

The Forms and Modes of Training Received by School Principals before and after Appointment: A Case of Nandi County, Kenya

Chemutai Emily*
P.O. Box 4237 - 30100, Eldoret, Kenya
Email: echemtai18@gmail.com

Kenneth K. Chelimo
Department of Business Management, University of Eldoret, P.O. Box 1125-30100, Eldoret Kenya
Email: kennlimo@gmail.com

Margaret Jerotich Keter
P.O. Box 3903-30100, Eldoret Kenya
Email: margaretketer@yahoo.com

Abstract

Skills and knowledge is a prerequisite for any given activity or labor to be performed. Acquisition of these skills and knowledge are significantly important because most of the functions of an organization cannot be realized without them. Previous studies indicate that experience and level of education are the yard stick to appointing any principal of a secondary school from professional teachers. Despite the fact that they are professionally trained as teachers, they carry out educational management roles, which are meant for professionally trained Human Resource Managers (HRM). To this end these Principals require some training on the new roles they take up after getting the new appointment. This study thus sought to identify the forms of training and the mode used in training the School Principals in Nandi County, Kenya. The study used a Survey research design with a target population of 140 secondary school principals drawn from Nandi County. Census sampling was used to select the study sample. Data collection was done using self-administered questionnaires after which Coding of responses was done using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) for windows Version 16. Analysis of the data was done through descriptive statistics. Data was presented in form of frequency tables and charts. This paper concludes that Lack of human resource management skills and background of the same make the principals of secondary schools not to realize the need of career development of their staff. From the findings it was noted that majority of these principals are graduate teachers therefore they don't see the need of allowing others to advance their career and skills since all of them are at the same level.

Keywords: Training Levels, Forms of Training, Secondary school, Principals, Appointment.

1. Introduction

Human Resource (HR) is a key component of any organization's senior management team. Though the human resource department is widely known for conducting interviews, explaining company benefits, managing employee relations, providing career development advice and helping in hiring managers with performance and productivity expectations, the profession has a much larger role in business today. There are various pathways one may choose in order to pursue a career in HR that best meets their needs. It is also important to note that HR professionals often progress to higher levels in an organization. (<http://www.shrm.org>)

HR practitioners structure staffing programs to recruit and retain the best employees by making the company competitive in terms of its attractiveness to potential candidates, so that they will choose to accept a position with, and remain working for an employer. In today's competitive environment, human capital management is critically important to remain viable in the global marketplace. (<http://www.shrm.org>)

In secondary schools, there is no HR department therefore it is the principal of the school who is supposed to carry out some of the above HRM responsibilities though he/she may not have trained for the same. It is theoretically possible and maybe even desirable for one person, or a group of people, to assume the leadership functions and another person or group to assume the management functions. Therefore, the principal is the most likely candidate to simultaneously play these two, quite different roles and the successful principal is the one who learns to balance them to improve curriculum, instruction, and other pertinent elements of the school (Achilles *et al.*, 1999)

For the principal to carry out this role simultaneously, he/she should have both the leadership and management qualities which will assist him/her to overcome the challenges they may encounter in the process of management. Most principals do not complete most of the activities that fall under a management role much less those that fall under a leadership role. It is because they are not yet expected to be managers and leaders. Perhaps they have had little or no training and so do not recognize nor understand the importance of their role, or it may be that they have not been supported in their efforts to act as leaders for change in their schools.

To be able to cope with the global challenges and be relevant in the 21st century, the quality of HR staff need to be improved. The enterprise need people who know the business, understand the theory and practice of HR. Those who can manage people effectively and make change happen and have personal credibility and integrity. Sometimes such individuals or talents may already exist within the organization but they must be identified and given additional qualitative training to sharpen their skills. In sum, the HR professionals cannot expand their role in the organization without the requisite expertise considering the current knowledge-driven operating environment. Knowledge is part of learning process. It is the accumulated experience and actionable information that exists within an organization. It is information or the capacity to take action (Nonaka & Tece, 2001).

Formal HR education is becoming increasingly important in today's competitive job market. This increased demand for knowledgeable HR professionals prompts the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) to consider the type of guidance it provides to those considering HR as a profession and the type of formal education one should undertake in order to be appropriately prepared. Just as general management careers can be greatly enhanced with graduate degrees, so can those in the field of HR management. Master's degrees in human resource management whether a Master of Science in HR with coursework in industrial relations, organizational development, organizational behavior or other specialty, or a Master of Business Administration with a concentration in HR are a vital part of preparation for an increasingly complex marketplace. These HR content areas, when taught with a focus on HR competencies and business or policy applications in the workplace, prepare one for the challenges they will encounter daily as an HR professional. (<http://www.shrm.org>)

At a Kenya Secondary School Heads Association annual general meeting in July 2007, principals suggested that the newly appointed heads be trained through Kenya Education Staff Institute so as to make them effective managers (Lucheli, 2007). They further demanded that the position of School principal be professionalized and a clear policy on identification, selection appointment and training of principals be set (Otieno, 2010). Some of these challenges that newly appointed principals face are therefore brought forth by the means through which principals are identified, appointed and trained which do not prepare them to become effective managers. The dominant tradition for identification and appointment of heads has been based on good classroom teaching, active participation in co-curriculum activities and teaching experience which has resulted into ineffective leadership and subsequently a number of challenges in institutional management (Kamotho, 2008; Republic of Kenya, 1988).

The principal as instructional leaders expected to be a person who has had experience as a teacher, a person who understands how children learn and how teachers teach. In the United States, for example, "nearly 90 percent of principals ranked experience as a teacher as 'highly valuable' to their success as a principals" (Doud & Keller, 1999 in Fenwick, 2000). In this case it is clear that the principals of schools are appointed to the job through experience of generally working for more years as a teacher. It should be noted that one becomes experienced only on what he/she has trained on and nothing more. Therefore the idea of the principals being appointed basing on the experience means that they are being appointed to carry out the educational roles only because that is the area they have their experience. There is no consideration whether one has qualities required for one to be a principal. Some of these qualities are acquired through a long period of training. For instance, for one to be a Human Resource Manager which is one of the roles of any principal, one needs to undergo a training of not less than two years which is not the case to different principals of different countries. This makes the principal to face challenges in their process of management and therefore leaving some activities falling under management uncompleted.

2. Methodology

The study was conducted in Nandi County among the existing 140 public secondary school principals. A Survey research design was used in this study because it encompassed a larger coverage area. Therefore it was suitable for the study since all the principals of secondary schools in Nandi County were involved. The study used both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected by use of questionnaires. Secondary data which included analysis of previous studies were used to depict pertinent issues as they existed before the study and as a basis to confirm or contrast findings of the study. Questionnaires were used as research tools to collect data from the sampled respondents. Data cleaning, coding, validation, error checking exploratory analysis, tabulation and finally statistical analysis was done. The analysis was centered on generating descriptive statistical outputs. Descriptive statistical analysis technique was used in data analysis. Presentation of data was done quantitatively in form of tables, graphs and pie-charts to illustrate the description and explanations of the research findings.

3. Results

3.1 Management training of principals after appointment

Organizations are constantly facing new competitive challenges. School managers are hard-pressed to learn the

skills necessary to navigate their business teams around this changing landscape. Training managers on topics such as human resource managements is paramount to an institution's success. This study identifies the management training that the Principals have undergone since their first appointment. Of importance was also how the training was conducted. The study findings indicated that few 11(9.1%) of the principals have not had any management training since employment. The rest have undergone some form of management training.

3.1.1 Forms of Management Training Preferred

After being appointed as the head of a particular secondary school, there is a number of management courses that one is required to attend. This study was therefore carried out to establish how Human Resource management is being incorporated in the management training of principals of secondary schools. It's clear from the statistics that human resource management as a course is not being given preference over financial management and other management courses by the already appointed principals

The major management training undertaken by the Principals is financial management training. The Principals who had undergone financial management were 65(53.7%) while those who had undergone HR management training were (26.4%). Other forms of training were represented by 13(10.7%) as shown in table 1 below. This implies that the most valued thing in schools is the finance and not the human resource which is the capital. The principals are seriously trained regularly on how to manage the finances in the institutions rather than training on the most important and crucial area on managing the human resource. Without the human capital, there is no organization which can survive. Therefore the most important thing for the human resource managers and principals as well is to acquire the knowledge and skills required in order to manage the human resource effectively for the benefit of the organization.

Table 1: Management training attended

Management training	Frequency	Percentage (%)
HR Management	32	26.4
Financial management	65	53.7
Others	13	10.7
None	11	9.1
Total	121	100.0

These findings, while depicting the unpopularity of human resource training, does not rate human resource training as unimportant from the mere fact that financial management is intertwined with financial issues.

3.1.2 Modes/Methods of Training Used

There are multiple modes of conducting training. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages. The method used in conducting training often leads to greater return to investment in training. In this study, the respondents may have undergone the training through seminars or full course training. The study findings indicated that 75 (62.0%) of the respondents went to a seminar while 35(28.9%) went to full course training. The remaining 11(9.1%) are the ones who had not attended any training (2). This implies that the principals who are presumed to be human resource managers do not get adequate training. A professional human resource manager should have attended full training either in diploma, a degree or a master's degree course in Human Resource Management (HRM) which is not less than two years. Attending full training means the HR managers get adequate skills and knowledge which will render their services successful. As indicated by the findings the principals get their training through seminars. This therefore makes them to face numerous challenges as they carry out the human resource roles in their school. The Strategic Training of Employees Model (STEM) offers a methodology to effectively and efficiently design training and career-development programs so that organizations can generate the highest possible output value, given the realization that resources will always be scarce to some extent in all organizations.

Table 2 is a clear evident that majority of the respondents only found some of the management training possible through seminars; full course training and the few who do not apply to any of the mode of training. This implies that majority of the secondary school principals who are human resource managers in their schools do not receive human resource management course in full after their appointment as principals. Therefore it would be hard for them to carry out their HRM roles effectively making them to encounter numerous human resource challenges.

Table 2: The way the training was conducted

Method of training	Frequency	Percent (%)
Seminars	75	62.0
Full course training	35	28.9
Not applicable	11	9.1
Total	121	100.0

4. Discussion

This paper's main objective was to identify the kind of training principals undergo after appointment and to identify prior appointment qualifications. From the study results it is clearly indicated that organizations are constantly facing new competitive challenges. School managers are hard-pressed to learn the skills necessary to navigate their business teams around this changing landscape. Training managers on topics such as human resource managements is paramount to an institution's success. The study findings show that most of the principals have done at least a management course.

The major management training done by most of the Principals is financial management training. The Principals who had done financial management were 65(53.7%) while those who had undergone HR management training were 32(26.4%). These findings, while depicting the unpopularity of human resource training, does not rate human resource training as unimportant from the mere fact that financial management is intertwined with financial issues. This implies that the most valued thing in schools is the finance. In Kenya, school principals ranked school fees and money matters as their principle concerns (Kitavi & Westhuizen, 1997). The principals are seriously trained regularly on how to manage the finances in the institutions rather than training on the most important and crucial area on managing the human resource. Without the human capital, there is no organization which can survive. Therefore the most important thing for the human resource managers, principals included is to acquire the knowledge and skills required in order to manage the human resource effectively for the benefit of the organization.

There are multiple modes of conducting training. The method used in conducting training often leads to greater return to investment in training. The finding of this study indicated that the majority of the respondents seminars 75(62%) were their mode of training. While 35(28.9%) went to full course training. This implies that the principals who are presumed to be human resource managers do not get adequate training. A professional human resource manager should have a full training either through a diploma, a degree or a master's degree course in HRM which not less than two years. Attending full training means the HR managers get adequate skills and knowledge which will render their services successful. As indicated by the findings the principals get their training through seminars. This therefore makes them to face numerous challenges as they carry out the human resource roles in their school.

The Strategic Training of Employees Model (STEM) offers a methodology to effectively and efficiently design training and career-development programs so that organizations can generate the highest possible output value, given the realization that resources will always be scarce to some extent in all organizations.

5. Conclusion

The criterion used in the appointment of principals contributes a lot to most of the challenges facing them as Human Resource Managers. This is because the major qualification for one to be a principal is the experience one has as a teacher. It is closely followed by one being in job group 'M'. Thus whether you have any management skills or not, you qualify to be a principal. After being appointed as a principal, they are then trained on some areas of management. The area most dealt on is the financial management.

It was indicated that a very minimal number of principal attend human resource training. The mode of training the management skills was also not adequate to equip the principals with enough skills and knowledge as most of them used seminars. Unlike a full course training, Seminars cover a specific section in the most limited time and this could not be the most effective for principals as very little may be acquired. All these render the principals to encounter numerous challenges as they carry out their roles as human resource managers.

6. Recommendation

The ministry of education should either have the principals of secondary schools be trained as human resource managers after appointment or have a human resource management office in all secondary schools.

The author also recommends that the principals can be trained through in-service courses for those who are already principals. For the rest, human resource management courses should be a compulsory to anybody who intends to train as a teacher. This will ensure that in future, anybody appointed as a principal is well equipped with knowledge and skills in HRM. This will reduce the challenges faced by the principals as they manage the human resources in their institutions.

Skills related to human resource management should be one of the mandatory requirements in the appointment of principals.

Human resource management course should be introduced to any teacher training college to allow them train holistically as HRM. This will ensure that anybody who has trained as a teacher will have skills and knowledge to handle any human resource management challenge in case they are appointed to be principals.

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