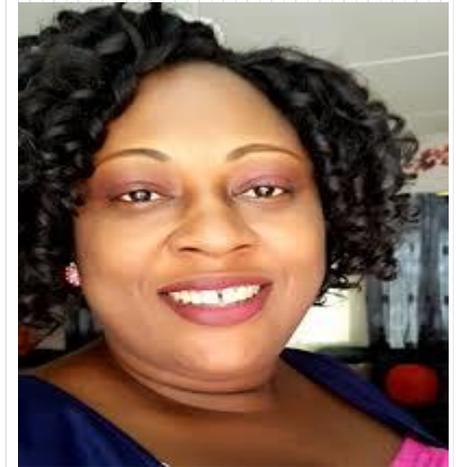


**WOMEN LEADING EDUCATION ACROSS THE CONTINENTS  
2019 CONFERENCE**

**Challenges Confronting Women in Leadership  
Positions in Nursing Colleges in Ghana**



**Lead Investigator  
Minnie Atwumaah Okai  
Principal-CCHN, Winneba.**



**Co-Investigator  
Dr. Marie Efua Baah Bakah  
Senior Lecturer (IEPA) UCC**

# Introduction

- Globally, women compared to men are underrepresented in the management of educational institutions (Warner, 2014)
- For those who find themselves in leadership positions, challenges confronting them are a long-standing issues of concern in both developing and developed countries.
- Several affirmative actions globally to improve women's capacity at leadership levels have been partially successful.
- The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 5.3) is to ensure equal opportunities for women in leadership positions at all levels in decision making
- Women in Educational leadership recognizes emerging challenges in educational institutions and inspiring responses to meet those challenges.

# Background

- In Ghana, similar challenges are inherent in most educational institutions (Mensah et al. 2014)
- In responding to international conventions on the elimination of gender discrimination, the Ghana government guided by article 17(1) & (2) of the 1992 constitution enacted the National Gender Policy to promote gender equity in government institutions
- Though, a number of studies have been conducted to ascertain the impact of these policies on female leaders and how they cope with challenges they encounter, none seems to have been done in Nursing Training Colleges.
- This study sought to ascertain challenges inherent in female leadership positions in Ghana with about 86 Public Nursing Colleges

# A case for the health sector

- Health managers are essential workforce at both the strategic and operational levels of health systems
- There is male dominance in managerial positions in the Ghana Health Sector - reflecting similar global trends in less female leadership in healthcare (MOH, 2013)
- Female health workers comprise 70% of the health workforce worldwide and contribute \$3 trillion annually to global health, yet only 25% of them occupy leadership positions in health (WHO, 2018).
- Disparity in global health leadership has been shown to have negative effect on health outcomes for women and children (Beaman et al. 2012)
- Despite this male dominance in healthcare leadership, a rather contrasting case is presented in Nursing Colleges in Ghana
- Out of the total number of 86 Principals in Nursing Colleges, 50 (58.14%) are females (MOH, 2018) showing female dominance

# Research Questions

- What kind(s) of training exist to prepare women for leadership positions in Nursing Colleges?
- How do cultural and structural dynamics affect the leadership of women in Nursing Colleges?
- What challenges confront women in leadership positions in Nursing Colleges?
- What are the coping strategies of women in leadership positions in Nursing Colleges?

## **Limitations:**

We included a limited number of challenges which is not a comprehensive list of challenges faced by women leadership in education

Our study population focused on only 9 out of the 16 regions in the country

We did not include data from the Universities

# Methodology

- The study adopted a descriptive survey design using both qualitative and quantitative approaches.
- Random sampling was used to select 15 out of 35 colleges in the 9 regions participated in the study
- The design used survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview guide to gather data from 41 females (principals, deputy principals and heads of departments) sampled across 9 out of 16 regions in the country.
- Quantitative data was coded and analysed using SPSS (version 20) and the results presented in frequencies and percentages.
- The qualitative interview responses were recorded using voice recorder, and data coded systematically and analysed thematically to address the research questions.
- The data was reported using narratives and verbatim quotations

# Key Findings

## What exist and prepares women for leadership positions?

- The study found out that, for females to become leaders, they should have attained higher educational qualifications and long working experience over counterparts and subordinates.
- This happens to be the same for males.
- However, due to lack of institutional policy framework to support career progression – about female leaders (73%) of 41 respondents attained leadership positions unprepared - as indicated by a Principal in quote 1 below:

Quote 1:

*‘ I am not aware of any policies that support women to leadership positions...I was just promoted to this position without any leadership skill..and I think this affects male leaders as well’*

# Key findings

## Cultural and structural dynamics affecting women in leadership positions

- All the 10 participants from Nursing Colleges in the Northern part of the country cited cultural and structural barriers as factors affecting their leadership roles
- A set of traditions, beliefs, norms, ethics, folklores, values and practices in their local communities compromises their performance as affirmed by a Principal in quote 2 below:

Quote 2 :

*'In our traditions women are normally not found in leadership positions.....so colleague male tutors tend to have difficulty in accepting some of us female principals.....hence they do not corporate with us especially in the early stages of our appointments' (Principal)*

# Key Findings

## Challenges faced by female leaders in Nursing Colleges

- Despite female dominance in leadership of nursing education, there are challenges in other areas of measure:
  - Gender and cultural stereotyping
  - Insufficient time with families and social roles
  - Lack of support from spouses
  - Limited leadership competencies and use of digital technology affecting data analysis and strategic decision making

These combine to distort female leaders capacity in managing nursing colleges effectively.

# Key Findings

## What coping strategies do females in leadership positions adopt in Nursing Training Colleges?

- Female leaders engage experienced administrators for guidance, team approach to work, and employing a variety of managerial techniques in coping with the challenges.
- Female leaders receive good working support from experienced male and female counterparts and that enables them to perform their roles effectively – as demonstrated by a Vice Principal from one Nursing College in the quote below.

Quote 3:

*'I usually consult other leaders whenever I am in difficulty and they have been supporting me in planning, resource mobilisation, financial management.....corporate governance. This has helped me address most of the challenges .....I think sometimes its good to shout for help' (Vice principal)*

# Summary

- The results have placed the challenges within gender stereotyping and other factors grounded in experiences that reflect cultural beliefs and lack of institutional support.
- It exposes the complex relationship between policy and practice and how current practices could be reinforced to transform policy and female roles as leaders in educational institutions
- We need to promote women's self-confidence as leaders, encourage networking, improve women competencies in technology and develop leadership pipelines
- The need for advocacy to support women in educational leadership is recommended to empower women in government institutions

# Call to action!

**We will like to re-echo what a participant said:**

*‘It is always good to shout for help’*

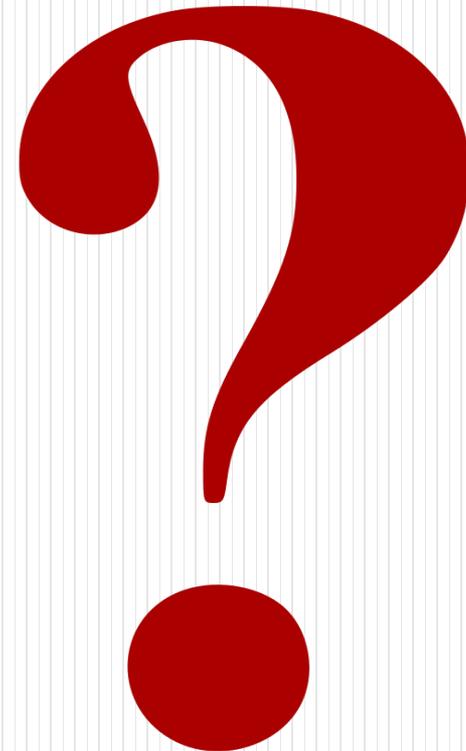
- We need more understanding into knowledge, attitudes and skills of female leaders in Nursing Education
- Platform for peer mentorship to support female leaders
- Further research into areas such as gender differentials and impact of female leadership on student performance.



Leaders in Nursing Education with Students



# Questions!



For any further queries you can contact us on the following:

[okatmin@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:okatmin@yahoo.co.uk).

[marieafua@gmail.com](mailto:marieafua@gmail.com).