers continue to marginalize women and limit their participation in educational leadership and decision-making processes.

Individual-level factors continue to play a significant role in limiting women's participation in educational leadership and management. Recent research shows that internalized gender stereotypes often shape women's self-perceptions, leading to lower self-confidence, reduced leadership aspirations, and heightened fear of criticism or failure (Eagly & Nater, 2020; Heilman et al., 2024). Many women may underestimate their leadership capabilities or hesitate to pursue leadership roles due to the anticipation of bias, negative evaluation, or social backlash. This phenomenon is reinforced by what scholars describe as the "confidence gap," where women are less likely than men to put themselves forward for leadership opportunities even when equally qualified (Heilman et al., 2024).

In addition, socio-cultural conditioning plays a critical role in shaping these individual attitudes. In contexts such as Ethiopia, particularly in rural areas, traditional norms and religious influences continue to define gender roles in ways that discourage women's public leadership (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). These cultural expectations often lead women to prioritize domestic responsibilities over professional advancement and may create internal conflicts when pursuing leadership roles. As a result, women may self-select out of leadership pathways or limit their ambitions, further reinforcing their underrepresentation in decision-making positions. Overall, the interaction between internal psychological barriers and external cultural expectations continues to constrain women's active engagement in educational leadership.

Socialization and Sex Role Stereotyping

Gender-based socialization and sex-role stereotyping continue to influence perceptions of leadership ability and constrain women's access to administrative positions. Contemporary research indicates that women are often associated with communal traits such as warmth, empathy, helpfulness, and kindness—qualities that are culturally valued but do not align with traditional conceptions of leadership as assertive and agentic (Heilman et al., 2024; Eagly & Nater, 2020). While these stereotypes may appear positive, they frequently undermine perceptions of women's competence, authority, and suitability for leadership roles, contributing to biased evaluations in professional settings (Heilman et al., 2024; Ely et al., 2022).

Sex-role stereotyping also shapes organizational practices by normalizing male dominance in decision-making positions and discouraging women from seeking leadership roles. Studies show that both men and women internalize these cultural expectations, often reinforcing the status quo and perpetuating discriminatory practices against women in leadership (Heilman et al., 2024; UN Women, 2023). These biases influence how leadership qualities are evaluated:

assertiveness, risk-taking, and decisiveness are typically seen as male characteristics, while communal behaviors in women may be interpreted as a lack of authority or competence (Eagly & Carli, 2023).

However, research on transformational leadership suggests a partial challenge to these stereotypes. Women often exhibit higher transformational leadership behaviors than men, emphasizing collaboration, inspiration, and mentorship, which can positively impact organizational outcomes (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2019; Eagly & Carli, 2023). Despite this, prevailing sex-role stereotypes still depict men as inherently more suited to leadership because masculine traits such as assertiveness, competitiveness, and courage are culturally associated with authority and the respect required to manage subordinates effectively (Heilman et al., 2024; Eagly & Nater, 2020). In short, socialization and entrenched sex-role stereotyping create both psychological and structural barriers that limit women's leadership participation. These stereotypes not only affect how women are perceived but also shape organizational norms, expectations, and selection processes, perpetuating gender inequality in leadership positions across multiple sectors.

Work Life Balance

The different personal and professional responsibilities, especially the demanding family and home responsibilities, do not align well to the personal and organizational goals, and therefore, this impact on the progress or growth of women leaders since women have to adjust and accommodate various needs and commitments (Shakeshaft, 2009). Especially in Africa including in Ethiopia, women besides carrying out the role of an administrator or leader, they perform social or family roles and responsibilities of being a mother, sister, wife and student, and this hinders in their leadership involvement and performance.

Women's Educational Level

There is adequate evidence that educating women is beneficial at the national, community, family and individual levels. Research indicates that achieving equitable representation of women in educational administration requires targeted education and professional development programs for women teachers (Heilman et al., 2024; UN Women, 2023). Even basic education enables women to engage more effectively in economic activities, contributing to increased national productivity and economic growth. At the family level, educated women are associated with lower fertility rates, improved child health and education outcomes, and reduced maternal and infant mortality (World Bank, 2022; UN Women, 2023). At the societal level, women with education are more likely to participate in development initiatives and engage in political and economic decision-making processes. In male-dominated contexts, however, women's lack of confidence is often compounded by structural barriers such as limited access to education, inadequate professional infrastructure, and the low social status of women, which together restrict their opportunities to pursue leadership positions (Eagly & Nater, 2020; Heilman et al., 2024).

Women's lack of self-confidence or Women's Perception

Lack of confidence has consistently been identified as a key barrier limiting women's aspirations for educational leadership positions in secondary schools (Heilman et al., 2024; Coleman, 2003). Historically, women have been observed to experience heightened anxiety regarding achievement, not because they desire failure, but because of anticipated negative consequences associated with success, which can diminish their motivation to pursue leadership roles (Horner, 1972; Eagly & Nater, 2020). In the education sector, female principals are less likely than their male counterparts to seek positions beyond the principalship, reflecting both structural and psychological constraints (Liu, 2000; UN Women, 2023). Traditional cultural values and societal expectations continue to reinforce feelings of inadequacy and inferiority among women teachers, further undermining their confidence to assume leadership responsibilities (Archer & Lloyd, 2002; World Bank, 2022). These findings unpack the interplay between individual, social, and institutional factors in shaping women's self-efficacy and leadership trajectories in education.

Institutional Factors

According to the study of Folmar, (1989), stereotypes of women by superintendents and school board members are a major barrier for their principalship success. The study of Lihamba *et al.* (2006) show that in many school board members, search consultants, search committee members, practicing administrators, and private citizens continue to believe old myths that have prevented women from becoming educational leaders in the past. Most research studies conclude that the biggest barriers to career advancement among women are beyond their personal control. The Glass Ceiling Commission indicts Organizational and structural barriers as the most predominant barriers toward women's upward climb in the career ladder. Recent research indicates that institutional structures, including job assignments, continue to reinforce gendered divisions of labor that hinder women's advancement into top administrative positions. Women are still disproportionately associated with teaching roles, while leadership positions such as school principals are often culturally aligned with men, reflecting persistent gender stereotypes in education systems (Gunter, 2016; Datnow & Park, 2018). Furthermore, studies reveal that female school leaders frequently experience limited institutional support, including inadequate mentoring, restricted access to resources, and insufficient time for effective implementation of policies, which can contribute to feelings of frustration and professional isolation (Fuller, 2017; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011). In the context of Ethiopia, the Government has demonstrated a commitment to reducing gender-based stereotypes and promoting women's participation across all sectors. This commitment is reflected through engagement in national, regional, and international initiatives aimed at addressing structural and cultural barriers to gender equality. Key measures include the establishment of dedicated institutional bodies such as the Ministry of Women's Affairs, the development and implementation of gender mainstreaming policies, and the integration of affirmative action strategies in education, employment, and public administration (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, the Government has aligned its strategies with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, particularly **Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower women and girls**, as well as other

gender-responsive development frameworks such as the African Union Gender Strategy and the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). These initiatives collectively aim to create enabling environments where women can participate equally in decision-making, leadership roles, and socio-economic development, while simultaneously challenging entrenched gender norms and reducing systemic disparities (UN Women, 2023; World Bank, 2022). In the area of education sectors, the school leadership systems of Ethiopia have passed through a series of policy reforms in the last three decades. Key reform areas ranged from improving quality and relevance of programs to promoting equality in access to and success in Education. Ethiopia has demonstrated a commitment to advancing gender equality by aligning its national policies with global frameworks such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls, and regional initiatives like the African Union Gender Strategy 2018–2028 (UN Women, 2023; African Union, 2020). These frameworks emphasize the elimination of gender disparities in education, leadership, and decision-making, with benchmarks that aim to empower women across all sectors by 2030. Despite these efforts, Ethiopian women remain underrepresented in both education and leadership positions, mirroring global patterns of gender inequality.

The present Study focuses on investigating the factors that constrain women's participation in educational leadership, specifically within private education institutions in Addis Ababa. The Study is based on ten branches of Elbethel Private Academy and aims to critically examine the persistent underrepresentation of women in management positions. Data from the Addis Ababa City Education Bureau indicate that women occupy only a small fraction of educational leadership roles; for instance, recent reports show that approximately 14% of leadership positions in secondary schools are held by women, compared to 86% by men (Addis Ababa City Education Bureau, 2004). This stark disparity highlights the continuing challenges faced by women aspiring leadership roles in education, despite national and international policy commitments. Consequently, this Study seeks to identify the individual, socio-cultural, and institutional factors that hinder women's full participation in educational leadership at Elbethel Private Academy.

Statement of the Problem

Women in managerial or administrative, technical and scientific positions are under represented. Different authors reported that it is a global fact that women's proportion in leadership positions is insignificant in comparison with their number in the world's population, (Jayaweera, 1997, Abebayehu, 1995 and Yalew 1997). Some African countries like Zambia have been implementing the policy of balancing leadership position in school following the rules of selection of school leadership in such a way that when there is a male school director, the deputy must be a female. Besides, when there is a female school director, the deputy must be male. This means that school leadership is now less gender biased (MoE, 2006). In practice, however, it has been observed that women are marginalized in the leadership positions within the education system (MoE, 2010).

Although there has been progress in increasing the number of women in leadership roles, gender inequality and discrimination continue to persist, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia. Because of traditional thinking the perception of women in leadership is still very low (Aretha, 1993). Despite the government's efforts to improve gender equality and increase women's participation in leadership positions, women still lag behind in leadership positions in education. The problem is particularly evident in the Ethiopia's private education system, where there seems to be a lack of women in leadership positions. According to the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, at the country level women hold only 12.5% of principal positions in secondary schools, while men hold the remaining 87.5% (MoE, 2010).

The issue of gender inequality in leadership positions is a persistent problem in Ethiopia, particularly in private schools. Hence, women's participation in leadership positions is an essential issue to address. Despite the importance of this issue, there is a limited research that has been conducted on the participation of women in leadership positions in private schools in Ethiopia. According to a report by the Ethiopian Private Schools Association (EPSA), only 10% of private schools in Ethiopia are owned and led by women. The under-representation of women in leadership positions in private schools has significant implications for the quality of education and the development of future leaders in Ethiopia.

Therefore, the current Study attempts to address factors that might have limited the representation of women in leadership positions in private schools. The Study aims to explore the challenges that women face to assume leadership positions in Elbethel private academy as one of the private schools.

Research questions

1. What are the different social factors affecting women's participation in leadership positions in Elbethel private academy?
2. What are the different personal factors that affect women's in participating in leadership positions in Elbethel private academy?
3. What are the different institutional factors affecting women's participation in leadership positions in Elbethel private academy?
4. Are there statistically significant relationships between respondents' perceptions of the socio-cultural, personal, and institutional factors and women's participation in leadership positions in Elbethel private academy?

Conceptual Frame work of the Study

Based on different theories and empirical evidence discussed in this chapter the factors (social and personal) which hinder or affect the representation and participation of women's in private schools leadership positions are conceptualized by the following diagram.

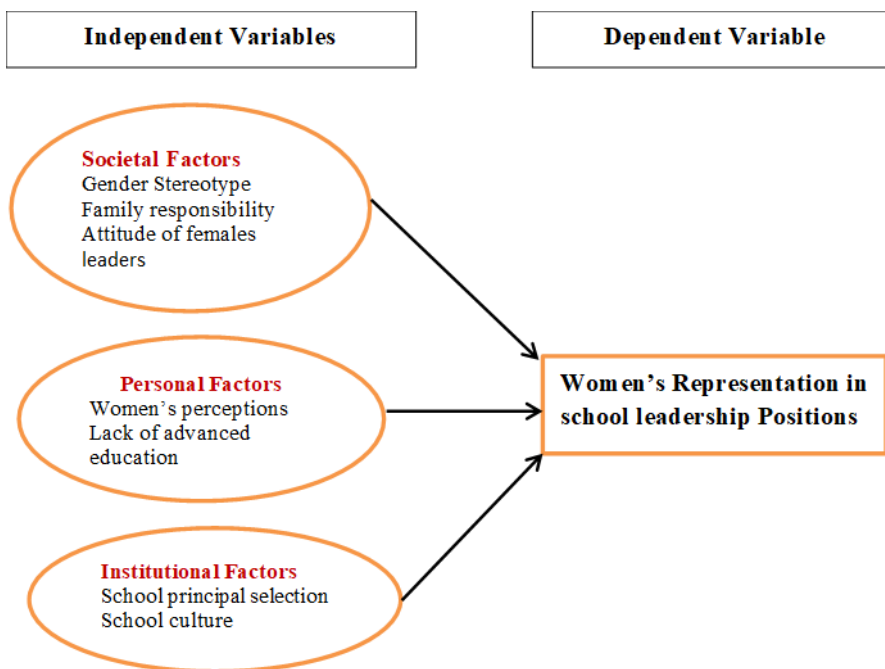


Figure 1: *Conceptual frame work of the study Source?*

Methodology

Study Design

This Study was aimed to study factors affecting women's participations in educational leadership positions at Elbethel Private Academy in Addis Ababa. A descriptive survey design was used to conduct the Study since it is important to describe and interpret both qualitative and quantitative data as well as to get information on the current situation of the Study problems (Best & Kahn, 2008) and (Creswell, 2003).

Population and Sampling Techniques

The targeted populations of this study were teachers, department heads, school principal, vice principals and human resource management of Elbethel Academy. The selected Academy or School has ten branches in Addis Ababa. The total population of the Academy in the ten branches in Addis Ababa was 300 (168 Male and 132 Female). Among this target population a sample of 171 respondents were selected using simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the principals or focal persons of the organizations because they have better knowledge about the issue under study. The following formula was used to determine the sample size of the population. A representative sample size with known confidence level which is 95% was selected, based on the formula of (Yamane, 1967). Therefore, considering the above given points the sample size for this study was calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, n = sample size required = 171, N = Population Size = 300 i.e. in the ten schools in Addis Ababa, $e = 0.05$. As a result, 171 respondents were randomly selected for the Study. The number of respondents in each branch of Elbethel Academy was determined using proportional methods. This means after the sample size determination, the sample respondents from each sample School were determined proportionately and selected using simple random or a lottery method.

Data Collecting Instruments

The intended information for the Study was gathered by using questionnaires, a structured and semi-structured interview, and document analysis.

The questionnaire was comprised of both closed and open-ended items. It had two parts; the first part consisting background information of respondents while the second part constituted items on factors affecting female's participation in educational leadership positions. In this part, each item was prepared in the form of a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

To check the reliability of internal consistency of the independent variable Alpha Cronbach technique was employed. The Cronbach Alpha values of social factors, organizational factors, educational factors, personal factors, family factors, and current leadership status of women were 0.987, 0.985, 0.933, 0.980, 0.937, and 0.976 respectively. Thus, it can be concluded that the measurement item or statement can be trusted (reliable) and the data is feasible to be used in the subsequent analysis.

Table 1: Reliability test results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha
1. Social factors	0.99
2. Institutional factors	0.98
3. Educational factors	0.93
4. Personal factors	0.98
5. Family factors	0.94
6. Women's leadership status	0.98

Source: Result of SPSS reliability output, 2024

Method of Data Analysis

For quantitative data analysis, the data from the questionnaire were coded into a computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24 computer programs for data analysis and quantitatively analyzed by using descriptive statistics such as percentage, frequency, and mean. To measure the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables Pearson correlation (r) was employed.

Results and Discussions

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondent

Out of the total respondents, 87.7% were female and the remaining 12.3% were male. In terms of age distribution, the majority of respondents fell within the 26-35 age range, comprising 36% of the participants. Regarding educational background, the majority of respondents (66%) held a BA/BSc degree. Around 17% possessed an MA degree, while 16% had a diploma. In terms of work experiences, the largest proportion of respondents had 1-5 years of experience (31%), followed closely by those with 6-10 years (28%). In the marital status category, the majority of respondents were married (56%), while 37% were single. Among the total respondents, about 50% were teachers, followed by department heads (22%), vice principals/principals (17%), and unit leaders/supervisors (6% each).

Social Factors

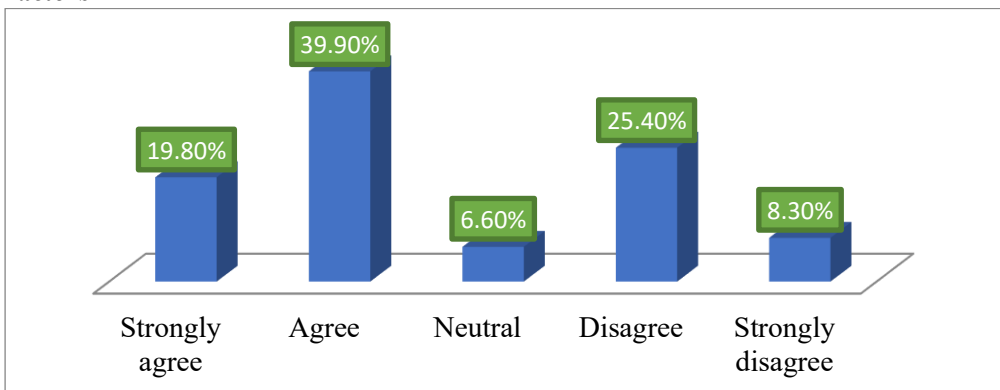


Figure 2: Respondents' Perception of the Effects of Gender Stereotypes on women's leadership participation

Above, Figure 2 shows that about 19.8%, 39.9%, 6.6%, 25.4%, and 8.3% of the respondents said strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree respectively. The findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents (59.8%) agreed on the influence of gender stereotypes on women's leadership participation or representation at private schools in Addis Ababa. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents believe that gender stereotypes act as a barrier to women's ability to participate and hold leadership positions in Elbethel Academy. These findings align with recent literature on gender stereotypes and leadership. Multiple contemporary studies indicate that gender stereotypes continue to shape biases and prejudice, creating structural and perceptual barriers that limit women's access to leadership positions (Heilman et al., 2024; Eagly & Nater, 2020; UN Women, 2023). Stereotypes that link leadership with traditionally masculine traits influence perceptions of women's competence, confidence, and suitability for leadership, ultimately constraining their opportunities for career advancement and leadership participation.

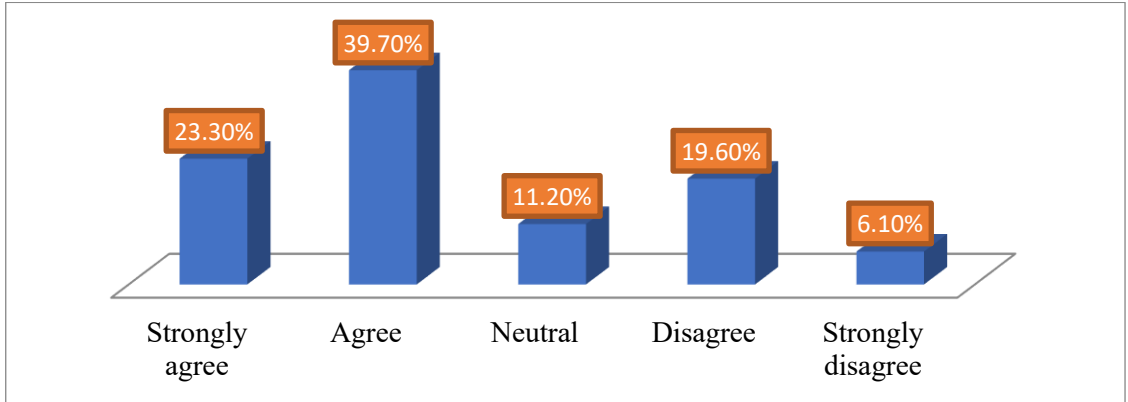


Figure 3: Responses on Societal Attitudes Towards Women's Participation in Leadership Positions

As indicated in Figure 3 above, about 23.3% of the respondents strongly agree, 39.7% agree, 11.2% neutral, 19.6% disagree, and 6.1% strongly disagree on the effects of social attitude on women's leadership participation. The findings indicate that a significant proportion of respondents 63% i.e. (23.3% + 39.7%) agreed on the influence of social attitudes on women's leadership participation or representation. This suggests that a significant proportion of respondents believe that societal attitudes act as a barrier to women's ability to participate and hold leadership positions in Elbethel Academy. These findings are consistent with the broader literature on gender equality and women's empowerment in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian context is characterized by deeply ingrained cultural norms and social expectations that often restrict women's access to leadership positions and perpetuate gender-based stereotypes (Bogale *et al.*, 2017; Geleta, 2018). Traditional gender roles, biased perceptions of women's capabilities, and unequal power dynamics can hinder women's progress and representation in educational leadership roles.

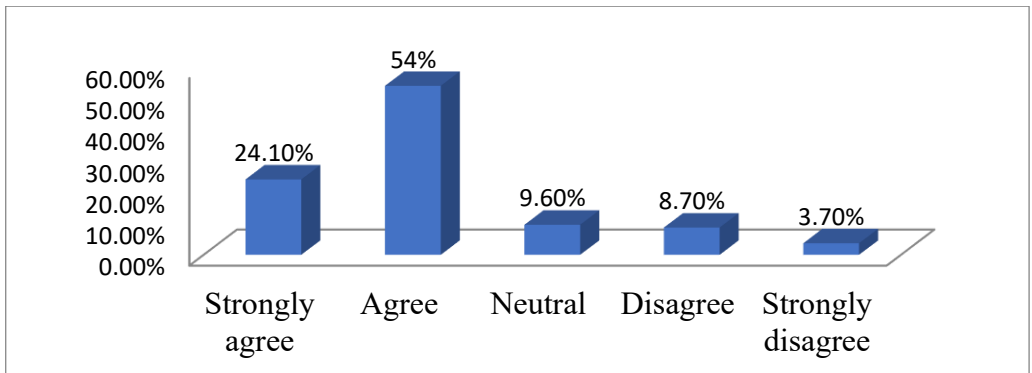


Figure 3: Institutional factors affecting women's participation in leadership positions

As shown in Figure 3 above, the highest percentage of respondents (54%) agreed that organizational factors have an impact on women's leadership participation. This finding suggests that the participants recognize the effects of organizational factors in shaping women's

involvement in leadership positions. Furthermore, (24.10%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the notion that organizational factors influence women's leadership participation, this indicates a significant portion of the participants strongly believe that factors within the organization directly affect women's ability to take on leadership roles. These individuals likely perceive the presence of barriers or opportunities within the organization that can hinder or support women's leadership aspirations. On the other hand, 12.4% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the idea that organizational factors affect women's leadership participation. Organizational factors, such as inclusive policies, supportive work environments, equal opportunities, and mentorship programs, have been identified as crucial in promoting women's leadership participation (African Union, 2010; Girma *et al.*, 2020). When organizations prioritize gender equity, create a conducive culture, and provide resources and support, women are more likely to thrive in leadership positions.

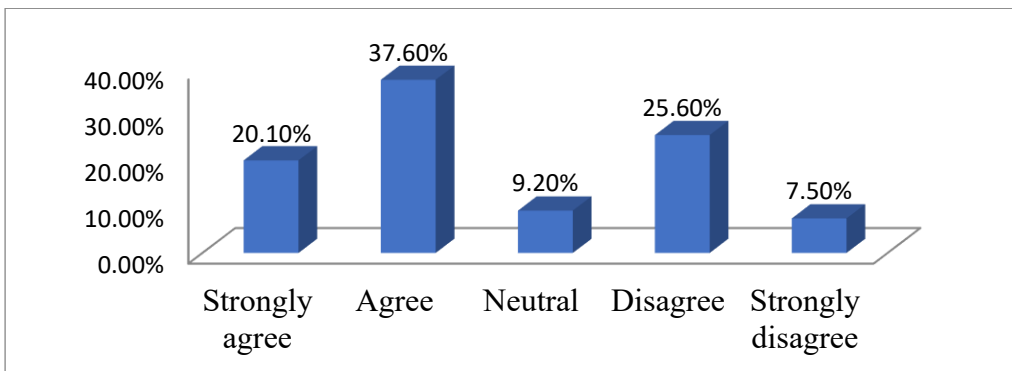


Figure 4: *Respondents' perceptions on family responsibility as a factor for women's participation in leadership*

As depicted in Figure 4 above, about 20.1% of respondents strongly agree, 37.6% agree, 9.2% are neutral, 25.6% disagree, and 7.5% strongly disagree. The findings suggest that a significant proportion of respondents (57.7%) agreed on the influence of family responsibility on women's leadership participation or representation. This indicates that a considerable number of respondents believe that family responsibilities have a hindering effect on women's ability to participate and take up leadership positions including in Elbethel Academy. The high percentage of respondents who agree or strongly agree suggests that there is a prevailing perception that family responsibilities act as a barrier to women's advancement in educational leadership roles. These findings align with previous research conducted on the topic of women's leadership participation. Studies have consistently shown that women face numerous challenges and barriers, including family responsibilities that hinder their progress and representation in leadership positions (e.g., Eagly and Carli, 2023; Eagly & Karu., 2002). Family responsibilities, such as caregiving and household duties, often disproportionately burden women, limiting their time, energy, and availability to engage in leadership roles.

Personal Factors on Women's Leadership Participation

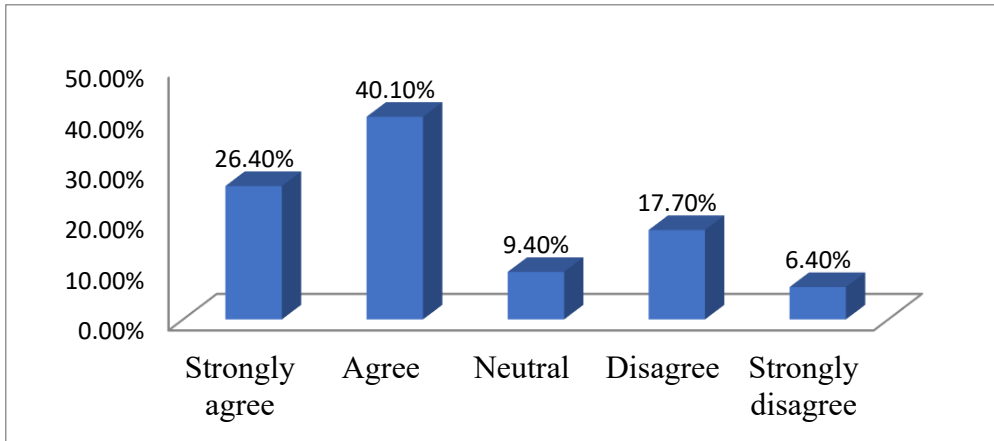


Figure 5: *Respondents' ratings of Women's self-perceptions*

As shown in Figure 5 above, 26.4% of the study participants strongly agree, 40.1% agree, 9.4% neutral, 18% disagree, and 6.4% strongly disagree on the effects of women's self-perceptions for leadership positions. The findings reveal that a significant majority of respondents (66.5%) agreed on the influence of women's self-image or perception on leadership participation or representation. This suggests that many respondents recognize the impact of women's self-perception on their ability to participate and hold leadership positions in Elbethel Academy. These findings align with the existing literature on women's self-perception and its impact on their leadership aspirations. Studies have shown that woman's beliefs about themselves, their skills, and their ability to balance multiple roles can influence their confidence and willingness to pursue leadership positions (Fentahun and Alemu, 2020; Girma and Emebet, 2018). Perceptions of the world as masculine, self-perception of being less skillful in leadership, fear of success, fear of balancing work and family responsibilities, and attitudes towards encountering jealousy and lack of support from other female subordinates are factors that can shape women's self-image and affect their leadership participation.

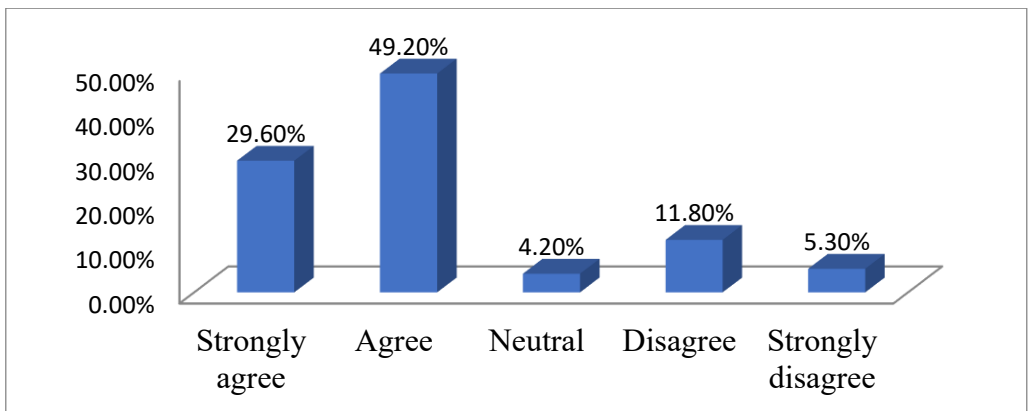


Figure 6: Respondent's perception of women's education as a hindrance to their participation in educational leadership

The majority of respondents agreed regarding the influence of advanced education on women's leadership participation. This indicates that many respondents recognize the impact of advanced education in encouraging women to apply for jobs with top management positions and believe that academic qualifications, coupled with experience, are key to the appointment, recruitment, and promotion of women into senior management positions. These findings align with the existing literature on the importance of education in women's empowerment and leadership development (African Union, 2017; Hailemariam and Birhanu, 2018). The high agreement and strong agreement percentages reflect the recognition of the role of education in narrowing the gender gap and addressing historical inequalities. The perception that women have lower levels of educational qualifications than men due to unequal opportunities in the past indicates an acknowledgment of the need to address past educational disparities. It also highlights the importance of providing equal educational opportunities to both genders to foster women's leadership participation.

The Results of the Inferential Statistics

Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation of each factor variable on dependent variables (WC)

		Pearson Product Moment Correlations					
		SF	OF	FF	PF	EAE	WCLS
SF	Correlation Coefficient	1.000					.
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.					
OF	Correlation Coefficient	.561**	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.				
FF	Correlation Coefficient	.492**	.580**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.			
PF	Correlation Coefficient	.594**	.683**	.690**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.		
EA	Correlation Coefficient	.689**	.683**	.688**	.690**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.	
WC	Correlation Coefficient	.860**	.861**	.651**	.758**	.657**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).N=163

SF= Social factors, OF= organizational factors, FF= family factors, PE= personal factors, EA=effect of advanced educations and WC= women's current leadership status

As depicted in Table 2 above, the strongest positive correlations were found between WC and OF ($r = 0.861^{**}$), indicating that organizational factors have a high relations with women's school leadership representation. This result aligns with the study of Skrla, Reyes, and Scheurich (2000) who described that organizations used intimidation and silence to discourage women.

Additionally, WC showed strong positive correlations with social factors (SF) ($r = 0.860^{**}$), family factors (FF) ($r = 0.651$), PF ($r = 0.758^{**}$), and educational factors (EAE) ($r = 0.657^{**}$), suggesting that social, family, personal, and educational factors also play important roles in shaping women's participation in educational leadership positions. This suggests that these factors collectively contribute to the lower representation of women in educational leadership positions at Elbethel Academy. The Study is in agreement with Sadie (2005), and Gumbi (2006), who found that patriarchal structure, socialization of the girl child, and cultural attitudes hinder women's participation in leadership. The Study findings are also in agreement with Tripp (2001) who found out that some cultures prohibit women from speaking in public. Livingstone (2004) also portrayed that domestic duties that women are still expected to do for their families take significantly more time and energy than those that most men are expected to do. So what? How is this connected with the current Study?

Regression Analysis

Table 3: Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				Sig. F Change	Durbin-Watson
				R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2		
.983 ^a	.967	.966	.19230	.967	910.983	5	157	.000	1.216

a. Predictors: (Constant), EF, OF, FF, PF, SF

b. Dependent Variable: WCL:

As shown above, the regression analysis results show that the model has a high degree of goodness-of-fit. The R-squared value of 0.966 indicates that 96.6% of the variance in women's leadership status (WLS) can be explained by the predictors in the model, which include social factors (SF), organizational factors (OF), personal factors (PF), family factors and educational factors (EF). Overall, the regression analysis suggests that the combination of social factors, organizational factors, personal factors, and educational factors have a strong influence on women's participation in educational leadership positions at Elbethel Academy. Towards this, research over the previous century has largely been male-dominated thereby perpetuating the myth that management and leadership are essentially male phenomena (Enomoto, 2000). Besides, the cultural and social assumption that women are less strong than men and therefore cannot hold managerial positions is common in many developing countries (Calvert and Calvert, 1996).

Conclusions

The findings of this Study reveal that women's participation in leadership positions is shaped by a complex interplay of societal, institutional, personal, and economic factors. Societal influences play a critical role, as entrenched gender stereotypes, cultural expectations, and biases continue to affect both how women perceive their own leadership potential and how they are

evaluated by others. These societal pressures can undermine confidence, limit aspirations, and restrict opportunities for women to advance into leadership roles.

Institutional factors were also found to significantly affect women's leadership representation. Policies, organizational practices, and support systems within schools including promotion criteria, mentoring opportunities, and gender-responsive management either facilitate or hinder women's progression into administrative positions. Institutions that fail to implement equitable policies inadvertently reinforce gender disparities in leadership.

At the personal level, variables such as self-confidence, perception of skills, fear of criticism, and challenges in balancing professional and family responsibilities emerged as key determinants of women's participation in leadership. Women who experience lower self-perception or perceive leadership roles as incompatible with their personal circumstances are less likely to pursue or sustain positions of authority. The Conclusion does not show the scenario at the Academy under study. How many women are there? How many have assumed the leadership position? How many are expected to be leaders? Why?

Finally, economic factors were identified as significant barriers to women's leadership advancement. Addressing economic constraints is essential for creating an environment where women can fully participate in decision-making and leadership positions. Overall, the study underscores that enhancing women's representation in leadership requires holistic interventions that address societal norms, institutional policies, personal empowerment, and economic equity simultaneously. Only through coordinated efforts across these domains can persistent gender disparities in educational leadership be effectively reduced.

Recommendations

In order to overcome the social factors, personal and institutional factors the following recommendations are forwarded:

To minimize social factors that hinder women's leadership, collaborative efforts should be developed among teachers, administrators, students, and parents to provide strong support for women in leadership roles. Educational institutions should also create a supportive and inclusive culture that values, recognizes, and respects the contributions of women leaders. In addition, schools and organizations should foster environments that encourage open dialogue about gender-related issues, challenge prevailing gender stereotypes, and actively address discriminatory practices and biases that may limit women's leadership opportunities.

To reduce personal factors that may hinder women's advancement into leadership positions, institutions should offer workshops and training programs designed to build self-confidence and help women overcome self-perceived limitations. Women should also be actively encouraged to participate in decision-making processes, with opportunities and platforms provided to ensure that their perspectives and contributions are heard and valued. Furthermore, organizations should promote a culture that supports work-life balance, helping to alleviate concerns related to managing professional responsibilities alongside family obligations.

To reduce institutional factors that limit women's leadership opportunities, private schools should take proactive measures to promote gender equality and ensure equal opportunities for career advancement. Institutions should develop and implement policies and practices that prioritize fair representation and career progression regardless of gender. In addition, both government and private institutions should effectively apply affirmative action measures to strengthen the competence, professional development, and leadership opportunities of female educators.

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