

Strategies Applied by the Board of Management to Enhance Students Academic Performance in National Examinations in Secondary Schools in Mandera County, Kenya

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Abstract

The thrust of the study was to examine the strategies applied by Board of Management to enhance students' academic performance in National Examinations in secondary schools in Mandera County. The study was premised on the Goal Path Leadership Theory propounded by Martin Evans and Robert House (1970) which contends that people are satisfied by their work if they believe that their work will lead to things that are highly valued. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was conducted in all five public secondary schools in Mandera County of North Eastern Province. The study involved a survey design of the five secondary schools in the district. Purposive sampling technique was used to draw 5 principals and 30 members of the Board of Management in the selected schools to yield a sample size of 35 subjects to participate in the study. Focus group guideline for members of Board of Management was the main research instrument used to collect data. The qualitative approach involving thematic analysis was used to manage data. The study established that most of the members of the Board of Management lacked requisite knowledge and skills to manage these institutions as a result of their low level of formal education. As a result, there were challenges including: lack of monitoring of most decisions made by the Board; frequent political interference especially from powerful politicians and members of the provincial administration; general school mismanagement; amongst others. These challenges impacted negatively on students' academic performance in the study locale. It was recommended that members of the Board of Management should be appointed on merit and provided with appropriate managerial training; proper communication and monitoring of crucial decisions made by the Board ; and optimal utilization of available physical and human resources geared towards enhancing students academic performance in the study locale of Mandera County.(305 words).

Keywords: Managerial skill, Board of Management, Challenges, Secondary education, Academic Performance; Mandera County, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Until of recent, the heated debate on management of school principals and teachers and Boards of Management for effective implementation of curriculum to yield high quality educational output has received top priority not only in most sub-Saharan African countries but also in Kenya (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2014). Quality of education measures using academic and no-academic indicators in secondary education in Kenya is neither achievable nor sustainable without the continuous assessment of these indicators on how they influence the delivery of quality education by school systems in the country. Demand for educational quality is also increasing, as the Government of Kenya views the satisfactory performance of her basic education systems not only instrumentally but also strategically in relation to economic development and international competitiveness (Republic of Kenya/UNESCO, 2012).

The Basic Education Act 2013 gives the Boards of Management responsibilities to run schools under their area. According to section 59(a-f) of the New Education Act, the functions of the Board of Management (BoM) include:

Promotion of the best interests of the institution and ensure development; promote quality education for all pupils in accordance with the standards set by the Act or any other law; Ensure and assure the provision of proper and adequate physical facilities for the school; determine causes of pupils indiscipline and make a report to the County Education Board; facilitate and ensure the provision of guidance and counseling to all learners ; encourage the learners, teachers and no-teaching staff and others, parents and community , and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution, amongst others.

From the foregoing citation, it is clear that the Government of Kenya recognizes the critical role of the Board of

Management by prescribing very critical functions that are central to facilitating the academic development of the school and quality academic output. Thus, it is arguable that management and leadership styles are very important for the running of the various organizations. In line with this argument, Ball (1987) identified the following leadership and management styles that emerged in the course of his research in British secondary schools: the interpersonal, managerial style, adversarial and the political style or authoritarian style. He describes interpersonal head teachers as being typically mobile and visible with a preference for consulting with individuals rather than holding meetings. They like to “sound out ideas” and gather opinions. Such head teachers will frequently reiterate to teachers the importance of bringing complaints and grievances to them first of all. Ball (1987) pointed out that this type of leadership style is particularly effective at satisfying teacher’s individual needs, and that grievances and staff turnover tends to remain low. On the other hand, he continues to argue that head teachers with managerial styles adopt a leadership style that parallels that of a manager in an industry:

Nonetheless, it is imperative to note that the use of management techniques involves the importation into the school structures, types of relationships and processes of organizational control from the factory. The managerial head is chief executive of the school, normally surrounded by a Senior Management Team (SMT). The head teacher relates to the staff through this team and through a formal structure of meetings, Board of Management (BoM) and various school committees (Nsubuga, 2008).

While Oyetunyi (2006) observes that participative style of management is the most effective. He further indicates that coercive management style is the least effective in most situations, as workers are always emotionally affected by intimidation and therefore, the school climate is affected negatively. Naturally when the climate is negative, teaching and learning is impaired and hence the resultant academic performance is poor. Ball’s (1987) research revealed several deficiencies of a managerial leadership style including a sense of exclusion from decision-making on the part of those teachers who are not part of the SMT, the creation of a “them and us” hierarchically-based division, and teachers’ derision for the management structure and its processes. The adversarial leadership style is typified by confrontational dialogue between the head teacher and the teachers. Improved students’ learning and achievement is strongly related to the way in which schools are managed.

When the BoM functions well, the school is well supervised and performs well. The BoM is important in the governance and management of the school for several reasons which include, but are not limited to, the following: liaising with the head teachers in upholding the culture of the school, maintaining school ethics and discipline and management of school funds, management of the general welfare of the school’s staff and learners, soliciting support for the school from the community and developing the quality and standards of education (Nsubuga, 2008). Although some aspects of management such as instructional, administrative, democratic and bureaucratic leadership and management styles are always good, coercive and authoritative management styles are always not conducive. It is against this background that this study was prompted and delved into an examination of the strategies applied by the Board of Management to enhance education of secondary schools and their impact on KCSE performance in Mandera County in view of the different managerial styles and skills of the Board members.

The State of the Art Review

Secondary schools come under the purview of one or several central ministry and regional offices. In addition to these offices, all Sub-Saharan African governments have created and regulated local governance structures, which generally fall into two categories: (i) government-appointed high school governing boards or high school education boards, and (ii) participatory structures comprising, in the main, members of the local community. The latter, most often, consist of school management committees (SMCs) and parent-teacher associations (PTAs). For each of these groups, membership size, responsibilities of members, and the nature of the activities are all regulated. There are, however, occasionally overlapping functions and constituencies. There are also, on occasion, insufficiently articulated relationships between these groups (World Bank, 2008).

In the colonial times, management of education in Kenya was highly decentralized with European, Asians and African community having their own educational systems managed differently and in different bodies (Sifuna, 1990). After independence, the education Act cap 211 (1968) repealed the 1952 education Act and centralized the opportunities throughout the republic. After independence, the Kenya education commission (Republic of Kenya, 1965, 2012a) was set to advise the government on the formulation of educational policies. This came up with the national goals of education and influenced the formation of school communities and PTA’s to assist management of schools and foster greater understanding between teachers and parents.

Sifuna (1990) argues that management of education in Kenya before independence was ineffective, because it fell in the hands of the missionaries who lacked financial resources, qualified teachers and acceptable curriculum. In 1924, the Philips Stokes Commission recommended establishment of Local Native Councils and the challenges of the government to be committed to encourage education at all levels. In 1958, boards of governors were appointed in all government secondary schools. However these BoMs became ineffective as pointed out by

the report of the Kenya Education Commission (1964) chaired by Ominde “as a result of rapid increase in the number of schools. There arose higher demand for school governors and since many Africans lacked formal education, some of the schools ended up being governed by BoMs that were inexperienced.

Education in the early years was seen as an economic rather than a social service. The second Development Plan (Republic of Kenya, 1975) after independence was equally full of enthusiasm and hope. At this time, the early vision was to expand enrolment at all levels to meet social and economic needs of the society for the good development. A major management burden that manifested itself quite early was the issue of high cost demanded by secondary education. This is precisely what made BoGs to plan a head of the government by starting to put up physical facilities which the government did not have the capacity and need (Republic of Kenya, 1989). Due to the economic constraints the government deliberately shifted most of the burden of school management to the communities through the BoGs and the parents. Although the above reviewed literature will help the proposed study in shedding more light on the challenges facing BoG members in the management of secondary schools in Mandera County, it is also evident that no specific study has been done to explore these challenges in Mandera County.

The current system of management puts the management of education in the hands of the Ministry of Education. Under the minister is the permanent secretary who is the accounting officer of the ministry and under him is the education secretary and five directors of education. These include Director Education (DBE), Director Higher Education (DHE), Director Technical Education (DTE), Director Quality Assurance and Standard (DQAS) and Director Policy Placing (DPP). At the province is the Provincial Director of Education (PDE) and at the District level is the District Education Officer (DEO). At institutional level, secondary and teacher training colleges are managed by board of governors and school management boards (Magaju, 2005).

Since independence rapid growth of secondary school education has been realized in terms of enrolment. By year 2003 student’s enrolment had increased by about 1.3 million, that is, from 5.9 million in the year 2003 to 7.2 million since the free primary education was introduced at the beginning of the 2003 (Waweru, 2005). Education budget has also gone up. This growth has posed some serious challenges to the BoM’s. BoGs have a critical role to play in determining the intellectual health of our nation through their personal management styles, provision of effective leadership and utilization of the resources at their disposal.

Every board has a constitution which provides the basic guidelines and the legal framework for its operation. In Kenya, the constitution of the Board of Governors derives its powers from the education Act (1968) chapter 211. The education Act stipulates clearly the composition of the membership of the Board, constitution and functions of BoMs and the powers and the seal of the board. At the secondary level, the BoGs are charged with management and not governorship (Koech, 1999). The education Act, 211 (1968) provides for appointment of BoMs by the minister for education and are answerable to the education secretary through director of higher education on matters concerning management of secondary schools.

According to Koech (1999) the roles of the BoGs as specified by the education Act 1968 revised (1980) include:

- i. Drawing school policy and articulating the government’s policy on education in the school
- ii. Raising and controlling school finances
- iii. Development of the school
- iv. Admission of students
- v. Discipline of the teachers and students
- vi. General coordination of the school.

Koech adds that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has delegated some duties to the BoG as her agent. They recruit and recommend disciplinary measures on its behalf. Recently, many schools have been rocked into mismanagement practice ranging from financial misappropriation, students unrest, and examination cheating among others. At some point there has been some political interferences with the management of some schools in the country. It is therefore evident that the BoGs have a bigger role to play in the management of secondary schools and these roles also attract a number of challenges which needs to be investigated. This is because performance in KCSE which is the dependent variable directly depends on the managerial skills and styles used by the BoG.

At a minimum, the concept of governance of secondary education begins by understanding the structure and functions of the system; the education vision and legislation which guides the system’s structure, content, objectives, funding, and access; and the roles and responsibilities of the staff in the offices that support those functions and objectives at all levels. There is no ideal configuration for an education ministry or for its decentralized offices. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the tradition of highly centralized governments has tended to concentrate authority in central ministries. The process of decentralization is distributing these responsibilities differently; over the last decade there has been movement towards locating responsibilities for planning and policy at the central level and moving management functions to regional levels (for example, Botswana and Senegal). Whatever the degree of decentralization, some conditions are critical for effective governance: i) the assignment of responsibilities and authority should be clear and avoid overlap and gaps; and ii) staff should be

selected or elected on the basis of demonstrated competence and be trained for specific job responsibilities (World Bank, 2008).

According to Nyaga (2003), management is the utilization of physical and human resources through cooperation efforts in order to realize the established areas. It is accomplished by performing the planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Management in education broadly involves the running of educational institute and includes school finances and business, the schools plant and guidance of teachers and organizing pupil personnel services. Okumbe (1999), defines management as the process of designing developing and affecting educational objectives and resources so as to achieve predefined educational goals. This is supported by the path goal leadership theory which stipulates that management behavior should be motivating or satisfying in order to increase goal attainment (Martins & House, 1970). According to the World Bank (2008), management is often defined quite broadly as the processes and practices designed to realize objectives at all levels of the education system: who carries out what responsibilities, how the various parts of the system communicate with each other, and how 'checks and balances' work among the levels. In theory, education management includes staff in the central ministry, satellite ministry offices at the provincial and district levels, secondary and vocational school, and in school governing boards and parent-teacher associations. The above arguments will be useful in the proposed study since they will help in laying some of the fundamental background and tenets of understanding management issues in secondary schools and the challenges faced by school governing and management bodies like the BoGs' in secondary schools within Mandera County.

In South Africa, the 1996 Schools Act gave decision making power to School Management Teams (SMTs) defined as internal management groups that include the principal, deputy head (where there is one) and departmental heads. These groups are responsible for daily and annual management and decision making. The Schools Act also created School Governing Bodies (SGBs) that include the principal and elected representatives of parents, teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. In South Africa, as in Zambia and Kenya, conflicts arise between governance bodies. Money is often the source of friction, as South African parents fund approximately half of all expenditures in most government-aided schools and they battle with SGBs and SMTs over school management. Financial support also creates friction between the churches and other religious and social groups (known as foundation bodies) that contribute funds and other support to the majority of government aided schools in South Africa and the Ministry of Education. Foundation bodies have no formal responsibilities for governance and management, but their financial contribution gives them some claims on schools. School management is therefore complex for school heads because multiple sources of finance create multiple senses of ownership. The problems of managing a complicated governance structure appear to be very similar (Bennell & Sayed 2002). The above observation will be useful since it will help in giving some insights on the managerial styles which leaders or managers apply in school management in order to realize effective control and management of the institutions which they head.

As pointed out earlier, in Kenya the education Act (1968) revised (1980) defines the functions of BoG, however it has also been observed that most of the board members do not measure up to this as they lacked financial prowess and others have vested interests in the procurement of supplies. Dawson (2008) and Mahoney (1988) have highlighted the importance of proper education qualification in the managerial efficiency of schools. These studies established that some members of BoGs were incompetent in school management because majority of them were not learned and as such their services were not found to be useful in the schools. It is out of these problems and the realization that there is scarce literature on the challenges facing BoG members in the management of schools in Mandera West that this proposed study seeks to examine the impact of these challenges on the academic performance of secondary school students in Mandera County, North Eastern Province of Kenya.

Administration is a very important concept in the development of education. For education to achieve its stated goals, the administrative structure and operation must be clear and practical (Apiyo, 2003). Eshiwani (1993), states that the role of educational administration is the direction, control and management of all matters pertaining to education. Direction, he said deals with school and community leadership in general, which is centered in curriculum development, supervision of class instruction and training of teacher. Control and management deal with the implementation of educational goals and plans. Since the attainment of independence, in 1963, Kenya has given a lot of emphasis to the promotion of quality education. This was at the realization that Kenya needed skilled manpower to fill in the part left by colonialist. Sound administration is comparative to quality education and hence the need for head teachers to be effective in the performance of their role.

Submission given to the commission of inquiry into the education system of Kenya chaired by Koech (1999) observed that the head teachers who are well versed with management are also essential for successful curriculum implementation, effective and efficient management and administration of schools (Republic of Kenya,2012a).The commission heard that many head teachers had not been trained in management and administration and were therefore ineffective and lacking in accountability (Apiyo 2003). The foregoing above will be useful in laying the foundation upon which the managerial skills of the Board of Governors in secondary

schools in Mandera County will be assessed.

Dean (1995) in an attempt to define school effectiveness states that the basic criteria for defining effectiveness are what happens to the children in the school and how they perform. She went on to say that as a head teacher one has to work through people, so effectiveness in this sense is concerned with the ability to manage and motivate people and to organize the work of school so that children, as much as possible can benefit. Therefore, for good academic performance to be realized, head teachers must apply the required competencies on the relevant task which is in line with the path goal leadership theory.

Academic performance is crucial to the effective administration. In Holmes and Wyne (1989) view, the school effectiveness research assumes that primacy is to be given to academic work and character development. They suggest that one possible explanation of the effective school research is that effective schools are those where the principal and teachers subscribe to the value of criteria attested to the effective school expectation, a focus on learner, effective use of time, safe and orderly environment, use of consistent discipline, rewards for performance and involvement of the community. From the foregoing, it is clear that effectiveness is the ability to draw together a community of people in pursuit of a common goal. It requires the competencies to stimulate, motivate, direct and influence as well as providing an organ with the necessary support to members of the institution. The effective leader draws together a community of people in pursuit of a common goal. It requires the competencies to stimulate, motivate, direct and influence as well as provide an organ with the necessary support to members of the institution. The effective leader draws together the parts of the organ and ensures that they all contribute to shared items.

Apiyo (2003), argues that school exists in and for the community. The way the head teacher conducts the school activities in relation to members of the community like parents' body, Board of Governors and local opinion leaders will determine the kind of support received and a reflection on whether the school will succeed or not. In relation to the BoG, Dean (1995), states that "as a head teacher, you need to work with governors. This is a role for which heads normally have little preparation or training yet it is very important one and is becoming increasingly so. You need to carry governors with you in making changes and this may be difficult partly when you are first appointed". Deans work will be useful to this study since it will help in shedding light on how working relationship between the head teachers and the BoG members not only affect the running and management of schools but also academic performance of the students.

Ukeju (1992) noted that administrative management which was practiced in the late 19th Century and early 20th Century following assumptions of scientific management theory were interested in ascertaining whether students were learning, that is, finding out the extent to which teachers were doing their job and not necessarily in helping to improve either teachers or teaching. In consonance with the assumption of the scientific theory, teachers were taken as tools of the organ and so had to do exactly what they were told to do. Omoka (1980), in her study of primary head teachers and time allocation for instruction, supervision and other school duties asserts that school administration is a complex and difficult task in which a lot of time is wasted because goals and priorities are not clearly stated. In tandem with the argument advanced by Omoka (1980), the Ministry of Education reiterated that a skillful administrator is one who is effective in improving the quality of his work in school. He is prepared to set goals, make policy, plan, appraise effectiveness, coordinate other personnel and give maximum cooperation for the good of the school system. Therefore, as the secretary to the BoG, the principals are also stakeholders as far as the general management of school is concerned as well as the academic performance of the students.

Globally, the education management of today is not an exact replica of their counterparts of past years. The challenges are bound to tax the abilities of education managers than people at any other level. Education managers of yester years had to deal with some change but change was not at a rapid pace, scope or range as evident in more recent years; and that promises to continue from at least the rest of this century (Gathira, 2008). The ultimate goal is to improve school management as postulated by Schaeffer (1990) that 'improving the quality of education is a major goal of most nations in the developed and developing world.

In 2001, the TSC decentralized recruitment and selection of teachers to various Primary School Boards (PSBs), Board of Governors and District Education Boards (DEBs). The new strategy was meant to give schools and DEB's control over their staff by ensuring that local communities got the opportunity to manage their local education resources and contribute significantly in teachers' employment. This liberated TSC from the task of conducting interviews and employing from the headquarters. Of critical importance was to ensure fair distribution of teachers by ensuring that high teacher turnover was to be based on the needs of the schools and districts leading to proper utilization of teachers (Republic of Kenya, 2012b).

In spite of the effort to delegate some of the TSC teacher management functions, to the agents, concerns for improved efficiency of the developed system of management have been raised. Some includes; the recruitment, selection and deployment system of teachers and lack of specific regulation on the roles of BoGs' Parents Teachers Associations (PTA's) and school committees in monitoring teacher performance (Gathira, 2008, TSC Mwalimu Welfare Association 2002). Since 2001, when the first recruitment and selection through BoGs started,

Kenyan citizens for example applicants, politicians, Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT) and Kenya Union of Post Primary Education Teachers (KUPPET) have often given their sentiments of dissatisfaction with the way the human resource practices are conducted by the BoGs (Daily Nation 29/8/2002). These observations will be useful to the current study since they will inform the impact of the challenges faced by BoGs on the academic performance of secondary students in Mandera County.

Leadership and academic performance of students

In Kenya, the success of both secondary schools and students is mainly gauged by their performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Exams-KCSE (Njiru, 1999). Research shows that students' academic achievement in schools is mainly dependent upon environmental and personal factors of students. However, these factors will be significantly influenced by the head teacher's leadership styles, management and effectiveness (Eshiwani, 1993, Okumbe, 2001). The students' personal factors include their intelligence, decision made, discipline and personal goals. Apart from headteachers' leadership, the second environmental factor that influences students' academic achievement in KCSE examination includes teachers. Teachers who are academically qualified and professionally trained are assets in the learning process. Thus the staff must be appropriately qualified and adequate in number to assist students realize high academic performance. Similarly, there is need for teaching and learning materials. The availability of relevant books and other learning materials is crucial in helping the teachers to make each subject less abstract and assisting individual students to learn better (Ochiel, 2008). According to Ochiel (2008), this is likely to improve the academic achievement and performance of the students. He further argues that proper financial management assists schools to acquire and utilize the scarce resources towards the achievement of the set goals. As one of the bodies in charge with the support and governance of schools, it will be important to examine how the BoG's undertake these responsibilities and how it overcomes a number of challenges associated with the task of management in secondary schools in Mandera County.

The literature reviewed above indicates that some studies have been undertaken on the challenges faced by Board of Governors in general. Some of these challenges include, for example inefficient management skills and style, recruitment of teachers, indiscipline among students and some teachers as well as raising and controlling school finances among others. However, there are several gaps which the review has identified and which require scholarly attention. One of the specific gaps includes examining the challenges faced by BoGs in the management of secondary schools and their impact on KCSE performance in Mandera County. Similarly, issues and challenges faced by the BoG in raising and controlling finances as well as the general coordination of the schools in Mandera County have not been adequately addressed. This study, therefore, addresses some of these gaps by looking at some of the impacts of the challenges faced by BoGs on the academic performance of secondary school students in Mandera County of Kenya. Indeed, the works, which have been reviewed above are just a selected few. There is thus little doubt that, from the foregoing reviews, very little research has been undertaken to specifically interrogate the challenges faced by the BoGs on the academic performance of secondary school students in Mandera County of Kenya. This study utilizes the numerous sources in related fields to harness relevant data in order to address this hiatus. This is the gap which this study intends to fill.

Statement of the Problem

It is the right of every child in Kenya to have, not only basic education, but also quality education regardless of gender, religion, ethnicity or geographical region. This quality has to come with better management in schools. However, the problem of proper school management especially in Mandera County has not been adequately addressed. Managerial problems have been heightened with the introduction of free primary education without a corresponding expansion of resources in secondary schools. Similarly, Mandera County being in Arid and Semi Arid Land (ASAL) has some unique problems which have affected the running and management of schools. These problems, for instance lack of good managerial skills among others, therefore, need to be examined because they have a profound effect on the performance of secondary school students in examinations within Mandera County as well as in the proper management of schools. Because of the remote nature of the area, no specific studies have been done to explore the challenges faced by BoGs in Mandera County. This study, therefore, explores and examines the challenges faced by BoG members in the management of secondary schools and how these challenges not only affect the academic performance of secondary school students in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Mandera County but also the overall organization of schools in the entire Mandera County. Such an approach to the challenges faced by BoG members has never been undertaken in Mandera County. This problem therefore needs to be addressed urgently.

1.3 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the challenges faced by BoG members and how these challenges impact on KCSE performance among students in secondary schools within Mandera County. The study had three fold objectives namely :

- i. To find out the challenges BoGs are facing in carrying out their duties towards the development of schools in Mandera County.
- ii. To examine the management skills of BoG members of secondary schools and its impact on the academic performance (KCSE) of secondary school students in Mandera County.
- iii. To solicit for suggestions regarding appropriate ways of solving the challenges faced by BoGs in secondary schools in County

The Theoretical Framework

The research was premised on the Path Goal Leadership Theory proposed by Martin Evans and Robert House (1970) which argues that people are satisfied with their work and will work hard if they believe that their work will lead to things that are highly valued. The theory emphasizes that the managerial behavior should be motivating or satisfying to the extent that it increases goal attainment by subordinates and clarifies the path to these goals. It further points out that the effectiveness of a leader depends on the managerial styles that the leader employs. This, in turn, will depend on the situation. The management styles include directive leadership, supportive leadership, achievement-oriented leadership and participative leadership. The theory further points out that the effectiveness of a leader is affected by the prevailing environmental and situational factors.

This theory is relevant to this study because the effectiveness of Board of Management are affected by situational factors like inadequate classrooms, dormitories, teaching/learning resources and managerial skills and styles the leader poses. These act as barriers to the achievement of the goal by the Board of Governor. The theory was therefore employed in examining how inadequate resources and managerial skills inform either good or bad management of schools in Mandera County

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research to examine the strategies being applied by Boards of Management to enhance education quality in their respective schools. According to Orodho (2012), this kind of design is concerned with gathering facts and obtaining perfect precise information concerning the current state of phenomena and whenever possible making conclusion for the facts discovered. The research was carried out in five secondary schools in Mandera County, Kenya.

The study population included one boys' boarding secondary school and one day mixed secondary school in Banisa division. Similarly, the study also included one mixed day secondary school, one boys' boarding secondary school and one girls' boarding secondary school in Takaba division respectively. All the five secondary schools in the entire Mandera County were considered for the study. Purposive and snowball sampling techniques were utilized to draw 7 out of 13 key members of the Board of Management from each of the five schools, yielding a sample of 35 BoM members. It was ensured that the principals in the sampled schools were part of the sampled population. The BoM's representing each school for the studies were identified through the use of a purposive and snowball sample techniques because of the diverse abilities of members with specific information relevant to the study objectives as suggested by Brooks (2013) and Orodho (2012).

A focus group discussion (fgd) guideline was used to generate information from the BoM members due to the fact that they had limited formal educational background. There were a total of 7 BoM members forming each focus group session in each school. The research team conducted five sessions of fgds in each school on dates pre-arranged through the school principal. Validity of research tool was sought through non-statistical methods, relying on the input provided by academic members of staff in the Department of Educational Management, Policy and Curriculum Studies, School of Education, Kenyatta University, Kenya. After gathering data, analysis was done using interview transcription and thematic analysis. The data was organized thematically and reported it in direct quotes and narrative form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges BoMs are facing in the development of schools

The researcher asked the respondents about the challenges facing the board and the entire administration in management and development of schools. In response to this question, the respondents in one focus group reported that:

Apart from financial constraints, most board members did not know their roles as members of the Board of Management. They went on to state that due to the general low literacy level in the study locale, most members, especially females were semi-illiterate and had not attended any management courses. The male participants hardly allowed the females to make any meaningful contribution in board meeting due to cultural norms.

In one school, it was pointed out that political interference in the appointment and management of schools was very rampant. In a paraphrased version of this, it was reported that:

There is constant political interference as narrated by the fgd at one girl's secondary school in the District. The principal and Board members lamented that they had recommended a teacher for appointment as deputy principal only for an influential politician from the area to interfere with the process ending up with the appointment of an un-resourceful person who could manage a school. Poor attendance or complete lack of attendance to meetings by board members due to laxity or engagement in other commitments was also common in most schools.

There interference by powerful members of the provincial administration was also reported in some schools visited. It was vividly reported that:

... as the powerful officers in provincial administration, they on many occasions overturn an important decision made by the entire board. This made members of the board afraid of being victimized by these same officers. There was also the lack of follow up mechanism on implementation of decisions due to poor record keeping abilities.

The other unique challenge had to do with the delicate issue of tribal and ethnic balancing. This issue was stressed in several fgd sessions. The general impression was that:

... tribal and ethnic balancing while nominating board members and overstaying in one school by some principals hence complacency. Any decisions that did not favour a specific ethnic group or political divide were opposed for the sake of ensuring that their side of bargain is satisfied.

The foregoing was posing a challenge at a time when the Basic Education Act 2013 as very unequivocal regarding the issue of tribal balancing. The Section 57(2) of the Basic Education Act 2013 stipulates that in appointing persons as members of a board, the nominating and appointing authority should observe and respect ethnic and regional diversity of the peoples of Kenya; and should also be impartial and be cognizant of gender equity. This section of the Act was meant to ensure that decisions should be fair to all and defuse any ethnic or tribal differences in making critical decisions regarding the management of schools.

Management skills of BoM members and its impact on the academic performance

The researcher asked respondents in each of the fgds to state whether there was any relationship between management of school and academic performance. In response to this, all fgds in all schools participating in the study agreed that progress in any learning institution depends on proper management of schools.

The message that predominantly came out from two leading schools in the District was that:

...by directly interacting with the students and involving them on issues that affect them directly, a slow but positive change in academic performance was noticed in affected schools. The performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams changed because the entire school management which includes the principal and all board members showed concern toward the plight of the students and the entire staff.

It was also revealed that excellent management strategies invariably utilized the school resources towards realization of school objectives and goals. This was emphatically put by one fgd session that averred:

If board members constantly meet the students and their teachers to share ideas and advice them, it builds a harmonious relationship between teachers, students and the entire support staff and this is healthy for the students and as it helps them even work harder to pass examinations.

The overall goal of this study was to find out the extent to which the school management by BoM affects academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education of the students. Two fgd sessions concurred that:

Management strategies that attempt to keep constant track performance and rewarding teachers for good results achieved by students was observed to improve their future performances. How do we expect the teachers to perform well unless their efforts are recognized and adequately rewarded?

This finding confirms what Dean (1995) found that in an attempt to define school effectiveness states that the basic criteria for defining effectiveness is what happens to the children in the school and how they perform. She went on to say that as a head teacher one has to work through people, so effectiveness in this sense is concerned with the ability to manage and motivate people and to organize the work of school so that children, as much as possible can benefit. Therefore, for good academic performance to be realized, head teachers must apply the required competencies on the relevant task which is in line with the path goal leadership theory.

The other fgd from another school board also gave the following suggestion regarding deployment and recruitment of support staff:

When BoM members intervene by employing PTA teachers to supplement the efforts

made by TSC employed teachers will reduce the problem of shortage of teachers. Furthermore, the BoM should oversee the implementation of various policies proposed by the ministry of education and other stakeholders pertaining to students' welfare as well as academic welfare.

With regards to the impact of management on academic performance of students, fgd revealed that: Although better managerial skills employed by BoM members have led to better performance by students in their KCSE in Mandera West, some of the outcomes of the bad managerial skills in some schools within the study area revealed that these bad managerial skills also impacted negatively on the school performance in KCSE. For instance, some BoM members influencing the intake of below average students to acquire chances in secondary schools managed by these board members.

The foregoing citation indicates that political interference as well as poor management can be held responsible for the falling academic standards in the County. In fact it was further noted that this tendency led to enrolling and admission of some indiscipline and academically weak students chased away from other schools whose poor academic records affected the average mean scores of certain schools in KCSE. The head teacher relates to the staff through this team and through a formal structure of meetings, Board of Governors (BoGs) and various school committees (Nsubuga, 2008).

The findings of this study are in tandem with other researchers such as Oyetunyi (2006), and Ball (1987) regarding the significance of teamwork in management. While Oyetunyi (2006) observes that participative style of management is the most effective, Goleman et al. (2002) indicates that the authoritative-coercive management style is the least effective in most situations, as workers are always emotionally affected by intimidation and therefore, the school climate is affected negatively. Naturally when the climate is negative, teaching and learning is impaired and hence the resultant academic performance is poor. Ball's (1987) concurs and adds that research has revealed several deficiencies of a managerial leadership style including a sense of exclusion from decision-making on the part of those teachers who are not part of the SMT, the creation of a "them and us" hierarchically-based division, and teachers' derision for the management structure and its processes.

Suggested Strategies of solving the challenges faced by BoMs

In mitigation and solution to some of these problems, the respondents suggested the following ways and mechanism to overcome the problems:

1. Involve the members of BoM who have vast knowledge in management in supervisory duties in curriculum implementation, development and regular meeting between principal and teachers in planning strategies to enhance students' academic performance. This suggestion was in line with the Education Act, section 59 (m) which stipulates that the BoM should encourage the learners, teachers and non teaching staff and others, parents and community, and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution (Republic of Kenya, 2013:255).
2. Ensure active participation of BoM in resource mobilization. They should jointly request for the allocation of funds for infrastructure to realize conducive learning environment private NGOs, CDF etc. This suggestion is also in line with the provisions of the Basic Education Act 2013 which stipulates that one of the functions of BoM is to ensure provision of proper and adequate physical facilities for the institution (Republic of Kenya, 2013:254).
3. Put in place appropriate structures in schools that ensure transparency, proper communication, training and capacity building of all members involved in management. The BoM members should be undergoing management training through the Kenya Educational Staff Institute (KEMI).
4. There should be regular Staff development programme for teachers and the principals. Teachers should be promoted on merit and not on ethnicity and if appointed as principal, should not overstay in a school.
5. Quality assurance at the district education office should be enhanced and board members must be people of high integrity.

From the foregoing suggestions, it is clear that the members of BoM who took part in the study have varied suggestions that could be used to enhance students' academic performance in the study locale. In fact most of these suggestions are in line with the functions of the Board of Management as spelled out in section 59 (a-f) of the blueprint document(Republic of Kenya, 2013).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

First, with respect to demographic variables influencing school management, the study has also demonstrated that some BoM members were illiterate and did not know their role in the management of schools and were therefore inadequate in executing the planning and implementation of policies within their areas of duty. Similarly, due to their illiteracy and general vulnerability, political interference and interference from the

provincial administration had slowly crept in. This was viewed as another challenge which affected the development of schools in Mandera County. The end result was Lack of follow up mechanisms, due to poor record keeping abilities and poor attendance of BoM meetings, as well as the need to maintain ethnic and clan balance while constituting the BoMs. This had a direct negative impact on management and seen as a challenge which compromised of effective management of the BoMs in the area of study.

Secondly, the study examined the resources available in the schools managed by BoM and how this had helped in drawing up of school policies as well as finding out ways of solving the challenges faced by BoMs in secondary schools in Mandera County. It was evident that the main challenge faced by BoMs in the management of schools in Mandera County was financial constraint which sometimes made the implementation of some policies and running of the school difficult. This financial constraint forced some principals in consultation with the BoM members to close schools earlier than the officially recommended closing dates.

Third, in terms of the management style and procedures used in the coordination of schools, the study has demonstrated that majority of the schools employed democratic styles where decisions are made through consensus and votes among the board members. Although most principals and BoM members used democratic style in management and leadership, it was evident that most BoG members had limited managerial styles in executing their duties and as such most of the coordination work in most of the secondary schools under study was left to the principals of the various schools. This was therefore one of the major challenges that most of the BoGs experienced in the management of schools in Mandera County which translated into bad performance in KCSE in some of the schools studied because of lack of proper coordination with the principals of some schools within the study area. Nevertheless, a number of BoM members have been undergoing some training to improve on their management styles.

Fourth, it was revealed that better management skills were seen to have some direct impact on the academic performance of students in Mandera County. Some of the BoM members used their good management skills to improve KCSE performance by rewarding students who performed well in exams and also rewarding teachers whose subjects scored the highest mean in the school. In contrast, bad management skills was seen to negatively affect KCSE performance in some schools since some BoM members influenced admission of either academically weak students or students who had been expelled from other schools due to indiscipline. Nevertheless, good managerial skills ensured that most schools implemented policies proposed by the Ministry of Education in Mandera County.

Fifth, majority of the schools in this study did not have enough or adequate resources. However, the few schools which had reasonable amount of resources used these resources to assist in the drawing up of the school policies. For instance, the funds received from the government were used in purchasing of text books and laboratory equipments. Some schools also shared their resources with other neighbouring schools and this enhanced the relationships between the neighbouring schools. But also, those schools which did not have enough resources suffered from understaffing, water shortages, lack of adequate classrooms, toilets and adequate funding. These inadequacies affected both the performance of students and the running of the school.

Finally, the study came up with some innovative strategies to counter the challenges faced by BoMs in the management of schools in Mandera County. These strategies were also seen as ways which would positively affect the performance of students in KCSE in the study locale. These included regular meetings and consultation between BoM members, parents and education officials to sort out management issues affecting the BoMs, taking board members for management training and also avoiding the election or incorporation of illiterate person to be members of the BoMs. Similarly, the study suggested that politicians should be discouraged from influencing decisions on the appointment of BoM members; and finally activities of quality assurance and standards officers QASOS should be enhanced at the district level to ensure that management of schools impact positively on the students' performance.

Based on the finding of the study, there is evidence that there are challenges faced by BoM members in the management of secondary schools and this has impact on KCSE performance among students in secondary schools within Mandera County. For deliberate and practical intervention, the study has recommended that:

1. To the schools, there should be regular meetings and thorough consultation with parents, education officials. Supervisory duties in curriculum implementation, development and meeting with principal teachers on student performance.
2. The government should avail funds for infrastructure to realize conducive learning environment. Other funds should be solicited from the private sector, NGOs, CDF etc.
3. The parents should ensure frequent crisis meeting are called by the principal on issues beyond their scope. The parents should be encouraged not to abrogate their duties of being involved in the holistic development of their children by attending academic days and other school meetings such as the annual general meetings.
4. The school should embrace transparency, proper communication, training and capacity building. The principals should take advantage of the training being offered by the Kenya Educational Staff Institute

- and recommend some key members of the Board of Management and support staff such as school bursars to attend and enhance their skills for the benefit of the school.
5. Politicians should be discouraged from influencing decisions on the appointments of BoG members and head teachers through patronage. In appointing persons as members of a board of management, the nominating and appointing authority should strictly follow the guidelines outlined in section 57(2) of the New Education Act, 2013, which stresses the balancing of ethnic and regional diversity of the people of Kenya as well as being cognizant of gender equity.
 6. Teachers should be promoted on merit and not on ethnicity and if appointed as principal, should not overstay in a school.

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