RICHTMANN
P U B L I S H I N G

Women in Education Management in Kosovo: A Hard Road Less Travelled

PhD(c). Linda Ukimeraj Harris

Faculty of Education,
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia;
Heimerer College, Kosovo

Prof.dr. Anita Trnavčevič

Faculty of Management,
University of Primorska, Slovenia

Abstract

This article presents limited yet significant findings of a pilot study of the experience of potential female leaders in education in Kosovo. It explores a small-scale qualitative study of the barriers to women's accession in school management positions and the under-representation of women in management positions in primary schools in Kosovo. A qualitative, multiple case study approach is employed. Semi-structured interviews are employed to explore the experiences of four female teachers who have engaged in a leadership development scheme, and two government officials. In spite of being qualified for promotion to school management positions, none of the participants had applied for a school leadership role and opted to remain class teachers. Mirroring other contexts, the study found a mixture of factors acting on their decision not to progress into a management role. A lack of aspiration was influenced by their perception of the primacy of maternal and uxorial roles, political interference in school leadership appointments, gender stereotyping, and the constraining forces of social expectations in Kosovo. These constraints were only thinly balanced by the positive influence of familial support and female role models, encouraging women to engage in leadership roles.

Keywords: education management, aspiring women principals, barriers, primary schools

1. Introduction

Researchers and policy makers in European countries and further afield are shifting attention toward issues of underrepresentation and gender inequality, across the wide spectrum of public sector employment. In regard to both leadership positions and educational management a similar focus is seen in Kosovo. Although women are the majority in teaching positions in Kosovo, their participation in school management positions seems to be undermined in spite of legislation introduced by the Government encouraging gender equality. Under the Kosovo Constitution, all citizens are equal before the law. The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo (Article 3.1) ensures that: *"All persons in Kosovo shall enjoy, without discrimination on any ground and in full equality, human rights and fundamental freedoms."*

Kosovo has a very advanced and modern legislation, including laws in the area of creating equal opportunities and advancing the position of women in political and public life, including a special

law aimed at ensuring gender equality, namely the Law on Gender Equality. The government has meanwhile pressed ahead with the adoption of policies designed to properly balance equal gender opportunities in employment, legislation and education aiming to advance the position of women in society and enhancing their role in leadership positions.

However, despite the legislation to ensure equality, and policies and mechanisms established to achieve gender equality in the workplace and in decision-making bodies, there are still major challenges for both the Kosovo institutions and for Kosovo society in general in achieving this laudable goal. It is lamentable that Kosovo's public and political spheres continue to be overly dominated by men, marginalising the role of women. This decline has occurred in spite of extensive legislation promoting gender equality and greater public awareness of gender issues in post-1999 Kosovo (Haug, 2015) and it is evidenced by statistical data.

The number of female employees in public and private institutions in Kosovo is still not proportional to the gender balance of the population. According to data provided by the Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019), approximately 13.3% of women are employed, against the employment rate of men which is 43.0%. This places Kosovo female employment at the lowest in Europe. The sector in which women have been more successful in securing a job is still the public sector, and education is an important female employment sector. Nevertheless, even in education, there is a clear horizontal job segregation based on gender. While women dominate at the pre-school education level and occupy 100% of all posts, they only occupy 12% of posts at higher education. It is noteworthy that 2018/19 statistics (KES, 2018/19) reveal the gender gap of teachers in pre-university is widening at higher levels, as can be seen in Table 1 below:

Table 1. The teaching staff in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in Kosovo

Level	Male	Female	Total
Preschool	0	548	548
Primary and lower secondary	7,409	10,044	17453
Upper secondary	3,080	2,181	5,261

Source: Data provided by Kosovo Education Statistics 2018/19

The situation is much worse when it comes to women in management positions in general. Women are not sufficiently represented in leading and decision-making positions in education public and private institutions of all levels in Kosovo. In many countries, it is a common perception that women teach, and men manage (Blackmore, 1999, 2016; Celikten, 2005; Coleman, 2007, 2011; Fuller, 2014; Kaparou, T. Bush 2007; Krüger, 1996). The official Kosovo statistics reinforce this statement. Although, the females represent 56.57% of all teachers in primary and lower secondary school, there are only 17% of school principals. In high secondary school, out of 41.45% female teachers only 8.9% are school principals (KES, 2018/2019). This data shows some obvious gaps especially for women in the position of school principals in both primary and secondary schools. They demonstrate an incongruous symmetry between the majority presence of women in the education workforce and their minority role in its management.

Table 2. Male and female representation in Kosovo primary schools

Teachers	%	Principals	%
Female	56.57	**Female**	17
Male	43.43	**Male**	83

Source: Data provided by Kosovo Education Statistics 2018/19

There is recognition within the Kosovo's Government of a need for positive action. In order to improve the representation of women in school management, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) has undertaken some actions which were included as a key objective of Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (KESP 2011-2016) which stated as follows: *"By 2016 capacities are built for all for improved and effective system management at the central and municipal levels, as well as for improved management of schools including mechanisms to involve more women in management".*

As a result of this policy, Municipalities have offered education management training programmes targeting women teachers aspiring to become school directors. Yet this measure has proved insufficient, and the ongoing failure to improve the gender balance has inspired the aim and purpose of the present study. It seeks to examine the perceptions of potential women leaders on the extent and nature of challenges they face, and support needed for women to access leadership positions.

2. Theoretical Background

The literature reveals the critical role of the school principal in education reform as a change agent in quality education (Trnavčevič and Vaupot, 2009) and school improvement (Harris, 2014; Fullan, 2005, 2014). It is clear from research data that classroom instruction is the primary factor that influences learning outcomes for students at school, closely followed by education leadership and management. Moreover, it is argued that there are of course numerous factors that may contribute to success in reforming poorly performing schools, but management and leadership is the catalyst (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In the same way, it is pointed out that other than the teacher, the school principal is the most influential individual regarding student achievement and performance (Lynch, 2012a). Some would go so far as to suggest that the educational leader of the school is the most critical component of a school's success (DuFour and Marzano, 2011) or the most important factor of school transformation (Tirozzi, 2001).

Although it is broadly acknowledged that the function of school principal is challenging for both genders, research points to greater pressures and additional expectations on female managers than their male colleagues (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). The topic of women's management and leadership in education has come centre stage in academic research over several decades, and even more so since the end of the last century (Ortiz, 1982; Shakeshaft, 1989). It rightly continues to occupy scholars as an important theme. Regarding the poor representation of females, there are many studies which have investigated the causal factors in school management and reveal a range of issues affecting the participation of women. Researchers in many countries discuss various aspects of women's management and leadership, including: social and cultural factors, the significance of cultural and contextual specificities in shaping educational leadership (Coleman 2007, 2011; Collard & Reynolds, 2005; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Mertz & McNeely, 1998; Sobehart 2009), professionalism (Oplatka, 2006), and the political dimension (Blackmore, 1999, 2016), etc.

Under-representation of women in management positions according to research is influenced by factors that lie within individuals, within organisations and within society (Eck & Volman, 1996; Moorosi, 2010). Earlier research studies tend to blame women's deficiencies and orientation for their underrepresentation (Hoyle 1969) or according to later research that women are said to lack confidence (Hoff & Mitchell, 2008; Young & McLeod, 2001) or lack motivation (Kaparou & Bush, 2007). Chan, Ngai & Choi (2016) discuss other factors and found out that family orientation overweighs career orientation. They (ibid.) also identified preference to teaching and interaction with children more than leadership and management. Similar findings are reported by Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Kaparou & Bush, 2007; Loyola, 2016.

The 'glass ceiling' term comprises the barriers that women face in their route to management positions. A now familiar analogy talks of the barriers to female career aspirations and balancing motherhood with work, as a glass ceiling (Coleman, 2011). In many countries, women are faced with the unequal challenges of balancing the demands of a professional career with family obligations, as

they seek attain or merely maintain positions as education leaders (Coleman 2001, 2007). However, the 'glass ceiling' metaphor seems – on the face of it – less useful in Kosovo, where the barriers seem more readily visible and recognised by women in the education system. In order to explore how aspiring principals perceive and interpret their career route, a qualitative explorative study was conducted. Of course, as with similar studies, much would hinge on getting the methodology right.

3. Research Methods

A study was conducted to explore the perceptions and interpretations of aspiring principals to the position of school principal, concerning those themes which they believed affect their desire to become leaders in primary schools of Kosovo. The researcher adopted a qualitative research design as an appropriate means of exploiting data from an explorative case study. Qualitative research is conducted when a problem or issue needs to be in in-depth explored (Creswell, 2007), and offers a number of useful strategies. In order to gain an in-depth insight into unique and complex challenges faced by female teachers, this study applied a qualitative methodological strategy. (Yin, 2003).

The underrepresentation of women in educational leadership has been rarely or not at all studied in Kosovo and the qualitative method, using semi-structured interviews, can achieve a suitable balance between a framework imposed by the researcher and enabling participants to construct the research agenda (Cohen, 2002).

3.1 Sample

The participants in this study were four female teachers of Kosovo primary public schools, one Municipal Education employee and a Ministry of Education employee. The female teachers had all been part of the professional development process provided by the Municipalities together with the German organisation (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*/GIZ), and had backgrounds relevant to the issue of female teachers aspiring to become school principals. That professional development process had taken place in six municipalities in Kosovo with the aim of encouraging female involvement in education management, and the researcher selected one Municipality as a case study. The selection of the trainees was made through the kind permission of the Municipal Authority which nominated the teachers at random, thereby avoiding researcher bias and in a manner that ensured voluntary participation in the study. In addition, a Ministry representative who deals with gender equity in education, was interviewed to obtain authoritative perceptions from the Ministry level.

Once identified in this way, the teachers were contacted by email and invited to participate in the research on a voluntary basis. Four teachers and two municipal and ministry officials agreed to be interviewed and recorded. Informed consent was sought and acquired. In terms of their relevant backgrounds, it was found that all the teachers, in addition to their long teaching experience, had attended the school management training required if one is to become a school principal. All the teachers were in their fifties and forties, and all of them were married with children. They were teachers in primary and in lower secondary schools: two in urban and two in rural schools. They taught various subjects, including physical education, biology, history and the Albanian language. Both Municipal and Ministry officials have been in their posts for more than ten years. Table 3 provides a summary of the experience and key perceptions of the participants in the study.

Table 3: Summary of Target Group

Name	Personal details	Key Statements of the participants
Teacher 1	12 years - Grade 6-9 Masters in Education (Physical Education)	*"Without being involved in a political party and without receiving the green signal from them, you will not be considered even if you meet all the criteria".*

Name	Personal details	Key Statements of the participants
Teacher 2	10 years – grade 1-5 Masters in teaching and curriculum	*"I love my job… I always wanted to be a teacher…I love working with children!"*
Teacher 3	15 years – Biology, Grades 6-9 Masters in Teaching and Curriculum	*"We both work and when we come back from work, my husband just sits down and starts to watch TV or reads a newspaper, whereas for me, I have to start my second job. I have to do everything in the house…"*
Teacher 4	9 years – Grades 1-5 Masters in Teaching and Curriculum	*You can observe the difference in schools with a female principal as soon as you enter the building. It is usually cleaner and tidier than schools managed by men'*
Official 1	4 years as primary school teacher & 8 years as official in Municipal Education Directorate. Masters in Albanian Literature	*"I can respect you as my colleague, but I can never accept you as my director".*
Official 2	5 years as a teacher 15 years in Ministry PhD Candidate in Literature	*"When we requested as MEST, why we do not have more women directors, why the number of women directors is not increasing, what is happening, the response from municipalities was they (female teacher) are not applying".*

For this research, semi-structured interviews were used. Interview questions were designed on the ground of the studied literature. The process was frequentative, with an interview schedule that would initiate discussion without constraining the responses of participants. Broadly structured questions which are emanated from the research questions are used to explore the perceptions of the impact of gender issues on the respondents' career development. These research questions are:

1. How do participants in this study describe their experiences of pursuing principalship?
2. How do participants in this study describe the reasons for deciding to proceed/or not to with their aspirations for principalship?
3. How do the participants in this study interpret the imbalance between male and female principals in educational management?

The researcher used elements of analysis typical for 'grounded theory', such as thematising, categorizing and moving backwards and forwards between description and explanation (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). The qualitative data was analysed manually through four stages: reviewing the data, organizing the data, coding and interpreting the data. Themes, patterns and categories resulted from the analysis which was followed by the interpretation.

4. Findings

Although limited in scale the data source yielded a rich and interesting range of findings, particularly relating to the initial motives for engaging in an education career and school principal training, as well as the forces that encouraged or dissuaded the women to seek promotion to a leadership role. The findings are discussed under three thematic headings: my identity, becoming principal and being principal.

4.1 Who am I? (My identity)

Respondents were asked about their background and reasons for being in education, in order to identify patterns in their broader professional interest and motivation. The participants were more than pleased to articulate their thoughts about why they felt drawn to a career in education. Perhaps more predictably, teachers are inspired by a role model – often a family member – in their choice of career in teaching. One interviewer stated: '*My father was the best example of teaching, correctness, character and professionalism and therefore my best model for my job…he has travelled for 23 years*

changing three buses and never missed a lesson'.

Some expressed an affinity to work with children: 'I love my job... I always wanted to be a teacher...I love working with children!' They saw teaching as a profession that suits women and their nature: 'Working with children is very sacred, and it fits my soft nature...I think we women have that inclination to be good at teaching.' These sentiments are echoed by other researchers who have examined motivating factors in teachers and found that intrinsic motives (e.g. love for working with children) are more common with female teachers (Konig & Rothland, 2012; Sinclair, 2008).

4.2   Becoming principal

The central question of why the participants in the study took part in school principal training yielded a rich vein of data. In general, most of the respondents admitted that that decision was a response to external prompting, rather than an internal process. A common trigger to start the training course - a criterion to become a school principal - was the co-decision or encouragement of either a husband or school director. According to one respondent '*I did not even think of attending this programme. It was the school director who told me to go and attend the training...*' This seems to chime with the rather controversial claim that women tend to find it difficult to make independent decisions related to their own advancement (Kossek, Su & Wu, 2017). Another respondent stated: '*My husband was the one that convinced me to start the programme.*' This hints at the significant role of family – either positive or negative – that will be discussed further in this paper.

Once a training programme has been successfully completed, a number of questions arise about its impact and influence on the subsequent career choice of female participants. In general terms, the training seems to have had a positive impact on the respondents and increased their interest in and command of leadership skills. One interviewee said: '*Before I had the desire for principalship, now I have the skills as well.*' Yet, after completing the training, only one of the respondents applied unsuccessfully to become a school director. It seems that the training is a necessary but not a sufficient gateway to principalship. Although the legislation (MEST, AI 8/2014) requires the training as an accession factor, it did not operate as a sufficient personal motivating factor for most of the women involved.

Throughout the interviews the subject of motivation and aspiration - or the lack of it - emerged as a dominant theme. Several participants stated that female teachers are not motivated to apply for a leadership role. For example, one respondent referred to women's preference for life balance as a key factor against a management role: '*Whenever I speak to my colleagues about how interested they are to become school principals, they don't want to because they want to have more time to do some other things.*' Another respondent stated*: 'no way...I just want to finish my teaching in the classroom and then to go home...*' In this way, many female teachers are content with the less limiting constraints of their teacher role and are not sufficiently motivated to sacrifice more personal time in exchange for greater responsibility and authority.

Travelling and a very small salary difference are additional factors that appear to diminish the aspiration of many potential female candidates. As one interviewer said: '*It would be professional growth for me as a director, but I see no other benefits. If I become a director somewhere, whether in the village or town, I have the travel, I have 50€ more salary, but the working hours are longer...there is no material benefit, I think so.*' The Ministry respondent pointed to the apparent apathy of female teachers, and their lack of interest in promotion: '*When we requested as MEST, why we do not have more women directors, why the number of women directors is not increasing, what is happening, the response from Municipalities was they (female teachers) are not applying.*' She further added: '*It is their own hesitation; they do not want to get out of line - they have created daily work routines and do not want to ruin the comfort of the routine.*'

Respondents were remarkably frank about their personal values and the way they acted upon career decisions. Without exception, they voiced a happy and cooperative relationship with work colleagues as a primary value. They felt that promotion to school leadership would almost certainly

betray that value and make for a less satisfying career, by jeopardising relationships and dissolving networks of friends. As one teacher remarked: '*I have no reason to worsen relations with the collective, because when you are a Director, if you want the staff to complete their tasks you are forced to ask them to work, respect the schedule, be accurate, etc. Not everyone is responsible...when taking a leadership position, you cannot be friends with your staff.'*

Of course, the above *internal* factors might be observed as significant in many if not most contexts. The study also revealed other, *external* forces that seem to be more specific to the context of Kosovo. All respondents acknowledged the considerable weight given to the role of women in the family as a potent influence on their career choice. One participant commented: '*Most of the women are married with family responsibilities, they are mothers with children, husbands, sometimes with an extended family, husbands' parents. They have to commit to the family and no matter whether you are a teacher or a school director, when you go home, you have to do your work. Husband does not help at home, or very little.'*

This sentiment is clearly rooted in the prevailing traditional culture of Kosovo, in which men are the primary breadwinners, and women care for the home and offspring. Such are the demands of housework and child rearing, that many women are steered away from professional career choices or, having made such a choice, curtail choices that conflict with maternal and uxorial expectations. Interview evidence points to the conclusion that maternal obligations have primacy, and this generates enormous tensions in the challenge of balancing work and family life. As the Ministry official stated: '*There are very good candidates to become school principal. They don't want to apply because of the multiple roles that women have in our society. They are mothers, they have to prepare food...we are speaking literally...they have to manage the house and maintain the cleaning, keeping order. Being a school director is an overload.'*

This finding echoes other research, which reveals a general trend in Europe and USA: namely, the major responsibility for all duties in the house including childcare and care of other dependants falls on women (Coleman, 2001). In many countries, women are expected to preserve traditional family roles alongside existing or new job responsibilities (Sanchez & Thornton, 2010). For those women who seek to attain or maintain a career in educational leadership, there is a constant and unenviable challenge of balancing their professional commitments with their family obligations (Coleman, 2001, 2007). It is arguable, however, that in the traditional culture of Kosovo this is even more the norm. Although the respondents suggested that their husbands were supportive of the careers' progression in principle, it was not generally translated into practical support. One interviewee acidly observed: '*We both work, and when we come back from work, my husband just sits down and starts to watch TV or reads a newspaper, whereas for me, I have to start my second job. I have to do everything in the house...imagine if I work as school director with longer hours...I will be more exhausted...why would I do that for a difference of only 50 Euro?'*

This observation resonates in the pages of a report by the Agency on Gender Equality in Kosovo. In particular, its comment that 'women have the support of their husbands in pursuing their career, but such support is more moral and less concrete in sharing responsibilities' (AGE Report: Women in the work process and decision-making in Kosovo, 2011). Support and encouragement from husbands, families and peers influence women's attitudes to promotion: yet men often fail to help and support their partners (Bush & Coleman, 2000). Women do not feel able to hold senior positions in education because of the dual demands of management and family responsibilities. This problem is also evident in other countries (Celikten, 2005; Coleman, 2007), but the present research suggests that it may be particularly prevalent in Kosovo.

Perhaps most poignant among the observations that emerged from the interviews was the suffocating role of local politics in Kosovo. All the respondents pointed to the need for prior 'approval' by ruling political parties if an application for employment as a school director is to be successful. This of course reflects a widespread phenomenon in Kosovo and applies equally to men and women. As one interviewee pointed out: '*Without being involved in a political party and without receiving the green signal from them, you will not be considered even if you meet all the criteria'.* In the

weak economies of the western Balkans job opportunities are limited and fall far short of that required to gainfully employ all the working adults. This puts pressure on access to public sector jobs, which have come to be abused and used as rewards for political loyalty. Management positions that attract higher salaries are of particular interest to central and local politicians. The recruitment procedure also leaves ample space for manipulation. As one interviewee said: '*According to the procedures, the recruitment commission after the selection process sends the proposals to the mayor, who is influenced by the political party he/she belongs to in the appointment of the school director...female teachers are not involved very much in politics and therefore are not usually selected.*'

Although political interference in civil service appointments affects both sexes, it is arguable that it is particularly weighted against women. A cursory survey of the gender balance in central and local government assemblies speaks loudly of the strong socio-cultural preference for men in politics in Kosovo. Politics remains a 'man's world', and men have first call on the title of 'politician'. The absence of women in politics tends to result in a male preference in political appointments of civil service managers.` Another interviewee stated that '*political parties have become the main door to employment opportunities from low to high positions...and women deal very little with politics and are not involved.*'

Perhaps the most daunting revelation from this study was the suggestion that male teachers seem reluctant to accept women as their leaders. Although this was revealed by just one respondent, it seems likely that it pointed to an attitude that might be more widespread among male colleagues as a dominant factor. Indeed, it is possible that a similar attitude is held by the wider community, and parents in particular. A participant recounted a remark made by a male colleague in the workplace*: 'I can respect you as my colleague, but I can never accept you as my Director!*' This blatant bias is born of a cultural norm within Kosovo society, that holds that positions of authority and supervisory responsibility belong to men exclusively. Interviewees believed that such prejudice is felt most strongly in rural areas, for example: '*In some rural areas there is the impression that a woman cannot lead... they say that they (women) cannot lead us because we still have men.*' Another interviewee hinted that this bias can also be found in large urban schools. She heard a parent comment that: '*A female cannot manage a big number of students as would a male principal*'.

While Kosovo is increasingly influenced by mainstream European norms and values, its remains a society constrained by traditional socio-cultural stereotypes and attitudes about the role of women. One interviewer made some telling comments about the social factors that influenced women's sense of confidence: 'The s*ocial aspect is important — women have many responsibilities — as wives, mothers, workers, etc. but are not usually seen as leaders starting from family. So, this affects us. We feel we should be led. Women are naturally not bold*". Rural areas remain patriarchal, with fiercely guarded views about gender. Social and family organization favours men as the main providers and heads of families, while women are restricted to care and welfare for families and household maintenance. As Kushi (2015) states: "*Women in Kosovo continue to live within the confines of a rigid patriarchal society, one in which men have the final say in all family matters, have primary access to all social and economic resources, and are able to preserve the cultural landscape of more traditional times – regardless of newly imposed institutions*". Respondents in the study readily acknowledged these forces at work on their life choices.

4.3   Being principal

The study did not include any women who hold a position of leadership in education in Kosovo. However, a number of responses from the participants suggested overwhelming support for the positive advantages that female leaders can bring to the role of school principal. Based on their statements, the respondents believe that women may be better managers than men, especially in terms of the school environment and tackling corruption. For example, one teacher commented: '*You can observe the difference in schools with a female principal as soon as you enter the building. It is usually cleaner and tidier than schools managed by men*'. This was confirmed by the Municipal

authority representative who remarked that: '*In schools that have a female director, the cleanliness is at a higher level.*' More importantly, evidence points to better performance in budgeting and financial management among female leaders. The Municipal representative pointed out that: '*Female principals are less inclined to misuse the school budget*.'

Although thinly researched in the literature, there seems to be good anecdotal evidence in Kosovo to suggest that a positive gender divide exists in regard to corrupt behaviour. Women leaders in general and also in education management positions are perceived to be less corrupt than male.

5. Conclusions

Although this brief study cannot achieve conclusions that are generalisable, it provides some evidence-based indicators for a broader research study of the perceived barriers to female representation in school leadership in Kosovo. The results obtained through the semi-structured interviews in this study strongly resonate with the findings of other researchers who have studied and analysed the reasons for underrepresentation of women in management positions (Blackmore, 1999, 2016; Celikten, 2005; Coleman, 2007, 2011; Fuller, 2014; Kaparou & Bush, 2007; Krüger, 1996; Moorosi, 2010; Robinson, Shakeshaft, Grogan, & Newcomb, 2017; Stromquist et al. 2013). Although it has demonstrated common links to the experience of female education professionals in other parts of the world, it also hints at what might well prove to be dominant factors that are more specific to the context of Kosovo.

A number of important points can be drawn thus far in this ongoing research enterprise. Firstly, it is clear that the mere presence of legislation that recognises and promotes the need for gender balance in education leadership – as in the case of Kosovo – is no guarantee of success in achieving that laudable and worthy aim. The legislator must do more in anticipating and neutralising those forces that will obviate or obstruct the aim of the legislation. Recent statistics provide clear evidence of a marked and consistent imbalance in the representation of women in school leadership roles, in spite of their dominance in mainstream teaching provision. This imperative for the Kosovo government policy direction, has greater force when we consider the recognised pivotal role of leadership in education reform and the noted advantages that female leaders bring to that often complex and intractable effort to improve education provision in a post-conflict society.

Secondly, the findings echo trends identified in the literature and paint a gloomy picture for Kosovo's education sector. A consistent pattern of responses conjure up a perfect storm of adverse factors, defeating the aim of a gender balanced leadership in Kosovo education. The respondents were wholly pragmatic in pointing to a preference for life-balance, peer friendships and family values as uppermost concerns. Counterintuitively they seem positive about the learning benefits of the school principal training course, while equally certain that they had no desire to use it as a means of career advancement. Their concerns, reflecting the positives about remaining a teacher and the negatives in becoming a principal, need to be studied more closely in order to identify ways of making the prospect of education management equally appealing to their current role.

Lastly, it is surely incumbent upon the Kosovo education sector to do more to overcome those external factors that lie beyond the influence of female teachers. It seems that the ubiquitous metaphor of the 'glass ceiling' is less accurate in the context of Kosovo, where the ceiling appears more unbreakable and certainly more opaque for potential female principals. What has hardened that ceiling is the apparently irresistible force of local politics and persistent and unchallenged gender bias. To those daunted by the task, there are ample examples of success in other societies that emerged from the seemingly intractable forces of a traditional rural society. Research in the United Kingdom – a country with a proud history of female leaders – points out that the work of countering gender bias is never complete. Coleman found as recently as 2005 that females are less preferred for British secondary school leadership, and that education leadership and that there is a gender-role pattern that sees teaching as essentially feminine and management as distinctly masculine profession (Coleman 2007, Bush, 2007). In Kosovo the task of recognising the legal right and natural merit of

female leaders in education must now begin in earnest, inspired and informed by the experience of other contexts.

References

Agency for Gender Equality (2011). Women in the work process and decision-making in Kosovo. http://abgj.rks gov.net/Portals/0/Raportit%20i%20hulumtimtit%20"Grat%C3%AB%20n%C3%AB%20procesin%20e%20pun es%20dhe%20Vendimarrjes%20"shqip%20A5%20-%2088%20faqe.pdf

Assembly of Kosovo (2008). The Constitution of Kosovo. https://gOPM.rks-gov.net/ActDetail. aspx?ActID=3702

Assembly of Kosovo (2015). Law No. 05 / L -020 on Gender Equality. https://gzk.rks-gov.net/ ActDetail.aspx?ActID=10923

Bassey, M. (1999). *Case study research in educational settings*. Buckingham [England] ; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Blackmore, J. (1999). *Troubling women: Feminism, leadership, and educational change.* Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Blackmore, J. (2016). *Educational leadership and Nancy Fraser.* London ; New York, NY: Routledge.

Bush, T. (2007). Education leadership: Theory, policy and practice. *South African Journal of Education, 27(3),* 391-406

Bush, T., & Coleman, M. (2000). *Leadership and strategic management in education.* London : Thousand Oaks, Calif: Paul Chapman ; SAGE Publications.

Celikten, M. (2005). A perspective on women principals in Turkey. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 8*(3), 207–221. https://doi.org/10.1080/13603120500041835

Chan, A. K., Ngai, G. S., & Choi, P. (2016). Contextualising the career pathways of women principals in Hong Kong: A critical examination. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education, 46*(2), 194–213.

Chen, A., Doherty, N., & Vinnicombe, S. (2012). Developing women's career competencies through an EMBA. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 27*(4), 232–248. https://doi.org/10.1108/17542411211244786

Chisholm, L. (2001). Gender and Leadership in South African Educational Administration. *Gender and Education, 13*(4), 387–399. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540250120081742

Cohen, L. (2002). *Research Methods in Education* (5th ed.). https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203224342

Coleman, M. (2001). Achievement Against the Odds: The female secondary headteachers in England and Wales. *School Leadership & Management, 21*(1), 75–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430120033054

Coleman, M. (2007). Gender and educational leadership in England: A comparison of secondary headteachers' views over time. *School Leadership & Management, 27*(4), 383–399. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632430701562991

Coleman, M. (2011). *Women at the top: Challenges, choices and change.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Collard, J., & Reynolds, C. (Eds.). (2005). *Leadership, gender and culture in education: Male & female perspectives.* Maidenhead; New York: Open University Press.

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology, 13*(1), 3–21. https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00988593

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Cubillo, L., & Brown, M. (2003). Women into educational leadership and management: International differences? *Journal of Educational Administration, 41*(3), 278–291. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230310474421

Dimmock, C. A. J., & Walker, A. (2005). *Educational leadership: Culture and diversity.* London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: SAGE Publications.

Dufour, R., & Marzano, R. J. (2011). *Leaders of learning: How district, school, and classroom leaders improve student achievement.* Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Fullan, M. (2005). *Leadership & sustainability: System thinkers in action.* Thousand Oaks, Calif: Corwin Press.

Fullan, M. (2014). *The Principal: Three keys to maximizing impact* (1st edition). Indianapolis, IN: John Wiley and Sons.

Fuller, K. (2014). Gendered educational leadership: Beneath the monoglossic façade. *Gender and Education, 26*(4), 321–337. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2014.907393

Grogan, M., & Shakeshaft, C. (2011). *Women and educational leadership* (1. ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Harris, A. (2014). Still making a difference: Reflections on the field. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 25*(2), 193–194. https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2014.896135

Haug, H. K. (2015). Gender Equality and Inequality in Kosovo. In C. M. Hassenstab & S. P. Ramet (Eds.), *Gender (In)equality and Gender Politics in South-eastern Europe* (pp. 147–168). https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137449924_8

Hoff, D.L., & Mitchell, S.N. (2008). In search of leaders: Gender factors in school administration. Advancing women in leadership, Retrieved from http://advancingwomen.com/awl

Hoyle, E. (1969). *The role of the teacher*. Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?id=0PglAQAAIAAJ

Kaparou, M., & Bush, T. (2007). Invisible barriers: The career progress of women secondary school principals in Greece. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 37(2), 221–237. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057920601165587

Kosovo Agency of Statistics (2019). Labour Force Survey in Kosovo, Q1 2019, http://ask.rks-gov.net/en/kosovo-agency-of-statistics/add-news/labor-force-survey-in-kosovo-q1-2019

Kossek, E. E., Su, R., & Wu, L. (2017). "Opting Out" or "Pushed Out"? Integrating Perspectives on Women's Career Equality for Gender Inclusion and Interventions. *Journal of Management*, 43(1), 228–254. https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206316671582

König, J., & Rothland, M. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: Effects on general pedagogical knowledge during initial teacher education. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 40(3), 289–315. https://doi.org/10.1080/1359866X.2012.700045

Krüger, M. (1996). Gender issues in school headship: Quality versus power? *European Journal of Education, 31(4)*, 447-461.

Leithwood, K., Seashore Louis, K., Anderson, S., & Wahlstrom, K. (2004). How Leadership Influences Student Learning. New York, NY: The Wallace Foundation.

Loyola, M. C. C. A. (2016). Career development patterns and values of women school administrators. Journal of Education and Practice, 7(5), 26–31.

Lynch, M. (2012a). *A guide to effective school leadership theories* (1st ed). New York: Routledge.

Mertz, N. T., & McNeely, S. R. (1998). Women on the Job: A Study of Female High School Principals. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 34(2), 196–222. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X98034002003

Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST). (2011). *Kosovo Education Strategic Plan (2011-2016)*. Prishtina: MEST.

Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST). (2014). *Administrative Instruction no. 08/2014 on Procedures and criteria for the Recruitment of School Directors and Deputy Directors of Educational Institutions*. Prishtina: MEST.

Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MEST). (2019). *Education statistics* 2018/2019. Prishtina: MEST.

Moorosi, P. (2010). South African Female Principals' Career Paths: Understanding the Gender Gap in Secondary School Management. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 38(5), 547–562. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143210373741

Oplatka, I. (2006). Women in educational administration within developing countries: Towards a new international research agenda. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(6), 604–624. https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230610704819

Ortiz, F. I. (1982). *Career patterns in education: Women, men, and minorities in public school administration*. New York: Praeger.

Robinson, K., Shakeshaft, C., Grogan, M., & Newcomb, W. S. (2017). Necessary but Not Sufficient: The Continuing Inequality between Men and Women in Educational Leadership, Findings from the American Association of School Administrators Mid-Decade Survey. *Frontiers in Education*, 2, 12. https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2017.00012

Sanchez, J.E., & Thornton, B. (2010). Gender issues in K-12 educational leadership. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal, 30(13)*, 1-15.

Shakeshaft, C. (1989). The Gender Gap in Research in Educational Administration. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 25(4), 324–337. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X89025004002

Sinclair, C. (2008). Initial and changing student teacher motivation and commitment to teaching. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education*, 36(2), 79–104. https://doi.org/10.1080/13598660801971658Sobehart, H. C. (2009). *Women leading education across the continents: Sharing the spirit, fanning the flame*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Stromquist, N. P., Lin, J., Corneilse, C., Klees, S. J., Choti, T., & Haugen, C. S. (2013). Women teachers in Liberia: Social and institutional forces accounting for their underrepresentation. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(5), 521–530. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2012.08.002

Tirozzi, G. N. (2001). The Artistry of Leadership: The Evolving Role of the Secondary School Principal. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 82(6), 434–439. https://doi.org/10.1177/003172170108200605

Trnavčevič, A., & Roncelli Vaupot, S. (2009). Exploring Aspiring Principals' Perceptions of Principalship: A Slovenian Case Study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(1), 85–105. https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143208099331

Van Eck, E., Volman, M., & Vermeulen, A. (1996). The Management Route: Analysing the Representation of Women in Educational Management. *European Journal of Education, 31*(4), 403–417. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1503355

Kushi, S (2015). Women of Kosovo: A Mirage of Freedom and Equality," openDemocracy (July 1, 2015). Republished in TransConflict (July 9, 2015)].

Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications.

Young, M. D., & McLeod, S. (2001). Flukes, Opportunities, and Planned Interventions: Factors Affecting Women's Decisions to become School Administrators. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 37*(4), 462–502. https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X01374003