

The effects head-teachers management on performance of primary school

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Abstract

The nerve centre of this study was the critical role played by the head teacher in primary school management; students' academic performance has persistently been poor.

Factors leading to this dismal performance have not been adequately investigated and well understood in Mandera County, hence there is a need for this study. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to determine the leadership styles of the head-teachers and their impact on the students' academic performance in KCPE in primary schools in Mandera County. The study was conducted in fifteen primary schools within the county. The researcher takes sample of 15 primary schools, hence 15 head-teachers, and 61 teachers and 239 students. The interest of the researcher to choose and study these schools is strongly prompted by their continued poor performance in KCPE. Data was collected using the questionnaires and interview schedules. The study used descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequency, which were used to analysis. The study intended to come up with policy guidelines that were to help improve the leadership styles of head teachers in primary schools. The study was further to contribute to the functions of knowledge for the present and future scholars. The major findings show a significant relationship between initiative structures of the head teachers towards improving leadership style which has impact on academic performance and finally there was a strong relationship between participatory traits of the head teachers and the management structures of the schools which has impact on the students' academic performance. Based on these findings, it is recommended that to the school administration to cooperate from parents by holding regular meetings and working out strategic plans, to the ministry to in-service head-teachers through workshops. Finally to the teacher to be encouraged occasionally to review their own leadership styles and checks their impact on students' academic performance.

Keywords: Head-teachers management style of primary schools, Kenya Certificates of Primary Examination performance (KCPE) in Mandera County, Head-teachers involve parents to discuss academic performance the learners

1. Introduction: Background to the Study

Each year late December is the periods in the history of Kenya to celebrate the results of eight years of primary education. December is the time when Kenya certificate of primary examination (KCPE) results is released. These time are marked with mixed reactions from people of all walks of life, but more so for parents and the grandaunts. This is because each examination marks the end of primary level and progression to the next level of education. Unfortunately not many of these graduated can proceed to the next level due to a sieve called examination performance. It's only those who are well refined that can pass through this sieve and progress to the next level. Those who pass through the sieve are too few in primary examination to proceed to secondary education.

Eshiwani (1993) conducted that examinations measure the output of education system and is a measure of internal efficiency of school. He argues that beside other national goals, the output of educational system must meet the individual's utilitarian goal. This utilitarian approach of output is viewed in terms of pupil's achievement. Where pupil's achievement has been dismal, the stakeholders get jittery. Mandera County has been performing decimally in Kenya certificate of primary examination over the years and tendency seems to worsen for the last five years. The stakeholders are worried that though the primary schools are producing children who join secondary schools and even meeting the National quota per county into the National schools yet the secondary schools are not enabling the graduates to proceed to the next level.

Leaders blame the head-teachers and education officials for the general performance of National examination in the county. On 25th of December 2015 members of county assembly from Mandera County confronted the District Education Office (DEO) over poor performance in Kenya certificate of primary examination (KCPE) and as the results the DEO was transferred because of poor performance in National examination.

The head-teachers on the other hand blame the leaders for doing very little about socio-cultural, economic and insecurity problem facing the community of which the schools is part of them. Effective leadership has been identified as key factor to good examination results (Daily Nation January 10th p 9) and poor performance of primary schools kills the morel of pupils.

Statement of problem

Primary schools in Mandera County are obtaining poor results in Kenya certificate of primary examination for the last five years. However the trend seems to worsen for the last three years. The stakeholders blame head-teachers for this disastrous results alleging mismanagement. While parents and ministry of education science and technology (MOEST) personnel's are playing their roles the stakeholders are worried that something must be wrong somewhere.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find-out the effects of head-teachers management on performance of KCPE. The study also attempts to establish if there is a relationship between the

head-teachers management and selects administrative experience. In addition, it also attempts to establish cause of poor performance and suggest remedies. Performance will be expressed in terms of mean grade for pupils.

2. Objectives of the study

1. To find out head-teachers management style of primary schools in Mandera sub-county.
2. To find out KCPE performance in Mandera county.
3. To find out whether head-teachers involve parents to discuss academic performance the learners

Research questions

1. What is the management style of head-teacher?
2. What is the impact of management style on KCPE performance?
3. What is the relationship between school head and parents?

Significant of the study

The findings will enable educational policy makers to cop up with policies on leadership and management of schools which will advocate for participatory management. The findings may also be used to sensitize the pastoralist society of Mandera on education status of their county so as to encourage them to assist the head-teachers.

Limitation of the study

The study is likely to be affected by the vast distance between schools coupled with weather roads which are impassable during raining seasons. The headteachers who are the prime factors in the study and central source of primary information may knowingly give untrue information.

Delimitations

Only factors of management will be considered in relation to KCPE performances. Other factors which may contribute to poor results will be highlighted.

Definition of terms

- **Administration**-is the process of effecting the policies of an organization so as to achieve the organization goal.
- **Authority**- the right to make decisions which guides the action of others.
- **Leadership**- is a process whereby individual influence the behavior of others without its own volition.
- **Poor results**- examination outcome in which the individual subject performance curtail the learners from secondary schools
- **Management**- working with and through people by planning organizing controlling, staffing, directing, co-ordinating and budging of all the activities in organization such as schools
- **Mismanagement**- situation where the decision making and controlling activities of the management in organization is totally not meeting its expectation
- **Performance**-refers to KCPE examination results
- **School effectiveness**-refers to ability of the school to meet its internal and externally set objectives.

3. Literature review

This section deals with review of related literature to management and performance in examination. Mbiti

(2009&2010) states that the sources of any organization depends largely on active administration procedures. Leadership is concerned with the execution of those policies and decisions which helps to direct the activities of an organization towards achieving a particular objective. Mbiti observes that people obey their leaders since it is a tradition to obey while others obey expecting material gains and others still obey because of their legitimacy of leadership. ngaroga (2007) concurs with Mbiti that educational administration is a social process which is involved in arrangement of human and material resources in programme for education and using these resources carefully to achieve educational objectives which are moreover the school administration is seen as the implementer of educational programmes among other functions such as planning school programmes procurement of funds and other material. Maintaining school culture is function of school administration for smooth flow of school activities. A number of researchers, including Edmonds (1981) ^[2], scheerens & Bosker (1997) ^[3], lezotte, skaife & Holstead (2002) ^[4], kir & jones (2004) ^[5] and Dagget (2008) ^[6] have demonstrated that successful schools have unique characteristic and processes, which help all children to learn at high levels. Schools require good leaders to organize the process of teaching and learning to ensure that the mission of the school is achieved (lydiah& Nasongo 2009). The core role of instructional leader is to ensure the achievement of the established mission through a good environment for schools (Lzotte 2009).

Many studies have therefore been carried out to determine what accounts for improving academic outcome. Academic performance is a key concern for educational researchers because failure in the national examinations spells doom for students whose life becomes uncertain and full of despair. Therefore a student's life is determined by academic performance in the national examination. Managerial functions of head-teachers are just like any other manager has functions that he/she has to undertake in institution. There-for the basic administrative functions of a head-teacher. There are specific day to day tasks that the head-teacher will have to carry out this are curriculum and instruction, pupils and personnel managements tasks, financial management tasks, school community relations.

4. Methodology

In this chapter, I present a description of the various methods used in carrying out the study. I organized them under the following headings; the research design, research location, population, sampling techniques, research instruments and data collection procedures.

Research Design

The research design used in this study was a case study. According to Bangbade (2004) ^[7] a case study refers to a research strategy of investigating an empirical topic. It follows a set of specified procedures and involves making a choice that is made from amongst other cases. I decided to apply case study methodology within the context of poor achievement in selected schools. I narrowed the study to four primary schools so as to investigate the subtleties and the intricacies within the sampled schools. It is possible to learn a great deal from a few examples of phenomenon under study (Hardy, I, & Smith, E. 2006) ^[8]. The approach is a holistic

one as it tends to analyse all the aspects closely knit within the sample rather than basing on the factors that are isolated. The study was carried out in Mandera County in Northern Kenya. I selected Mandera county through purposive sampling because it is the district of my residence and secondly, being a stakeholder in education, the worrying trend of performance as reflected in KCPE analysis of three consecutive years was an issue of great concern for me. Murnane, Richard j. (2004) ^[10] argue that the quality of education in North Eastern Kenya is poor. As mentioned earlier, Mandera County has many similarities with the districts of Northern Kenya. Within Mandera county I used stratified sampling to put the 25 schools into two categories of Urban and Rural and further identifying the high and low achievers in each category. The four schools had similarities in many ways with the schools within their category. Hence to some extent, the results of the findings could be generalized to other schools in the county.

Population

The population of study was 25 primary schools which had presented candidates for KCPE for the last 3 years (2013, 2014 and 2015) in Mandera. Stratified random sampling was used to classify the schools into urban, and rural; with two schools selected from each category bringing the total number to four schools which were then used in the case study. The participants in the study included ten teachers in every school bringing the total number of teachers to 61 teachers, 15 head teachers, and 263 students bringing the total number of the respondents to 339.

Sampling Techniques

I employed stratified random sampling technique by categorizing all the public primary schools with class eight candidates into urban and rural schools. Stratified random sampling involves grouping the sample into homogenous subgroups (Darling-Hammond, L. 1998) ^[9]. From each category two schools were selected randomly by assigning numbers to each unit in the respective category and randomly drawing from a cap. This process of sampling respectively provided each school in the two categories an equal chance of selection. Thus bias in sampling was avoided. It was anticipated that the mode of selection would produce results that would be generalized to other schools in a similar category.

Research Instruments

There were three research instruments that were used in this research. These were questionnaires, documentation and interview.

Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample (Darling-Hammond, L. 1998) ^[9]. I used this technique mainly because confidentiality was highly upheld and time was also saved. I administered questionnaires to 61 teachers, 15 head teachers' and 263 students. The questionnaires for the three target groups had some similarities and differences. Most of the questions were of likert type format with responses ranging from 'strongly agree' 1 to 'strongly disagree' 5. The questionnaires were

numbered and it was therefore easier for me to trace them.

Documentations

This involved accessing some administrative documents at the sampled schools and the District Education Officer's office (DEO). I was able to get information about staffing situation, pupils' attendance and the examinations results. Data derived generated information about the likely causes of underachievement.

Interview

Darling-Hammond, L. (1998) ^[9] defines an interview as questions asked orally. In this study, I interviewed the DEO through telephone. The interview was semi-structured. I gathered information related to the causes of poor academic performance in KCPE Mandera County.

Limitations of the Study

The area is prone to banditry attack and tribal clashes, especially in the rural areas and this effect can easily spill to other areas which might lead to closure of the schools. From my experience as an EO, external aggression may occur from the neighboring country (Ethiopia) as they pursue - the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF) rebels across Kenya- Ethiopia border. Evidence from the past indicates that in such situation, schools might close for security reasons. During the study there was evidence of fear especially among the schools along the border, but nothing directly affected the research. Travelling to the county and between the schools was a challenge because there were no reliable public means. This was certainly a constraint on time and my meagre financial resource.

5. Data Collection

Before I set off to collect data, the ethical approval forms were completed. This was followed by communication to the DEO (District Education Officer) requesting his approval to allow me conduct a research in the selected schools in the County. This was confirmed in a telephone conversation with the DEO granting me permission to conduct the study. His office communicated to the schools of the intended activity. As an EO based at the Ministry of Education Headquarters and as a resident of the district, I did not encounter any resistance in getting approval by the DEO. The data was therefore collected during the second week of the second school term. With the aid of research assistants, the questionnaires were directly administered to the respondents in schools and respective offices. Each respondent was provided with serialized questionnaire and an envelope. They were given a time-line within which they filled and returned in a sealed envelope to the researcher. This ensured confidentiality. Meanwhile some of the documents were also accessed. The interview with the DEO was organized at his convenience.

6. Conclusion

The research was effectively carried out as planned (refer to appendix 5). It was interesting to visit the District to investigate the causes of underachievement. In fact some unexpected findings were made which boosted the discussion.

7. Data Analysis

Various techniques were used to collect data on the effects head-teachers management on performance of primary school as discussed in chapter three. Data analysis, presentation of study finding and discussion were guided by the following research questions;

7.2 Instructional Leadership

7.2.1 Objective 1: What is the management style of head-teacher?

7.1 Research questions

1. What is the management style of head-teacher?
2. What is the impact of management style on KCPE performance?
3. What is the relationship between school head and school management committees (SMC)

Table 1: Head-teachers visiting teachers in class to supervise teaching to improve academic performance

	Head-teachers		Teachers		Students	
Response	Frequency	Percentage %	Frequency	Percentage %	Frequency	Percentage %
yes	10	67.7	48	78.7	230	87.5
No	5	33.3	13	21.3	33	12.5
Total	15		61		263	

i) Interpretation

It is evident from the table 4.6.1 that majority of the head-teachers 10(67.7%) were very keen on the supervision of teacher to improve performance while 5(33.3%) of head-teachers disagreed that supervision is very minimal to improve academic performance. It was noted from the study that 48(78.7%) of teachers agreed that head-teachers supervisory role was very effective to improve performance while 13(21.3%) disagreed that the role of head-teachers supervision was not felt by the teachers. According to the finding majority of the students 230(87.5%) indicate that head-teachers supervise teaching and learning process in their school to improve performance, whereas 33(12.5%) disagreed that their head-teachers rarely supervise their teachers to improve academic performance in KCPE.

ii) Discussion of the Findings

Supervision emerged slowly as a distinct practice, always in relation to the institutional, academic, cultural, and professional dynamics that have historically generated the complex agenda of schooling. Basically in education sector, the main purposes of supervision are to improve classroom instruction and to promote professional growth and development of teachers. Supervision can be thought of as the glue of successful school and "behind every successful school is an effective supervision program. The supervisor must watch the teacher's work, ask the teacher questions about why the teacher used certain teaching methods and provide information on the best teaching practices, enabling educators to improve.

Educational Management in secondary schools involves the application of management principles in designing, developing and effecting resources towards achievement of educational goals. Today, the demand for effective management of schools is rapidly taking centre stage more than ever the world over. This effectiveness is judged by the extent to which schools acquire the necessary instructional materials and teachers, and how they provide a congenial organizational climate and generally meet the expectations of the society within which they are established. It is in our schools that education takes place and it is there that the success or failure of the national educational objectives will be determined. To achieve this objective, school executives are expected to apply appropriate management skills. The head teacher of any primary school has a crucial obligation in

discharging management duties in the school. Therefore, the overall management of schools rests with the head teacher working with and through the teachers to maximize their capabilities in the profession and achieve the desired educational goals.

School requires good leaders to organize the process of teaching and learning to ensure that academic performance is improved. From the above study, it is clear that the majority of the respondents agreed that head-teachers supervise classroom instructions to oversee effective teaching is in progress to improve academic performance.

iii) Implications

Supervision of instruction involves motivating the teacher to explore new instructional strategies. The teacher must be made aware of the educational goals and standards to be implemented. The observer must be objective during the observation process and maintain confidentiality. It is also important for the observer/supervisor to provide due feedback and appropriate resources for the teacher to utilize. It is assumed that supervision is a participatory process with an ongoing dialogue between administrators/head teachers and teachers to find improved methods for. Administrators strive to share the principles and practices of quality teaching while promoting input and decision making on the part of the teachers. Supervision encourages a wide variety of instructional techniques and diversity in teaching methods which take into accounts the unique talents and capabilities of each teacher. Administrators/head teachers support the improvement of instruction by observing teaching as well as by giving suggestions, coaching, or demonstrating a teaching skill or an alternative teaching method. The head teachers' visionary and moral contributions are expected to give teachers direction and the ability to perform in school. Such contributions, in the final analysis, define school managers because their leadership positions demand from them knowledge of personnel management among others things. This is vindicated in the case of a school head teacher with the management responsibility of a team of teachers. The head teacher's skills in school management influences the behavior of the school in terms of how teachers teach, how much students learn and the overall school performance. This is because the significant proportions of key decisions made within the schools are made with the consent of the head teacher.

iv) Recommendations

1. The supervisor should provide teachers with objective feedback on the current state of their instruction and to diagnose and solve instructional problems.
2. The supervisor should help teachers to develop skill in using instructional strategies and evaluate teachers for promotion, tenure, or other decisions.
3. The supervisor should encourage teachers to develop a positive attitude about continuous professional development to improve methods of teaching.

7.2.2 Objectives 2: What is the impact of management style on KCPE performance?

From the data in table- revealed that the performance of Kenya certificate of primary examination (KCPE) for the last five years in mandera west sub-county are tabulated below. A closer analysis further revealed that none of the school attends the average mean score of 250 marks in KCPE and this show that the performance is not good. The table below shows analysis of Kenya certificate of primary education (KCPE) for the last five years.

Table 1: Mandera west sub-county KCPE mean scores from 2011-2015

Year	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Mean score	214.24	177.74	201.27	194.81	241.45

Source: Sub-County Education Office KCPE Analysis 2011-2015

Table- shows the analysis of (KCPE) performance per subjects for the last five years in mandera west sub-county. The results indicates that none of the subjects, schools score 50% of the total marks from 2011-2015 accepts 2015 where

the mean scored of mathematics was 53.13% and 54.10% for social studies and religious education (SSR). This implies that, student performance in National examination is general poor and this worry education stakeholder.

Table 2: Analysis of performance based on subject from 2011-2015

Subjects	2011 Subject Mean Score	2012 Subject Mean Score	2013 Subject Mean Score	2014 Subject Mean Score	2015 Subject Mean Score
English	40.49	37.89	40.00	41.04	46.00
Kiswahili	42.01	30.54	30.86	35.15	40.37
Mathematics	42.10	40.90	42.69	45.91	53.13
Science	49.99	40.35	44.34	44.24	48.38
SSR	54.51	40.76	43.44	46.67	54.10

Source: Head-teachers office KCPE analysis 2011-2015

7.2.3 Objective 3: What is the relationship between school head and school management committees (SMC)

Table 3: School heads and school management committees (SMC) are effective in raising students’ academic performance

Response	Head-teachers		Teachers		Students	
	frequency	Percentage %	frequency	Percentage %	frequency	Percentage %
yes	6	40	18	29.5	206	78.3
No	9	60	43	70.5	57	21.7
Total	15		61		263	

i) Interpretation

The study also establishes the extent to which school management committees are interacting with the school heads to improve students’ academic performance in KCPE. From the findings majority of the head-teachers 9(60%) disagreed that school management committees (SMC) are inactive to participate in school activity to raise students’ academic performance while 6(40%) of the head-teachers agreed that SMC are actives in participating in school activity to raise academic performance in KCPE. Majority of the teachers 43(70.5%) indicated that school management committee are dormant to participate in the school development to raise the performance of students in KCPE. While 18(29.5%) of teachers agreed that SMC are active to participate in school development to raise the academic performance in exams. According to the findings majority of students 206(78.3%) agreed that school management committees are active participant in school development to improve academic performance while 57(21.7%) disagreed that SMC are dormant to raise the academic performance of students in KCPE. According to the finding majority of the respondents agreed, the school management committees are inactive to

participate in school development to improve academic performance in KCPE.

ii) Discussion of the Findings

All government and aided schools across the country should constitute a School Management Committee that would plan, monitor and implement. An SMC works toward achieving proper and smooth functioning of a school, by catering to its infrastructure needs, mid-day meal programs and ensuring a better learning environment for children. A school development plan (S.D.P) is prepared and shared with government officials. Under the current legislation, there is no specific requirement on the composition and mode of operation of the SMC. Individual schools may have different ways of management. Individual sponsoring bodies still have reservations about the inclusion of teachers and parents into the SMC. Therefore, teachers and parents lack a proper channel to participate in school decision-making. On the other hand, there is no provision in law requiring the SMC to disclose the names and particulars of school managers, and they are not required to declare any conflicts of interest with the operation of the school. The lack of transparency in

school operation makes it difficult for the public to understand how school decisions are made.

Parental involvement can be of three types: Parents as educators, parents as partners and parents as decision-makers. The education Act envisions parents to get involved as decision-makers with an objective to make teachers and head-teachers more accountable for education delivery which in turn would lead towards the better learning outcomes of students. If parents become actively involved as decision-makers in school, then they would also be encouraged to get involved as educators. Also, the committee should be given more authority. It shouldn't only be expected to highlight problems but rather, it should be given more power to solve it. For instance, if a school is lacking enough teachers then it should be given power to hire teachers according to the need. If somebody is not sending his/her child to school then it shouldn't only be expected to report to higher offices, but rather it should be allowed to do something against it. If a teacher is being absent for long exceeding his allowed period of leave, School Management Committee should have the power to do something against it. Then, I believe members will be more serious and more responsible for the running of the schools.

iii) Implications

To enhance the transparency of the SMCs, the Education Department requires all school managers to declare personal and pecuniary interests. Some of the information of school managers will be made public in order to monitor the operation of the SMCs. The Education Department will also draft a Code of Ethics for School Managers which will list out the requirements on moral standards and commitments for reference by the school managers and the public.

With the implementation of school-based management, schools will enjoy greater flexibility and autonomy in school management and the use of resources. To ensure that the SMCs carry out their duties effectively, schools are required to set up an internal monitoring and accountability mechanism.

They have to set out clear, open and fair procedures in financial and personnel management particularly in handling issues like appointment, dismissal, promotion or any decisions related to personal interests of individuals

iv) Recommendations: Role and functions of School Management Committee

- A school management committee shall be constituted in every school, other than unaided school, within its jurisdiction and reconstituted in every one years
- SMC shall meet once in a month and minutes is recorded and made available to the public.
- SMC shall monitor the functioning of school, prepare and recommend School Development Plan
- Monitor the utilization of grants received from State Government or local authority
- Ensure the enrolment and continued attendance of all the children from the neighborhood

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