BREAKING OUT FROM THE FOUNDATIONS OF PERCEPTUAL PREJUDICES OF FEMALE LEADERSHIP IN THE AKUAPEM SOUTH MUNICIPALITY BASIC SCHOOLS: HOW THE SUN AND THE RAIN RELATE AND SHOULD RELATE TO EACH OTHER TO CREATE THE SPECTACULAR RAINBOW

Kwame Odei-Tettey, Ph.D.

Centre for Educational Policy Studies, University of Education, Winneba

P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana. West Africa.

Dominic Kwaku Danso Mensah, Ph.D., DBA.

Department of Educational Administration and Management

University of Education, Winneba

ABSTRACT: *This study epitomizes the gender mainstreaming concerns across the globe, especially the discourse on male-female dynamics in administration and management. The paper demonstrates that society has to acknowledge the importance of co-existence of men and women which is a prerequisite for success in administration and management. The article recommend strategies that will be required to persuade society to embrace the male-female contradiction as correlative and complementary rather than oppositional by collecting survey and interview data in the sequential and explanatory format. The researchers used purposive sampling to select 50 female school leaders in the Akuapem South Municipality of Ghana. The quantitative data was analysed by generating simple percentages with SPSS version 20, whereas categories and themes were developed to analyse the qualitative data. The study is based on the theory that 'cultural beliefs and traditions in the Akuapem South Municipality has created an entrenched milieu for female exclusions and fettered access to educational leadership which violates the logic of complementation of opposites'. The study sought to investigate strategies for breaking out from these foundations of prejudices. The study reveals that there are windows of societal acceptance of male-female co-existence in administration and management, and female leaders have to use these opportunities to break out from prejudices through women's identification and acceptance of their own abilities.*

KEYWORDS: Co-existence of opposites; Mythic opposition; Complementation of opposites; refraction; Ying-Yang relationship; Binary oppositions.

"The purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction" - Claude Levi-Strauss

INTRODUCTION

The classification of humans into male-female is a social construction which is derived from the myth that associates creation – that is the complementation and utility of opposites which are the bedrock of creation and existence. This gender classification has led to the creation of cultural expectations across the gender divide and humans are taught and encouraged to conform to these expectations through constructed social systems.

For example, although the demand for education is generally high for both sexes, preferences for educating men still persist due to the dictates of social systems. These preferences reflect

traditional stereotypes of female roles, customary patrimonial inheritance systems, and the perception that men have greater prospects for formal-sector employment than women. Also, women bear a larger share of domestic chores than men do, leading to the perception that these everyday jobs are womanly. Hence, parents are more likely to assign domestic tasks to their daughters than to their sons, particularly in rural areas where girls are expected to assist their mothers with household chores such as fetching water, collecting firewood, cooking and caring for their younger siblings.

The feminist movement has argued that men have developed and maintained the idea of distinct public and private spheres in order for them to dominate public life by relegating women to the private sphere (see Mackay, 2015; Dean, 2011). However, it is believed that, education is a route to women's personal advancement. It is in response to this that emphasis is now placed on the education of women to ensure their self-reliance and empowerment. Besides, formal education enables women to affirm their own identities as they attempt to change society's perception about gender.

The reality, which is also an anti-thesis of the feminist argument is that perceptions about the woman's world may be categorized into private and domestic. But inherent in both of these classification are the assumptions that women should be a person with few transactions, controlled desires, measured words and confined to defined positions in society (see Schumaker, Kiel & Heilke, 2000). In most societies, women have been more involved in reproduction and subsistence living. This is a phenomenon that has confined women to the private rather than public sphere of life (Schumaker, Kiel & Heilke, 2000). Consequently in most African and Asian societies, women are under-recognised despite their dominant pioneering and supportive roles in voluntary institutions, churches, political parties and professional groups (Cole, 1996). This incidence of under-representation of women in public life and under-recognition in society pervades all sectors of society (Leo-Rhynie, 2002), and the educational sector is typical, especially in the Akuapem South Municipality.

This notwithstanding, the process of changing this incidence of prejudices against female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem South Municipality can best be expressed in the context of the concept of co-existence of opposites. The idea is that the world and existence are fully packed with mythic opposition, and this epitomises the myths that underpin the universe. Such mythic opposites include 'young versus old' as reflected in 'idealism versus wisdom', 'freedom versus tyranny', 'love versus hate', 'good versus evil', 'sacred versus profane', 'body versus mind', 'beginning versus end' and many more. And focusing the discussion on the statement that: *the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction,* Claude Levi-Strauss (1995) argues that opposites (such as in gender classification) are the basis of myth, that is purposed to overcome such contradictions through dramatization in a structured story format so as to bring an understanding of this contradiction. For example with the creation myth, heaven was first separated from earth, then light from dark, land from water, and others until man and animals were created, and finally man and woman were split. These systems of meaning are highly and structurally interwoven, and this underscores the beauty and essence of the co-existence of men and women in educational administration to produce an efficient and enhanced system of leadership.

This is enforced by the idea that creation is engulfed by many opposites especially in terms of the belief that reality consist of opposites as argued long ago by Socrates that "if two things are opposite, each of them comes into being from the other" (Socrates, 469 – 399 BC; see also Johnson, 2011). This philosophy of Socrates emphasises the need for society to accept and

continually harness the abilities and capabilities of both men and women in leadership to develop an enhanced educational system and delivery. This constitutes the rationale for this study. Thus, the research intends to begin a groundbreaking debate regarding a resolution of the social problems that surround gender contradiction through unconventional ways of understanding the phenomenon of opposites – that is, using the myth of opposites as embedded in creation to show contemporary society that it is possible to create success in administration and management through permissive co-existence of male and female leadership. This is the point where the paper seeks to contribute to the dialogue regarding the resolution of the gender contradiction problems in society which has so far centered mainly on the use of law and force, but has not been able to advance much the very course society has set.

Statement of the Problem

Eagly and Carl (2003) have pointed out that at the turn of the 21st century the number of women in leadership positions (managerial and administrative) in the United States has increased from 18% to 46%, especially within the last thirty years. This is evidence that women play a significant role in the socio-economic and political development of nations. This view is corroborated by Jacquete (2000) with the view that just like males, there is an appreciable number of female leaders across the ideological divide of nations who also draw support from a wide range of groups and people.

In spite of this leadership achievement of women, some societies perceive that women cannot be effective leaders. Such views and perceptions are influenced and stayed by culture and belief systems of the people, and by a stereotypical belief that men and not women are more effective leaders and hence, leadership has to be the preserve of men. In these societies, women are looked down on, and they are swayed by a belief that women are vulnerable to pressures and stresses. These cultural notions and perceptions create platforms of obstacles that dissipate the drive and energy of women for leadership.

This paper makes a claim that such platforms are knitted by the tapestry of discrimination, stereotyping, prejudices, family demands and lack of opportunities (see Emory, 2008). For example in the Akuapem South Municipality, women play key roles in the educational sector as compared to men but women are underrepresented in leadership positions. And the causes of this phenomenon run deep in the traditions and culture of the people which makes it difficult to be eradicated. The Akuapem South Municipality area is a patriarchal society that is borne principally from their paternal system of inheritance. This system of inheritance portrays men as natural leaders whose views and actions have to take precedence over women (Mensah, Odei-Tettey & Osaebo, 2014). This culture tends to make women believe psychologically that they are inferior to men in all spheres of life including leadership. Ghana has since the Beijing Action Platform in 1995 undertaken many gender mainstreaming activities in order to reduce and finally eliminate prejudices against women in all sectors of social life (see Morley, 2010; Mehra & Gupta, 2006). However, gender prejudices and imbalance still persists and a wide gap exists in the inclusion and participation of women in organisational leadership, contextually in the Akuapem South Municipality. Consequently, the problem that this research sought to investigate is that: *the cultural beliefs and traditions in the Akuapem South Municipality have created an entrenched milieu of female exclusions and fettered access to educational leadership, and thereby violated the logic of complementation of opposites.* Consequently, the research sought to establish effective ways of institutionalizing male-female co-existence and complementation in administration and management.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study's theoretical framework is discussed along the under-listed themes:

Perceptions about female leadership

Astin, Carter and Astin (2004) see leadership as a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change and implies a process of movement from the present to some future place or condition. This connotes purposefulness, as change is directed towards some future condition which is desired or valued. Thus, characteristically leadership may be defined as creating a vision for others to follow (McHugh, 1999); the ability to empower followers through visionary mission, decision making, mural rewards, effective communication, power of influence and positive force (O'Neil, 1999; see also Hayle & Wallace, 2005; Duodu, 2001; Scouller, 2011; Kaiser, Hogan & Craig, 2008; and Okumbe, 1998).

Okumbe (1998) has suggested that leadership is a process of encouraging others to work towards an objective. He argues that leadership is attained in three ways, namely: by appointment, election, and popular choice. Dua-Agyemang (2007) has also iterated that leadership is fundamental to nation building. These perspectives provide a lead to the debate of whether women can make excellent leaders and society's perception on this, as explored by the first research question (stated below).

Stemming female leadership prejudices through women's conceptualization of leadership

There is a long history of female achievements in leadership which extends from royal women through broader groupings of women with power such as clan mothers and female elders; priestesses, diviners, medicine women and healers; market women, weavers, and women in other arts and professions, to executives in modern organisations. However, these female spheres of power vary greatly from culture to culture. Some female leadership, particularly those with spiritual ordination championed and led female self-determination courses in both public and private spaces in predominantly patriarchal societies (Dashu, 2000). Priestesses or diviners in traditional societies have led liberation movements like Nehanda Nyakasikana in the Shona and Yaa Asantewaa in Ashanti. These women led movements to revolt against English colonization of Zimbabwe and Ghana (then Gold Coast). There are other similar occurrences in history across the world like María Candelaria in the Maya uprising against the Spanish; Toypurina in the Gabrieleño revolt in southern California; Priestess Cécile Fatima started the Haitian revolution against slavery in a Vodun ceremony in the Bois Caiman; Dahia al-Kahina led Berber resistance to the Arab conquest of North Africa, and Gudit Isat (Judith the Fire) led the overthrow of the Axumite empire in 10th century Ethiopia. These occurrences show that female leaders in many societies have championed the struggle for personal liberty and self-determination even in the midst and in spite of patriarchal constraints. The most courageous women have perceived oppression in societies and have challenged it. There are many historical accounts of women warriors, and women often fought to defend their homes, their people and their country. Besides, some other women supplied warriors with dried food and other necessities, and they suffered the consequences of war as well (Dashu, 2012).

In contemporary times also, a number of women have effectively functioned as leaders across the spectrum of society the world over, although some segments of society still hold them back. Chabaya, Rembe and Wadesango (2009) have argued that although a good number of female teachers in Zimbabwe are educated and well qualified to be promoted for school headship

positions, they are inhibited by gender stereotypes which cause persistent under-representation of women in basic school headship. Bennett, Crawford and Riches (1992) have denounced what they call 'the neglect of womanpower' in educational leadership. They argue that "women have not always been so neglected a group in promotion and educational leadership in schools" even though the promotion of women they admit, has deteriorated over a couple of decades now (see also Al-Khalifa, 1992). In Ghana, women generally perceive their role as leaders who keep the home, community and the country. On the public front, Georgina Theodora Wood is functioning effectively as the leader of the judiciary, Elizabeth Mills-Robertson was a leader of the police service as a Deputy Inspector of Police, and Akua Kuenyehia also appointed the Vice President of the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

These incidence and perceptions of female leadership has been facilitated in a great way by the 1992 Constitution of Ghana which has rendered all cruel and inhumane aspects of culture and traditions illegal (Government of Ghana, 1992). Besides, several laws have been enacted over the past decade to criminalize violence against women, and this involves unequal access for leadership opportunities. Thus, activities of women in Ghana especially those in rural areas usually come under the influence of expectations and regulations of men, and society counts on the legal framework to protect and guarantee the rights of women. The Children's Act of 1998 promotes the education of all children including girls. This suggest that both men and women are encouraged to achieve whatever their abilities will permit them. This makes the legal framework in Ghana quite effective at protecting women's physical integration and achievement in society, and this is an example of instrument that women can use to break out from the foundations of society's prejudices against the female leadership in the manner envisaged by research question 2 (as stated below).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to investigate how women can break out from the entrenched foundations of the prejudices against female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem South Municipality, and embrace the 21st century reality of gender co-existence and complementation.

Objectives

Two basic objectives underlie this study. These are to:

a. explore the perceptions of the Akuapem South society about female leadership in basic schools in the Municipality.

b. determine the ways of stemming the prejudices against female leadership in the Akuapem South Municipality through women's conceptualization of leadership.

Research Questions

The lines for investigating this subject are defined by two research questions, namely:

a. what are the perceptions in the Akuapem South Municipality about female leadership in basic schools?

b. what are the prognoses for stemming the prejudices against female leadership in the Akuapem South through women's conceptualization of leadership?

METHODOLOGY

The study used a sequential explanatory mixed-method design to explore the perception of women regarding ways of stemming prejudices against female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. This mixed method design is a systematic and rigorous form of inquiry that used qualitative and quantitative research methods, namely, survey and interviews. The qualitative data helped the researchers to understand the processes of prejudices against female leadership, especially those aspects that have endured over time (see Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner, 2007). The mixed methods design thus offered the study an in-depth, contextualized, and natural insights of qualitative research and the predictive power of quantitative research (see Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2012; Hoepfl, 1997; Maxwell, 1996; Baumgartner, Strong & Hensley 2002; & Myers, 2000).

Site and Subject Characteristics

The research was conducted in the Akuapem South Municipality, which is one of the twenty-one districts in the Eastern Region of Ghana. The site has a total population of 123,500, made up of 60,900 men and 62,600 women, and an estimated population growth rate of 7.8% per year. It is made up of two constituencies, two electoral areas and two paramount traditional areas. (Ghana Statistical Service, 2012). The Municipality also has finance, education, health, agriculture and social work as the major occupation for women. Furthermore, and in terms of education, the site has 146 public basics schools that are divided up into 84 primary schools and 62 junior high schools. The researchers selected the Akuapem South Municipality for the study because women are adequately represented at all levels of formal work in the municipality which is the heart of masculine practices and patriarchal culture in Ghana. Secondly, the incidence of the prejudices against women is rife in the municipality partly due the culture of patrimonial inheritance. The target population for this study is constituted by all the women who occupy leadership positions in both public primary and junior high schools in the Akuapem South Municipality. The population is comprised of 50 headmistresses and assistants in 7 circuits of the municipality, namely; Adoagyire 'A', Adoagyire 'B', Nsaba, Nsawam Central, Pakro, Djankrom and Aburi.

Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The researchers used purposive sampling to select a total number of 50 women in leadership positions in basic schools within the municipality. This comprised 30 headteachers and 20 assistant headteachers. These numbers are divided into 23 women from junior high schools and 27 women from primary schools as the sample for the study. Figure 1(below) gives a graphic illustration of these figures.
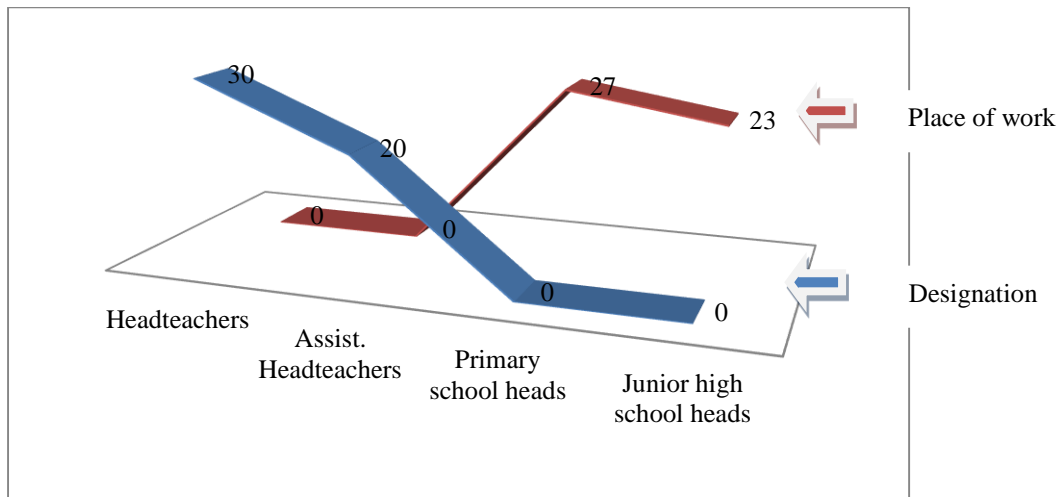
Figure 1: Respondents designation and place of work.

Source: Fieldwork data (2015).

Research methods and instrumentation

The researchers used survey and interviews as the research methods for this study. The interviews were used to supplement the data collected via the survey method, and it aided the researchers to explore the perspectives of the respondents in depth (see Merriam, 2001). Furthermore, the research instruments that were used to collect data for both the survey and interviews were questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide (see Greef, 2002; Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The reason for this decision is expressed in Elly's (1991) argument that interviews produce rich data to explain social worlds (see also Evans, 1997). So the interviews enabled the researchers to probe further for in-depth data on ways to stem prejudices against women in the Akuapem South Municipality (see Babbie, 2004; Yin, 2003; Babbie, 2004; Merriam & Simpson, 2000; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; and Hitchcocks & Hughes, 1995).

Validity and reliability of instruments

The researchers conducted validity and reliability tests to ensure that the research instruments measured what they purported to measure. Both content validity and face validity tests were conducted (see Ronald, 2010), as well as reliability tests (see Yin, 2003). To ensure content validity of the instruments, these were given to leadership experts and retired headmistresses, and for face validity, the instruments were given to colleague female lecturers. The experts and colleagues gave very useful suggestions to ensure content and face validity. Thence, the researchers pre-tested the instruments with headmistresses and assistant headmistresses who were not part of the study in the Municipality. This helped to minimize problems in the conduct of the study (see Muijs, 2004). The researchers did a re-test to determine the reliability of the instruments after six weeks with the same set of instruments and respondents for the pre-test. The data from the re-test yielded the same responses, and these were put to Pearson Moment correlation analysis. This analysis produced reliability coefficient (r) of 0.813 which is an indication that the instruments were reliable.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data obtained from the field are presented and analysed under the two themes below:

Perceptions about female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem South Municipality

Data that is presented, analysed and discussed under this theme relates to research question 1 which states: *what are the perceptions in the Akuapem South Municipality about female leadership in basic schools?* The survey and interview data provided answers to this research question. The society's perception of female leadership in basic schools in the Akuapem South Municipality is captured in statements from the interview data as,

> traditionally, the community thought women were vulnerable and could not hold leadership positions in schools. They believe women have important roles to play in traditional set up because they are always known to be at home performing household chores and caring for children…no but we have shown that as women leaders, we can work cooperatively with our men counterparts. Some of the schools in this area have men heads. Occasionally all heads meet and take decisions together which are implemented in our respective schools and sometimes on collective basis and the outcomes are almost always stunning (Headmistress #8).

Another view explains that "some people even think women cannot lead men. They think certain leadership positions should be in the hands of the men counterpart but here in this school, the head is a man but I have assisted him all these years and have worked harmoniously together to bring the school to its present status" (Assistant Headmistress #9). Yet others hold the view that "some members of school communities look down upon women. They think women should not be bold leaders. That's their traditional expectation." (Assistant Headmistress #6), and "most people in the society consider leadership as a man's endeavor. They do not readily accept women to be leaders. Really, a woman has to be very exemplary before she is somehow accepted as a leader." (Headmistress #3). These views epitomize the deeply entrenched bias of the Akuapem South community against female leadership. These present a challenge to female leadership in administration and management, and most importantly the complementary relationship that has to pertain in the educational leadership front. But the view as reflected by Headmistress #3 also provides a window for the acceptance of female leadership in the community. Furthermore, the views expressed by Headmistress #8 and Assistant Headmistress #9 shows that the community is beginning to be accommodative of the co-existence and complementation of male-female leadership. This comes with exemplary performance of the female leader. Some parts of these qualitative data converge with the survey data as presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Perceptions of female leaders in the Akuapem South basic schools

Community perception of female school heads	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Low motivation & confidence	4	8.0	12	24.0	1	2.0	33	66.0	0	0.0
Competent, committed & assertive	6	12.0	5	10.0	3	6.0	36	72.0	0	0.0
Too emotional to be effective	11	22.0	10	20.0	0	0.0	21	42.0	8	16.0
Irrational & stiff/unbending	6	12.0	9	18.0	2	4.0	27	54.0	6	12.0
Ineffective disciplinarians	10	20.0	10	20.0	5	10.0	21	42.0	4	8.0
Interpersonal and democratic	8	16.0	20	40.0	12	24.0	4	8.0	6	12.0
Autocratic & task/goal oriented	7	14.0	9	18.0	10	20.0	24	48.0	0	0.0
Passive & laissez-faire leaders	8	16.0	16	32.0	1	2.0	25	50.0	0	0.0
Transformational & transactional	8	16.0	22	44.0	5	10.0	10	20.0	5	10.0
Strategic & forward looking	7	14.0	30	60.0	3	6.0	6	12.0	4	8.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2014).

N = 50

<u>Key:</u> ***SA*** *= Strongly Agree;* ***A*** *= Agree;* ***N*** *= Neutral;* ***D*** *= Disagree;* ***SD*** *= Strongly Disagree.*

Table 1 shows that most of the respondents agree the community perceive female school leaders to have low motivation and confidence. That is, whereas 16 (32.0%) respondents believe that the community perceives female school heads to have low motivation and confidence, 33 (66.0%) respondents disagreed. Similarly, the interview data indicates, "some members of the community think female school heads are weak, sympathetic and incompetent. As a result, they look down upon the capabilities of a woman leader. So, they do not readily give us the chance" (Headmistress #5). Another view on this same subject indicates "members of the society see women as sympathetic, easily influenced and weak. But they think men are autocratic" (Assistant Headmistress #10).

On the subject of perception of female school heads as competent, committed and assertive leaders, 36 (72.0%) respondents perceive female heads as not having these attributes. Furthermore, the data showed that 29 (58.0%) respondents think that society perceive female school heads as not too emotional to be effective leaders but 21 (42.0%) did not. The interview data confirmed this perception as a respondent indicated "some people within the community under rate the capabilities of female school heads. They think women 'fear a lot', and that women cannot be effective in leadership positions. They see men to be assertive, dominant and forceful" (Assistant Headmistress #3). Regarding the perception that female school heads are irrational and unbending administrators, 33 (66.0%) respondents affirmed that this is the society's perception of female school heads. The interview data also confirmed this view of female heads as, "society believes women in educational leadership must meet certain standards in order not to attract negative comments about their work. Besides, other members

of the community see female school heads as 'hard' or 'tough' and very difficult" (Assistant Headmistress #1). Another view also indicated that, "some people have the opinion that, when a woman leads she creates problems. They see women leaders as troublesome" (Headmistress #11). A third view also said that "some people think women heads strictly perform duties according to laid down rules and regulations. They think we are very difficult or hard when we hold on to principles" (Assistant Headmistress #1).

The respondents were split on the subject of society's perception of female heads as effective disciplinarians. Whereas 25 (50.0%) of respondents disagreed that female heads are effective disciplinarians, 20 (40%) thought society see them otherwise. The data also points out that 28 (56.0%) respondents agreed that the society perceive female school heads as interpersonal and democratic leaders.

The data however did not show strong views on the society's perception on whether female school heads are autocratic and task/goal oriented leaders. Ten (20.0%) respondents were neutral, 16 (32%) agreed with the notion, and 24 (48.0%) respondents opposed it. This perception of female leadership style is strongly expressed when it relates to the lasses-faire style. Regarding this subject of society's perception of female leadership as skewed to the laissez-faire type, the respondents are split in their opinion. Thus, 24 (48.0%) respondents said that the community perceive female school heads as passive and laissez-faire leaders, and 25 (50.0%) decried that society does not perceive female heads as such. However, 30 (60.0%) respondents consented that the society perceived female school heads as transformational and transactional leaders. A further 37 (74.0%) respondents asserted that the society perceived female school heads as strategic and forward looking leaders. During the interview, some of the interviewees gave responses as: "most people in my community consider leadership as a man's endeavor. They do not readily accept women who are leaders. That is why female leadership in some schools is always low" (Headmistress #2), and "most people within the community have pre-conceived idea that there is no sense in a 'woman's talk.' Men are the people with power in our society. Anything you say is 'woman's talk,' they think" (Assistant Headmistress #5).

Stemming prejudices against female leadership by women conceptualization of leadership

The discussions on the above theme pertains to research question 2 which states: *what are the prognosis for stemming the prejudices against female leadership in the Akuapem South through women's conceptualization of leadership?* In order to find answers to this research questions, the study drew data from the field survey, and the interviews which are used to augment the survey data and authenticate the data by establishing various associations (see Bulmer & Warwick, 2003). The data from the survey are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: Respondents' conceptualization of leadership

Conceptualization of leadership	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Shared vision & abilities	12	24.0	30	60.0	5	10.0	3	6.0	0	0.0
Execution of authority	15	30.0	23	46.0	4	8.0	4	8.0	4	8.0
Source of support & inspiration	16	32.0	26	52.0	3	6.0	2	4.0	3	6.0
Influence to achieve	25	50.0	18	36.0	5	10.0	2	4.0	0	0.0
Motivation for others	12	24.0	33	66.0	4	8.0	1	2.0	0	0.0
Trust & confidence for followers	17	34.0	31	62.0	2	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Facilitator of team work	21	42.0	24	48.0	3	6.0	3	6.0	0	0.0

Source: Fieldwork data (2013).

N = 50

Key: **SA** = *Strongly Agree;* **A** = *Agree;* **N** = *Neutral;* **D** = *Disagree;* **SD** = *Strongly Disagree.*

The survey data as presented in Table 2 shows 42 (84.0%) respondents conceptualizing leadership as shared vision, and an ability to achieve results. The interview data also showed a respondent conceptualizing female leadership in education as: "I feel leadership is essential for all kinds of organizations. It has to do with vision, ability and result. Leadership has to do with teaching others through example, and women have these attributes." (Headmistress #1). Another view on the subject indicated, "two heads are better than one, especially when male and female heads are put together. I am aware leadership is sharing knowledge, ideas and skills with other people, and that includes women…leading them to achieve organizational goals." (Assistant Headmistress #2). Other studies by McHugh (1999) asserts that, leadership is creating a vision for others to follow, establishing corporate values and ethics and transforming the way the organization does business in order to improve its effectiveness and efficiency. This also corroborates Kansal and Chandani's (2014) view that, leadership is a process that is ultimately concerned with fostering change (see also Kavanagh, & Askhanasy, 2006; Eisenbach, Watson & Pillai, 1999).

On the subject of exercise of authority, 38 (76.0%) respondents from the survey asserted that, leadership is about execution of authority. The interview data also gave a similar response:

> In my opinion, leadership is an act of managing, directing and controlling others to achieve specific goal or objective. Leadership has to do with working with some group of people to achieve some results. Women are capable of doing this too...where best outcomes are achieved when we work side by side with our men counterparts (Headmistress #2).

On this same subject another perspective stated "I think leadership is my willingness as a woman leader to exercise power over subordinates, telling them what to do, and making appropriate use of positive results" (Assistant Headmistress #4).

Furthermore, and regarding the notion of support and inspiration from leadership, the survey indicated 42 (84.0%) respondents saying that leadership is the ability to support and inspire others. The interviews corroborate the survey data as a view on the subject indicated that "I believe leadership involves having a set target, activating and encouraging the people to work

to achieve the goals of the organization" (Headmistress #4). This view corroborates with Hayle and Wallace's (2005) idea that leaders encourage followers to reach beyond their self – interest to embrace a collective goal advocated by leaders. Another 43 (86.0%) respondents from the survey also saw leadership as the ability to influence others to achieve goals. The interview data also indicated,

> "I think leadership is the ability to mobilize people to perform a task effectively at one time or the other for the growth of the organization … and so part of my success as a woman leader is my ability to mobilise both men and women in a coherent work unit and motivate them to achieve the organisational goals" (Assistant Headmistress #1).

This finding is expressed in Dua-Agyemang's (2007) statement that, leadership refers to the quality of the behavior of individuals, whereby they guide people in their activities in organized effort.

Table 2 further shows 45 (90.0%) respondents as saying that leadership is motivating others to perform tasks. The interview data indicated that "leadership has to do with vision and the ability to motivate others to achieve result. It is the ability to work with people – both men and women - as a team, and most female leaders have this capability" (Headmistress #3), and another said, "I think leadership is about encouraging subordinates to embrace collective goals, and working beyond self-interest to reach the goals as most women leaders do." (Assistant Headmistress #3). This way of conceptualizing leadership is described by O'Neil (1999) as the ability to empower followers.

A further 48 (96.0%) respondents affirmed that leadership is about gaining trust and confidence of followers. Avolio (1999) and Bass (1998) remarked that leadership involves establishing oneself as a role model by gaining followers trust and confidence. The last conceptualization of female leadership explored by the study is on team building, and 45(90.0%) respondents from the survey indicated that leadership is ability to build and work with a team.

Thus, the survey data has established that, female school leaders and their assistants conceptualise leadership as: sharing vision with followers; gaining confidence and trust of the followers; and inspiring and motivating followers to perform tasks in a team. They also saw leadership as exercising authority to achieve goals. The views were reflected by majority of respondents (i.e. 38 to 48, or 76.0% – 96.0%) (see Table 2). Respondents for the interviews also had the same conceptualizations of leadership which are expressed similarly and summarised by Okumbe (1998) that, leadership is a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards certain objectives. Cole (1996) also sees leadership as a process in which one individual influences the efforts of others towards the achievement of goals. The findings also support Duodu's (2001) assertion that, leadership is the ability to organize and influence efforts to achieve goals.

It may be inferred from the data that, the society in Akuapem South Municipality perceive female school heads as strategic and forward looking, assertive, interpersonal and democratic, and transformational leaders. The data further reveals that female school heads are not perceived as irrational managers, and definitely not leaders who have low motivation and confidence, but as leaders who are committed and competent for educational leadership. This position is described appropriately by the qualitative data as a respondent said "despite these negative perceptions, some members of the community respect us and hold women school heads in high esteem especially if they perform their responsibilities very well" (Headmistress

#15). This view has been expressed also by Headmistress #3 early on in the discussion, which is described by this paper as a window for the acceptance of female leadership in the community, and the coexistence and complementation of male-female leadership (also expressed by Headmistress #8 and Assistant Headmistress #9 early on).   These notwithstanding, some of the female heads are perceived as autocratic, but task oriented; passive and laissez-faire and quite disciplinarian. The qualitative data points out that, most of the interviewees held the same perceptions. These findings contradict Schumaker et al., (2000) who has argued that in Ghanaian culture, communities lack confidence in female heads. The findings are also not congruent with Jaquete's (2000) assertion that, most people predict that women cannot be effective leaders.

Revisiting the earlier discussion of mythic opposite structures in the context of these findings, it is appropriate to argue that the relationship between opposites leads to the creation of strongly held cultural norms as pertained in the Akuapem South Municipality about female prejudices. For example in mythology, 'good versus evil', 'beautiful versus ugly', and man versus women, are three important dimensions of meaning which are strongly associated. These combinations are cultural norms, and the opposing combinations are cultural contradictions, but the cultural contradictions create stereotyping which split society and leads to social injustices. These findings regarding female conceptualization of leadership corroborate the idea that it is the presence of the opposite that brings about the dialectics of perfection just as for example, the presence of rain as the opposite of the sun when it co-exist with the latter creates the spectacular rainbow.

CONCLUDING WITH CREATING THE SPECTACULAR RAINBOW: A METAPHORICAL ANALYSIS OF BUILDING GENDER COMPLEMENTATION FOR EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP.

The key findings of this study are summarised thus:

a. The society at Akuapem South Municipality perceive female heads as autocratic, task oriented, passive and laissez-faire, and quite disciplinarian.

b. However female school heads conceptualise their role in leadership as sharing vision with followers, gaining confidence and trust of the followers, inspiring and motivating followers to perform tasks as a team, and as exercising authority to achieve goals. The society on the other hand largely conceives female school headship to be strategic and forward looking, assertive and interpersonal, democratic and transformational.

These conceptualizations of female leadership provide a platform for *breaking out* of the perceptual foundation of prejudices against female leadership. This claim provides grand silver lining for this paper's contribution to the discourse on gender co-existence and complementation in administration and management. The evidence have thus shown that female leaders have to persist and persevere in their current practices and use this as an opportunity to change and shape society's view of the female leader and still show the urgency and importance of fusing both female and male leadership for the advancement of education and welfare of society.

Thus, this pair of opposites (the male-female dichotomy) defines categories which are logically opposed to each other and has no middle ground. This notion is typical of Western thought that dates back to Aristotle's endeavour to categorise all knowledge. However, the idea is rejected by Eastern philosophy which focuses more on relationships than attributes, and where society combines conflicting ideas to create harmony as illustrated by the metaphorical analogy of the interaction between the sun and the rain in creating a spectacular rainbow.

The beauty of the rainbow is realised through a relationship between two opposite elements of the universe – the sun and the rain which may be juxtaposed with the male-female contradiction in educational leadership. The rainbow is an arc of multi-coloured light that appears when these two elements – the sun shines through the rain. It occurs when raindrops scatter sunlight. The sunlight which appears to be white is actually made up of 7 colours when dispersed viz; violet, indigo, blue, green yellow, orange and red (The splitting of sunlight into its constituent colours is called dispersion and the strip of colours is known as spectrum). The rainbow however occurs after the rains when the atmosphere is full of small water droplets and these spherical raindrops act like tiny prisms and as the rays of the sun falls on them, the rays get refracted as they enter the raindrops, and then get reflected from the far surface of the raindrops ('refraction' is a process in physics in which there is change in direction of propagation of a wave due to a change in its transmission medium. The phenomenon is explained by the conservation of energy and conservation of momentum. Due to change of medium, the phase velocity of the wave is changed but its frequency remains constant). They get refracted again as they come out of the raindrops. Each component of the rays of the sun gets refracted at a different angle which makes them separate out from each other. This is how the colours of the sun are separated into spectrum. Furthermore, the rainbow is circular because it takes on the form of the sun which is circular. And for the rainbow formation to be complete, it has to have a primary and secondary bow. The primary bow is more brilliant and its colours are violet on the inside, then indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange and red on the outside. However the colours of the dimmer secondary bow are reversed: red on the inside and violet on the outside. The secondary bow is located above the primary bow, and the rainbow is formed by those rays which have been reflected and refracted once again after the first reflection and refraction within the raindrops. Besides, the rainbow is generally seen in the sky, opposite the sun, and it is essential for the formation of the rainbow that the sun shines after the rain. It is also important that the sun, human eye and the center of the rainbow lie on the same straight line (see Khaparde & Pradhan, 2009). It is thus argued from the illustration of the rainbow formation that the process is full of contradictions, but this extols the beauty of contradiction and the idea that contradictions produce results, in the sense of how opposites relate and should relate supportively to one another, and where the stronger opposite becomes more supportive as in the relation between the primary and secondary bow. The paper therefore draws a parallel from this metaphor of how men and women should relate in terms of complimenting each others' efforts to achieve the spectacular beauty of effective leadership in educational administration and management.

This analogy may be extended to link the Chinese (and by extension, Eastern) law of opposites – the Yin-Yang relationship - which connotes opposites not as oppositional or contradictory but rather correlative or complementary, and considered as fulfillment to make complete. The Yin-Yang portrays the harmonious nature of opposites as shinning upon, covering up and governing each other, and it is cyclic. According to this view, opposites are a self contained, self operating successive loop in continuous line powered by its own inner necessity. Part of this inner necessity is based on Yin and Yang's unchanging core but changing outer nature.

This constitutes a situation that permits the strength and domination of their roles to change naturally within the Yin-Yang cycle (Foley, 2010; Kim, Lee, & Richman, 2010; Palmer, unknown). This is the point of the paper's contribution to the male-female complementation in the educational leadership discourse.

It is the view of this paper therefore that as in the creation of myth, society and culture gives meaning to the world by splitting it to pairs of opposites as in 'boy is not a girl' or 'man is not woman'. This is underlined by the fourth key principle of semiotics – that is, meaning comes often from 'what things are not' rather than 'what they are'. These pairs of opposites are binary oppositions which are important to the structure of meaning and thinking as in the combination of the capabilities of men and women for enhanced leadership in educational administration and management. The changing perception as shown by the data is probably due to the emergence of more competent women leaders in the 21st century which is attributable to a rise in women's education. Globally, society is becoming much aware of the leadership potentials of women and their internal motivation to assume leadership positions. More so, female heads have become more aware of their leadership potentials and the desire to occupy and become effective at various leadership positions alongside their male counterparts which is a stride to break out from the foundations perceptual prejudices of female leadership.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the key findings, the following recommendations are made:

a. Gender-based organizations, traditional institutions and the media in Ghana should work together with female leaders and use the prevailing platform to shape society's orientation for the co-existence of female and male leadership through further educational programmes.

b. The Government of Ghana, Non-Governmental Organisation and individual experts in leadership should periodically organize leadership training for women in educational leadership and other leadership positions in Ghana to encourage them to persevere in their leadership roles and to find new ways of breaking out from prejudices.

c. Parents, teachers and society at large should systematically impact the social structure to reflect changing times. Boys and girls should be sensitized to see one another as equals, and women should be encouraged to perform some roles that are socially conceived as masculine, and men on the other hand encouraged to undertake some feminine tasks. This will help in shaping the psyche of society regarding female leadership.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

In spite of the ground breaking findings made by this study, the data is limited by the fact that some participants were inhibited by fear of community reprisals for giving information that were at variance with traditional norms. As members of the community, they had to be careful about their choice of words. Secondly, the study comes with a bias for female views as male heads were excluded from the population of the study.

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