Primary School Management: Focus on Constraints Faced by Headteachers in Managing   Primary Schools in Chogoria Division, Meru County, Kenya

Mrs. Lucy Njeri MBAABU
Doctorate student in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya

Prof. John Aluko ORODHO
Associate Professor (specialist in Curriculum Studies, Research Methods and Applied Statistics) in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya (corresponding author, (orodhojohn@gmail.com)

Abstract

The thrust of this study was to examine the constraints experienced by headteachers in primary schools in Chogoria Division, Meru County, Kenya. A survey research design of the exploratory sub-type was adopted   . Combinations of purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to draw a sample of 30 teachers out of an accessible population of 42 to participate in the study. The main research instrument for data collection was an   in- depth interview guide which was used to collect qualitative data. Interview transcription and thematic analysis was applied to analyse the qualitative data from in-depth interviews. The major finding   was that although the headteachers had appropriate academic qualifications, they experienced myriad of intertwined challenges that gravitated around lack of intrinsic leadership acumen, lack of skills in curriculum and instruction, as well as inefficient human, physical and financial management. As a result, there was no collegial interrelationship among various key stakeholders in education leading to low quality school outcomes in terms of student discipline and academic performance in internal and national examinations. It was recommended that the Government of Kenya through the Kenya Education Staff Institute (KEMI) should intensify the professional training of Headteachers and members of School Management Committees in school leadership, particularly in resource acquisition and management technique [210 words].

Keywords: Primary School Headteachers, Management, Constraints, Professional Development Chogoria Division, Meru County, Kenya.

I.   Introduction

Background Information

 In the current era of heightened competition and expectations from education stakeholders, school managers and particularly school headteachers are in the hot seat to initiate innovative management practices that are geared towards the improvement of teaching and learning as is measured through enhanced students academic performance (Oluchemi, 2012; Orodho,2014; Waweru & Orodho,2014). According to Henriengel, Jackson, Stocum and Theus (2009), headteachers are expected to improve the management practices by becoming educational visionaries, instructional and curriculum leaders, assessment experts, disciplinarians, community and public relations experts, budget analysts, and facility managers. According to Waweru and Orodho (2014), headteachers are also expected to broker the often conflicting interests of parents, teachers and Ministry officials, and hence need to be sensitive to the widening range of students' needs, especially those related to academic excellence. It is thus arguable that although the job description of the headteacher sounds overwhelming, it should be regarded as the acid test to most school managers (Ayeni, 2010; Ondieki & Orodho, 2014; Orodho, 2014). It is against this backdrop that this study found justification since all stakeholders seem to be concerned about the positive role school headteachers should play in terms of their management strategies. Thus, this study was motivated to delve into possible constraints experienced by headteachers and possible strategies employed to tackle these constraints in primary schools in Chogoria, Meru County, Kenya.

State of the Art Review

 The headteachers are the frontline of the battle for universal basic education and are intensely interested in children's realities and social contexts (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). Despite the increase in administrative responsibilities, headteachers still view themselves are responsible for supervising teaching and

learning activities in the school, including teachers professional development (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Yet, the history of primary school administration in Kenya reveals that the headteachers roles have been dynamic and challenging to an administrator who has nonetheless not been trained specifically in school administration (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012). Once approved as the school headteacher, the new administrator has added new roles besides teaching, which calls for efficient handling of the new responsibilities, to enable attainment of the educational goals and purposes for which the school was established. Considering that headteachers are selected from classroom teachers who have no training at all in school administration, it is expected therefore that the headteachers might face various problems in school administration (Republic of Kenya, 2012a; Waweru & Orodho, 2014).

Headship, if it has to lead to successful school administration and management whose ultimate purpose is to enable the effective and efficient attainment of educational goals, requires much more than experience as a classroom teacher has been observed, constraints inhibit and circumscribe the extent to which an ideal state of affairs can be achieved. They set limits to our best efforts, whatever the setting, whether it is private or public. In the primary school, the lack of facilities, of books equipment, books and materials, the teachers level of competences, training or readiness to co-operate with his colleagues, the rigidity of the time table, the style of discipline employed and the number of children in a class, among other things are each likely to set limits to what the school can teach (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). Several world educational systems have recognised this complexity and have mounted programmes to enhance headteachers professionalism and status. Among those that have already made positive strides and definite strides towards headteacher professionalism are, USA, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand only to mention but a few (Olembo,1975). In 1973, a Presidential Decree provided free education to children in standard 1-4 in Kenya. The following year, "enrolment in standard one classes rose by a million above the estimated figure of about 400,000. The total enrolment figure for the standard 1-4 children increased from 1.8 million in 1973 to nearly 2.8 million in January 1974, (Muhoro, 1975).

Since the Decree was unexpected and was not in conformity with the projected estimated of the then Ministry of Education, one does not need to stress the numerous problems that faced the primary school headteachers all over the republic. It is obvious that with the provision of free education, a lot of problems have been imposed on the work of the headteacher. They now have to deal with a much bigger student population that definitely highlights the headteachers responsibilities in terms of discipline and administration. The number of teaching staff the Head has to supervise has also increased drastically (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

Literature is abundant which attempts to relate the concepts of teaching and learning resources and eventually on their overall influence on classroom management and effective curriculum implementation (Coleman &Anderson 2001; Orodho, 2013; Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Nthinguri, 2013; Sherman, Bohlander& Nell, 1996; Woodford, Jack, Gillard, Crazy, & Glennonn, 2003). Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu and Nthinguri (2013) established that the challenges of availability and adequacy of learning resources was found to negatively affect teacher effectiveness in the use of teaching methods as well as focus on individual learner , hence fostering discipline and good attainment of good academic results. According to Woodford et. al. (2003), a resource is a useful or valuable possession or quality of a country, organization or person. Sherman et. al. (1996) contends that resources available for organizations are human, financial, physical and informational. Coleman and Anderson (2001) say that in education area resources fall into two main categories: those used to provide support services such as the running costs of the buildings, administration and management and those for operational core of teaching and learning like physical or tangible resources.

Birimana and Orodho (2014) write that school teaching and learning resources include buildings particularly classrooms with lockable doors for storage of materials, teaching aids like textbooks, visuals aids and other scholastic materials. Hence, according to Birimana e and Orodho (2014) , at a bare minimum level, schooling would require a building; some provision for seating children, drinking water, and sanitation facilities, teaching material; teachers and provision for upgrading skills of teachers. Lack of any of these would render the schooling experience ineffective and render management of educational resources cumbersome (Kinyanjui & Orodho, 2014).

Farrell (1993) writes that a teaching and learning resource is any support material available for use by the teacher in the class and a reading material for children. Mintzberg (1979) and Kinyanjui and Orodho (2014) contend that resources directly utilized in teaching and learning are clearly classrooms and curriculum support resources (i.e. books, stationery materials and equipment, wall pictures, blackboards, audio-visual aids, globes, maps, atlases, concrete objects and classroom environment). The UNESCO (1996) and Kabana (1999) recommend audio-visual materials namely wall pictures, charts diagrams, films tape-recorders, maps, blackboards, projectors, motion pictures, television, radios and video.

The NCERT (2005) arguments that teaching and learning resource appear in three types. The first type of instructional materials includes such objects and phenomena as minerals, rocks, raw materials; semi-finished and finished manufactured articles, and plant and animal specimens. Included among these materials are reagents and apparatus for producing chemical and other reactions and for demonstrating and studying such reactions during laboratory sessions. Also included in the first group are materials and equipment for students' expeditions and other travel, as well as supplies, instruments, and equipment for production training and for courses in drafting and the representational arts. Among such supplies, instruments, and equipment are wood, metal, plastic, and glass objects, measuring and monitoring instruments and equipment, equipment for the assembling and finishing of various products, and machines and machine tools.

A lot of changes have taken place in the primary school and to be able to meet the challenges posed by the changes and innovations in the primary school education, the school needs a progressive and dynamic headteacher who is firmly interested in, and committed to the education of children. Not every classroom teacher will have these qualities. A study by Orodho (2014) in Mandera County indicated that effective management of schools translated positively to students' academic achievement. In one of the interviews during the study, Orodho (2014) avers:

> The personality of a school changes when one principal replaces another; and that
> the type of principal a school has will determine how the school will be in terms
> of students' discipline, teachers' commitment to their duties and overall students'
> performance in both academic and non-academic disciplines that facilitates the
> holistic development of the individual learner.

If this view is sound, much of the responsibility for educational improvements falls therefore on the primary school headteacher; and this makes his position to be of utmost importance in the entire educational system. As has been observed, the headteacher is held responsible for so many roles in the school; and to be able to fulfil all of them satisfactorily, then there is an urgent need to equip him with all the relevant abilities and skills, which will contribute to making him a better and more effective school administrator.

Campbell (1974) and Nwangu (1978) have observed that the administrative task or operational areas of school administration fall in the following areas:

1. Curriculum and instruction
2. School community relations
3. Pupil personnel
4. Staff personnel
5. Physical facilities
6. Finance and business management

This means that the headteacher in any school has many duties to perform in each of these operational areas. Curriculum and Instruction and Finance and Business Management are regarded as the most fundamental duties of a school headteacher. Of these two the basic operation area for the school administrator, it has been argued is curriculum and instruction. Inthis respect the headteacher must select and procure instructional material which will help even good teachers to perform better. This means that the major role of the primary head is improvement of instruction to be attained by effective instructional leadership on the part of the headteacher. According to Nwangu (1978), the instructional roles of the primary school headteacher can be summoned as:

1. Organising the school timetable and seeing to the day to day operation of the school.
2. Ensuring that there is adequate learning teaching materials and equipment, (indeed a curriculum design is void if practical meaning without supporting materials such as textbooks, visual aids, paper, chalk etc. Equipment and supplies for any given school must, first of all be up to date and in line with current syllabuses).
3. Designing and implementing appraisal programmes and reporting pupils progress in the school.
4. Planning the school curriculum in accordance with the stated and implied aims of primary education.
5. Supervising the instructional activities of teachers.
6. Helping teachers to grow professionally by encouraging them to attend in-service training programmes, seminars and workshops.
7. Encouraging teachers and pupils to use the available teaching facilities effectively.

Quality Management in Organizations

Management has been perceived by several scholars and researchers as the process of designing and maintaining any setting in which people work in groups (Adeyemi, 2012; Waweru & Orodho, 2014). In recent years, quality management has become a vehicle for organizations to achieve competitive advantage in the local and global arena (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). Thus, it is arguable that quality management is the process that the

organization must utilize to produce products and services of the highest possible quality (Birimana & Orodho, 2014). This argument borrows from the last century writings in which there has been a growing interest in the issue of quality management in organizational theory and practice. The research literature agrees that proper implementation of a quality and excellence based management system can drastically affect company performance. Two important studies recently focused on the relationship between quality and excellence based management systems and performance (Hendricks & Singhal, 2001). In both studies, quality appears to make a central and important contribution to long term organizational performance. This leads to the suggestion that implementing a performance management system based on quality and excellence is a long term process requiring the support of management and the organizational culture at both Government and institutional levels (Ondieki & Orodho, 2014; Mwinyipembe & Oordho, 2014; Waweru & Orodho, 2014).

There is a strong case for investing in developing the leadership capacity of headteachers to facilitate implementation of curriculum and overall school reforms (Fullan, Bertani & Qumine, 2004). Literature also indicates that heads play a critical role in the school and as a result have the authority and ability to significantly influence changes in the school environment (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). As recognized leaders in the school community, they also have opportunity to influence change beyond the classroom (Adan & Orodho, 2014; Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). Finally, they are the link between schools and the larger bureaucratic education system and also the pipeline for new administrators (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

In view of the above, it can be said that headteachers sit at the centre of a web of relationships and as such are able to influence change to improve the quality of education. However, the silence of this relationship between headteachers, teachers and school reforms is yet to be realized in Kenya (Orodho, 2014). They receive little or no training to develop their skills and abilities to transit from teachers to their headship positions and to continue to grow in the role (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). Yet, the Commonwealth Education Partnerships (2013) stress that when teachers are given the right opportunities and support through professional training, they are able to achieve their vision as school leaders , set time-bound goals for improving school processes and take appropriate decisions directed towards the core objective of the institution , which is basically improved school outcomes. There is need then to introduce leadership programmes that build headteachers capacity to be effective leaders in the domain crucial to their functioning as school leaders.

Fullan et.al.,(2004) has postulated a theory that school-change driven by individual change can create systemic change when all individuals within the system begin to understand and act within their own spheres of influence , while retaining an awareness of the bigger picture , and consequently contribute to broader change within the education system. Within this theoretical framework, this study sought to examine the constraints being experienced by headteachers in primary schools in Chogoria, Meru County.

The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the problems that are experienced by primary school headteachers in the tasks of administering their schools. The study was guided by two objectives, namely:
- (i)   To profile the status of basic education in Meru County
- (ii)   To examine the constraints experienced by headteachers in primary schools in Chogoria, Meru County, Kenya.

II. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design employing qualitative multiple case study research paradigms. Bogman and Biklen (1992) as well as Orodho (2012) assert that qualitative research demands that the world be approached with the assumption that nothing is trivial, that is everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied. Within the qualitative methodology the study adopted multiple case study design. Orodho (2009a) defines a descriptive survey as a scientific study that aims to generate data from a cross-section of respondents that might be used to establish distribution and the interrelationships between variables. Such studies could be conducted using a combination of quantitative and qualitative data. The current study relied heavily on qualitative data generated from interviews with headteachers in Chogoria, Meru County Kenya.

The study population comprised of all the 42 headteachers in Chogoria Educational Division in Meru County. Combination of purposive and stratified random sampling was used to select a sample of 30 teachers out of an accessible population of 42 to participate in the study. This is in accordance with Orodho (2009a) assertion that in purposive sampling you handpick certain groups to include in the sample on the basis of the relevance to the

problem under study.   The main instrument for data collection was   an in-depth interview guides which was used to collect qualitative data. Interviews are ways for participants to get involved and talk about their views (Creswell, 2009; Brooks,2013). The study used face-to face interviews which gave room for probing and clarification of issues (Orodho, 2012).   Thematic analysis following interview transcription was used to analyse qualitative data.

III. Findings and Discussion
Status of Education in Meru County
 The Early Childhood Education and Development (ECDE) in Meru in 2009 stood at 34.0 % (33.5 % for boys and 34.5 % for girls). The primary school NER for Meru in 2009 was 85.0 % (84.11% boys and 85.9 % girls) which was slightly above the national NER of 77.2% (76.2 % males and 78.3% females) .The Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in primary schools at the national level increased from 91.2 % (92.7% boys and 89.7% girls in 1999 to 109.8 % (108.9 % boys and 109.9 % girls) in 2010. The national Net Enrolment Rate (NER) increased from 68.8 % in 1999 to 91.6 % (94.1 % boys and 89.0% girls) in 2008. However, in 2010, NER at national level dipped slightly to 91.4 % (90.6 for boys and 92.3 % for girls).

At the secondary school level, the national NER was 24.0 % (22.2 % Males and 25.9 % Females). The situation in Meru county as of 2009 was below the national NER as it stood at 22.3% (19.1 % males and 25.3 % females) . The situation in Chogoria was even lower than the Meru county rate of 22.3 %. It is instructive to note that as of 2010, only Kiambu County had recorded a NER of 50.0 % (47.5 % males and 52.4 % females. The females were recorded as performing better than their male counterparts .Although the least performing county in the country at the national level was Turkana with a NER of 3.5 % (3.8 % males and 3. % females), the performance in Chogoria compared to the Meru County level performance was below expectations.

Constraints Experienced by Headteachers
The headteachers were requested to indicate the major constraints that they experienced in their execution of duty in primary schools in Chogoria, Meru County, Kenya. The headteachers responses are presented in Table1 which shows the frequency of mention of the constraint and their relative ranking.

Table 1: The main challenges confronting education in Chogoria Division, Meru County

The Administrative Constraint	Frequency of mention	Rank
Curriculum and Instruction	30	1
School –community relations	24	3
Pupil Motivation and Discipline	20	6
Staff Motivation and Development	22	4
Physical facilities	18	7
Finance and business Administration	22	4
Poor Curriculum Delivery	12	9
Over enrolment and Quality	16	8
Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning	8	10
Personal leadership skills and vision	28	2

From the data in the Table 1, it is evident that the most highly ranked constraint experienced by headteachers in primary schools was curriculum and instruction followed by lack of intrinsic leadership skills at the second position. What these results suggest is that whereas all headteachers agreed that they lacked appropriate knowledge and skills to deal with constraints related to curriculum and instruction, over   90 per cent of the headteachers admitted that they lacked intrinsic leadership skills. The revelation that all the headteachers concurred that they lacked appropriate knowledge and skills related to curriculum and instruction which is the core business of a school system raises concerns regarding the quality of education in the study locale. In a similar vein, the fact that majority of the headteachers were not visionary in their administrative tasks implies that the schools are managed without clear focus and targets to be attained.

When probed further, they revealed that in the area of curriculum and instruction, they specifically experienced constraints related to:

> Obtaining adequate equipment and supplies; Supervision of teaching;
> evaluation of instructions; and students learning outcomes; shortage of
> qualified teachers; lack of co-operation from students and teachers

The third highly ranked constraint was poor school-community relationship. This constrain was experienced by over three quarters of the respondents.   The headteachers were probed further to specify the particular issues. The highly narrated issues gravitated around the following:

> Lack of co-operation among parents, especially when called to participate in school activities such as pupils' discipline and general fund-raising; inability to create a healthy parent-teacher relationship; lack of acceptance of headteachers by the community; challenges related to dealing with illiterate and semi-illiterate parents ;and dealing with the religious and community leadership differences and squabbles.

At the fourth position two constraints tied. These were personnel (managing teaching and no-teaching staff) and issue elated to finance and business administration. When probed further through interviews, the following specific issues related to management of staff personnel emerged:

> Lack of qualified teachers to cope with the ever increasing pupil enrolment; Lack of in-service courses for teachers and headteachers especially to enable them cope with the curriculum changes; Dealing with unqualified teachers some of them joining the teaching profession while too young for the tasks at hand; Frequent teacher transfers, especially the qualified ones due to poor living conditions in some primary schools.

With regards to finance related issues, the following specific constraints emerged:

- Accounting and auditing for everything in school was a major challenge for all headteachers;
- Preparing a sound budget plan for the school;
- Raising and obtaining enough funds to finance the school programmes;
- Book-keeping and managing all school records.

The sixth highly ranked constraint was related to pupil motivation and discipline. When probed further, the following specific challenges emerged:

> Dealing with high cases of absenteeism was a major challenge for many headteachers, especially when most parents had abrogated their parental responsibilities; Providing guidance and counselling without professionally trained teachers in place;   and the Teach Training Colleges do not adequately prepare teachers and equip teacher trainees with the requisite guidance and counselling knowledge and skills as an elaborate course, especially well tailored to dealing with the ever increasing learner problems

The seventh ranked constraint experienced by headteachers was related to construction and maintenance of school physical infrastructure. With regards to the physical planning, organisation and management of infrastructure, the following specific issues emerged:

- Keeping all school records, especially that both the headteacher and the school bursar, if any, are not trained in financial management.
- Constructing and managing all school buildings, grounds, equipment and facilities with dwindling finances. The school headteachers confessed that they lacked entrepreneurial skills to enable them put in place income generating activities to supplement the pupil capitation which is basically inadequate to meet these functions.
- Lack of sufficient space and land for school plan. Most schools are constructed on restricted land due to over-population in the study locale and generally dwindling landholdings in the study locale.

From the foregoing citation, it is evident that headteachers in primary schools in the study locale of Chogoria Division, Meru County are experiencing a myriad of intertwined problems that cumulatively thwart effective school management for quality outcomes.

The findings are in line with previous scholars who contended that management ought to be perceived as the process of designing and maintaining any setting in which people work in groups (Adeyemi, 2012; Waweru & Orodho, 2014). In our current study, it was evident that most school headteachers lacked appropriate education in school management. Yet, in   recent years, quality management has become a vehicle for organizations to achieve competitive advantage in the local and global arena (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). Thus, it is arguable that   quality management is the process that the organization must utilize to produce products and services of the highest possible quality (Birimana & Orodho, 2014). The research literature agrees that proper implementation of a quality and excellence based management system can drastically affect company performance. Two important studies recently focused on the relationship between quality and excellence based management systems and performance (Hendricks & Singhal, 2001). In both studies, quality appears to make a central and important contribution to long term organizational performance. This leads to the suggestion that implementing a performance management system based on quality and excellence is a long term process requiring the support of management and the organizational culture at both Government and institutional levels (Waweru & Orodho, 2014).

The implications of the finding are that a lot needs to be done in the study locale of Chogoria Division in order to enhance the management capability of headteachers. This is critical given that there is a strong case for investing in developing the leadership capacity of headteachers to facilitate implementation of curriculum and overall school reforms (Fullan, Bertani & Qumine, 2004). Literature also indicates that heads play a critical role in the school and as a result have the authority and ability to significantly influence changes in the school environment (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). As recognized leaders in the school community, they also have opportunity to influence change beyond the classroom (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013). Finally, since the headteachers are the link between schools and the larger bureaucratic education system and also the pipeline for new administrators (Commonwealth Education Partnerships, 2013), there is an urgent need to ensure that all headteachers appointed to head any educational institution should be adequately prepared in terms of overall institutional management techniques. In view of the above, it can be reiterated that headteachers sit at the centre of a   web of relationships and as such are able to influence change to improve the quality of education. However, the silence of this relationship between headteachers, teachers and school reforms is yet to be realized not only in the study locale of Chogoria Division but also in most institutions in Kenya (Orodho, 2014).

The findings of this study have come at the right time in the context of the Commonwealth Education Partnerships (2013) who stress that when teachers are given the right opportunities and support through professional training, they are able to achieve their vision as school leaders, set time-bound goals for improving school processes and take appropriate decisions directed towards the core objective of the institution, which is basically improved school outcomes. There is need then to take the challenges experienced positively and introduce leadership programmes that build headteachers capacity to be effective leaders in the domain crucial to their functioning as school leaders.

IV. Conclusion and Recommendations

The focus of this study was to examine the constraints experienced by headteachers in primary schools in Chogoria, Meru County, Kenya. The findings have unequivocally demonstrated that Headteachers experience a myriad of intertwined constraints. These can be grouped into four categories, namely; Personal leadership; instructional leadership, institutional leadership; and social leadership. With regards to personal leadership, it was evident that headteachers had not developed intrinsic motivation; self-awareness and ability to critically analyze experiences and organize own mindset. This was deemed to be one of the major leadership constraints that cannot be easily inculcated into any leader. In fact, it is through the reflective thinking and planning, proactive problem solving and goal directed planning that the headteacher can gain effective leadership that is inborn and self-nurtured. Nonetheless, training in critical thinking would have enhanced the way these headteachers managed their schools.

The second cluster of constraints had to do with instructional leadership. It was evident that effective supervision of teaching and learning was lacking. With the nature of problems cited, it was clear that the schools were not child-friendly. Additionally, due to shortages of basic instructional resources and teacher over-load, it is arguable that there could have been no activity-based teaching and learning. The headteachers lacked the basic instructional ledership skills which prepares the leader to mentor other teachers to adopt the required positive attitude towards modern approaches to teaching.

The third cluster of constraint was related to institutional leadership. It was apparent from the nature of the results generated that headteachers hardly focussed on the school as a system and incorporated a working culture with teachers and improved administrative processes. It was apparent that the headteachers were not able to design and implement processes that enable peer leaning to take place and encourage teamwork amongst staff and students.

The final cluster of constraints was social leadership. It was evident that headteachers hardly focused on getting parents and the community to get involved in the education of their children, encourage enrolment where these were low and actively involve parents in school activities. Yet active parental involvement is enshrined in the Basic Education Act, 2013. Section 36 of the Basic Education Act states that a parent who fails to take his or her school going child to school commits an offence, and if convicted shall be liable for a fine not exceeding Ksh.100, 000 or imprisonment not exceeding one year or both. The headteacher cold also educate the community that the same Basic Education Act, Section 38 (1) that no person shall employ a child of compulsory school age in any labour or occupation that prevents such a child to from attending school. If convicted of such an offence, the employer will be liable for a fine not exceeding five million or imprisonment not exceeding five years o both. These social leadership skills would encourage parents to not only participate in school activities but also ensure high school attendance, completion rates and enhanced pupils' academic performance.

In a nutshell we conclude that the problems concerning financing of the school, the staff personnel, discipline of high enrolment and pupils, the school-community relationship, curriculum supervision and instruction among others, were experienced across the board by all the headteachers irrespective of their age or their qualification. The study also found out that the problems differed from school to school depending on such factors as school tradition, school-community relations and school environment. This therefore calls for a school headteacher who is well grounded and well trained in school administration.

On the basis of the data collected and analysed, it was recommended that:

1) There is need to educate the parents and the entire school community on the role of the school. One way of doing this is by organizing grass root provisional programmes by the Ministry of Education.
2) Regular and meaningful in-service courses to be organised for headteachers to promote sharing of experiences, finding working solutions to the problems – and providing forums for receiving advise and new information regarding curriculum/policy changes.
3) The roles and duties of the major stakeholders in the school – the Parents/Teachers Association and school committee need to be clearly spelt out to avoid conflicts and to enhance smoother running of the school.
4) Religious differences and community leadership wrangles should be solved amicably to avoid them spilling over to the school via Parents/Teacher Associations and or the pupils thus complicating the work of the headteacher.

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