

Challenges Head Teachers Face in the Management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Turkana County, Kenya

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Abstract

The study sought to determine Challenges Head Teachers face in the Management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Turkana County. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a total of 160 teachers selected from 16 public secondary schools. The instrument was tested in three public secondary schools and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study findings perceived lack of parental involvement as the main challenge facing Head Teachers. In light of these findings, the study concluded that Head Teachers are faced with various challenges in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance. It is expected that the key findings from the study will help all stakeholders to collectively develop strategies that will promote improved academic performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County.

Keywords: Challenges, Head Teachers, Management, Performance, Public Secondary

1.0 Introduction

Management and performance are unpredictable and difficult processes to evaluate but they are key indicators to a success or failure of an organization such as a school. It is therefore important to understand the concept of management and performance in regards to the significant role they play in educational organizations. As noted by National College for School Leadership (2003), “management is policy implementation and running of current activities” (as cited by Alkarni, 2014). Performance, however, according to Brumbach (1988) refers to “both behaviors and results, and adjusting organizational behaviors and actions of work to achieve results or outcomes” (as cited by Nsubuga, 2008). Sonnentag and Frese (2002), contend that performance comprises two major aspects; behavioral and outcome respectively. To them behavioral aspect is determined by real work situation and it entails what an individual does in the organization while the outcome aspect is the ultimate consequence or result of the individual’s behavior. In the same vein, Campbell et al. (1993) attest that “performance is what the organization hires one to do and do well” (as cited by Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

Campbell et al. (1993) further attest that “actions which can be measured are considered to constitute performance” (as cited by Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). What Campbell et al. (1993), try to put forward is that performance is the actual valuable results or outcome an organization or individual accomplishes against intended goals or outputs. However Ilgen and Schneider (1991); Motowidlo, Borman and Schmit (1997) have a different view as regards to the meaning of performance and to them, performance should be defined by judgmental and evaluative processes but not by the action itself (as cited by Sonnentag & Frese, 2002).

According to Mbithi (1974), “schools are social organizations with defined rules and procedures that determine the degree of activities and behavior of each member. He further contends that schools are factories in which raw children are to be shaped and finished to meet the various demands of life” (as cited by Yara et al. 2011). Koontz and Weihrich (1988) are of a similar view that “an organized enterprise does not exist in a vacuum; it is dependent on its environment in which it is established”. They contend that inputs (students) from the environment are received by the organization (school), which then transforms them, into outputs (examination results) (as cited by Kyoshaba, 2009).

With the same thought, Maryland State Department of Education (2003) attest that “schools, now more than ever, are challenged to improve to the extent that every effort is made to ensure the success of all students” (as cited by King, 2006). In Kenya, performance and success of a public secondary school is measured by students’ academic performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. Henceforth, Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination results can be used to indicate the overall performance of a school and its students as well as showing to both students and teachers challenges attributed to performance and what ought to be done in order to improve in future external examinations. The present study sought to investigate the challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Turkana County.

1.0 Literature Review

Mwangi (2009) posited that “the implication that leadership matters when it comes to academic performance is generally accepted within educational leadership studies”. However, with a different view, Witziers et. al. (2003) asserted that there is insufficient evidence to support relationship between school leadership with performance. Research study by Marchesi and Martin (2002), on performance in secondary schools reported better use of metacognitive strategies by students in the upper social class than those in the lower social class. This study is in tandem with that of Chepchieng and Kiboss (2004) which reaffirmed the influence of socio-economic status of students on their academic performance. With a similar view, Graetz (1995) contends that “one’s educational success depends strongly on socio-economic status of the parents” (as cited by Kyoshaba, 2009). Moreover, Considine and Zappala (2002) wholly support Graetz (1995) argument by reaffirming that “families where parents are advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster a high level of achievement in their children”.

Aduwa (2004) noted that “students’ home environment, cognitive abilities, self esteem, self concept, study habits and motivation affect their academic success” (as cited by Akinsolu, 2010). A similar study by Wang et al. (1990) posited that “school factors comprising principal instructional leadership, classroom climate, student – teacher interaction and peers’ influence have greater influence towards students’ academic achievement” (as cited by Sim, 2011). With a similar opinion, Aremu and Sokan (2003) asserted that “academic performance is influenced by motivational orientation, self - esteem or self efficacy, emotional problems, study habits, teacher consultation and interpersonal relationships”. No wonder, Wairegi (2009) contends that “learner motivation, socio-cultural and socio-economic background and instructional environment influences learners’ attitude towards learning and ultimate academic achievement in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education” (as cited by Ngesu et al., 2012). These studies suggest that a combination of various factors influence students’ academic performance.

According to Insagedighi (1998), environment influences learners’ academic performance (as cited by Asikhia, 2010). The study reaffirms that learning is not conducive in a learning environment with large number of students in classrooms hence affects students academic performance. Hallack (1990) is in agreement with what Insagedighi (1998) described as “learners’ – environment mismatch” by emphasizing that “unattractive school buildings, crowded classrooms, non-availability of playing grounds and surroundings without aesthetic beauty can contribute to poor performance”. Moreover, Sanoff (2001) noted that, “the physical environment can be considered as the second teacher, since space has the power to organize the educational process and promote the relationship between student and classroom” (as cited by Alkarni, 2014).

Ngala et al., (2005) posit that better utilization of teachers positively influences students’ academic achievement. With a similar thought, Marks and Printy (2003) attest that “school leaders seeking to improve academic performance of their schools often involve teachers in dialogue and decision making”. In the same vein, Harris (2004) asserted that “distributed form of leadership is strongly associated with higher student academic performance”. Moreover, Njeru and Orodho (2003) conclusively reaffirmed that the general academic performance of students’ in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education showed a greater difference in academic achievement.

3.0 Statement of the Problem

Access to basic secondary school education by learners is instrumental as it plays a vital role in laying foundation for further education at subsequent levels; and it is a prerequisite requirement for national, societal and individual development. It is for this reason that performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education measured after the accomplishment of an examination task, remain one of the major goals of a school.

However, it has been noted that while some students in some public secondary schools in Turkana County perform well, others perform below the expected standards. This matter is of great concern among education stakeholders and it has further raised questions concerning schools whose students do not perform well and the challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools.

As the trend in performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County causes concern, it is not yet known why performance of some students falls below the expected standards. There is lack of sufficient evidence in the case of public secondary schools in Turkana County with regard to the challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance. The study therefore intends to ascertain the challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County.

4.0 Theoretical Justification for the Study

The study is anchored on Organizational theory advanced by Getzels and Guba (1957) social model which conceived management as a hierarchical structure made up of super ordinate – subordinate relationships within a social system. The super ordinate - subordinate relationships are both independent and interactive. The hierarchy assigns roles and assists in achieving organizational goals. The theory viewed the school as a social system comprising two major components; the individual and the institution respectively. Individuals have certain personalities and need dispositions that interact to form social behavior while institutions have certain roles and expectations required to fulfill the goals of the social system. In light of propositions advanced by Getzels and Guba (1957) social model, Head Teachers as managers of educational institutions are expected to integrate the demands of institutions and those of staff members in order to achieve improved performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education as well as ensuring that institutional expectations are fully met. Therefore, organizational theory based on the analysis of human social behavior is suitable in explaining the challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

5.0 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represents the relationship between the independent, intervening and dependent variables. In this study, it is conceptualized that independent variable (challenges) have a direct influence on dependent variable (Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance). The intervening variable is caused by independent variable and in itself is a determinant of dependent variable. The conceptual framework for the study has been developed from retrieved literature and related theory.

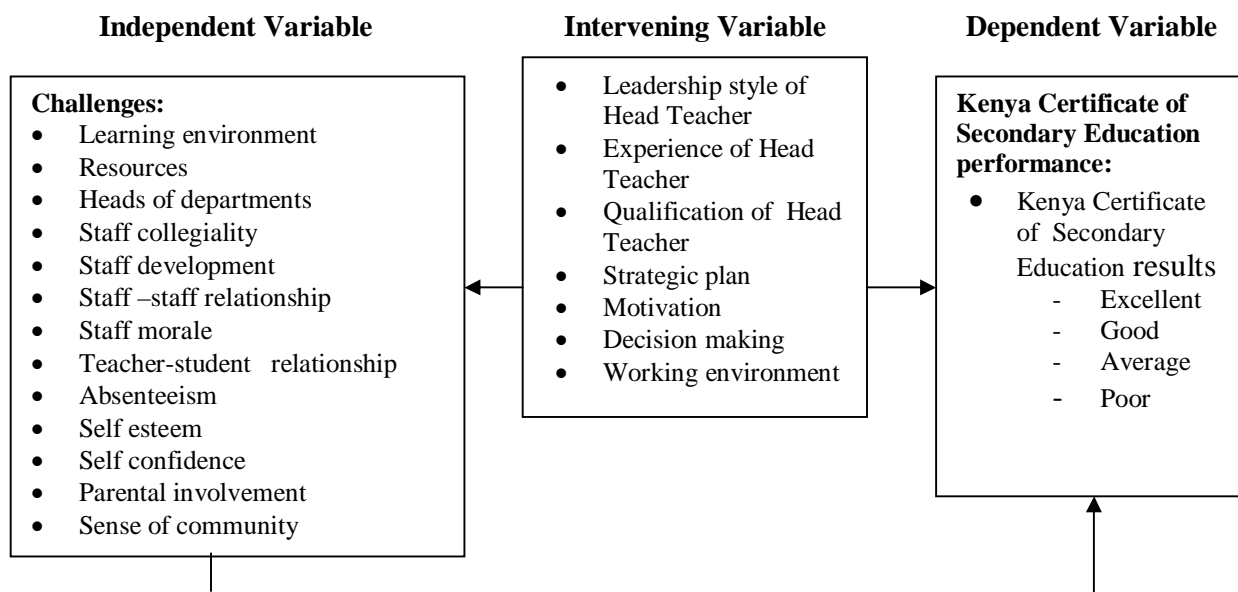


Figure 1: Challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Public Secondary Schools

6.0 Research Question

The study will attempt to answer this research question: What challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County?

7.0 Research Design and Methodology

This study was carried out in public secondary schools in Turkana County. This is because in some public secondary schools, performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations was below the expected standards. The target population comprised 29 public secondary schools with a population of 29 Head Teachers, 213 teachers and 8309 students. The public secondary schools considered in the target population had presented students for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations for a period not less than five years and it comprised 8 Boys, 7 Girls and 14 mixed public secondary schools. The accessible population was teachers in 16 public secondary schools which have presented students for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations for a period of five years and above.

The study collected data from teachers from the sampled public secondary schools in Turkana County. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The researcher's use of descriptive survey was only to determine the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable without manipulating any of the variables. Descriptive survey was also used in the study because it allows for quick data collection at comparatively cheap cost (Grinnell & Richard, 1993).

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) survey involves asking a large group of people questions on a particular issue. The information for the study was obtained from a sample rather than the whole population. Chadwick (2001) and Cochran (1977) reaffirm that Slovenes formula can be used by a researcher to estimate the sampling size. Thus, Slovenes formula for sample size was used to determine the number of schools and teachers to be included in the sample. As illustrated $n = N / \{1 + N[e]^2\}$ where n = sample size, N = total population and e = acceptable error margin of 5% for categorical data. Using this formula, a total of 57 teachers from boys, 38 teachers from girls and 65 teachers from mixed schools were selected randomly from the 16 public secondary schools.

Table 1: Sample size

Type of school	Number of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education schools	Sampled Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education schools	Number of teachers from sampled schools	Sampled teachers
Boys	5	5	67	57
Girls	3	3	42	38
Mixed	8	8	77	65
Total	16	16	186	160

Stratified sampling method was used to determine the number of teachers required for the sample after having been grouped into various strata according to gender, type of school and schools population size. To achieve a proportional allocation, a school was taken as a stratum and the formula adopted by Agresti (2002) for categorical data was adopted. Thus, $n = N_i n/N$ where N_i = Stratum (school) population size, n = Total sample size and N = Total strata (All schools) population size.

8.0 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The content and face validity of the research instrument was determined using expert judgment by research supervisors and the researcher discussing the research items with colleagues in the field of education for proper scrutiny. To establish reliability of the research instrument, piloting was carried out in three public secondary schools that were not considered in the study but shared similar characteristics with schools under study and a reliability coefficient of 0.70 was obtained.

9.0 Results and Discussion

Table 2: Challenges Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance

Challenges	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Physical learning environment is not conducive	42 (26.3%)	58 (36.3%)	6 (3.8%)	27 (16.9%)	27 (16.9%)	160 (100%)
Lack of adequate resources	26 (16.3%)	56 (35.0%)	0 (0.0%)	40 (25.0%)	38 (23.8%)	160 (100%)
Inadequate and ineffective heads of departments	39 (24.4%)	59 (36.9%)	19 (11.9%)	37 (23.1%)	6 (3.8%)	160 (100%)
Lack of collegiality among staff members	24 (15.0%)	70 (43.8%)	22 (13.8%)	41 (25.6%)	3 (1.9%)	160 (100%)
Inadequate staff development	16 (10.0%)	64 (40.0%)	17 (10.6%)	41 (25.6%)	22 (13.8%)	160 (100%)
Poor relationship between members of staff and low staff morale	38 (23.8%)	40 (25.0%)	9 (5.6%)	35 (21.9%)	38 (23.8%)	160 (100%)
Poor relationship between teachers and students	62 (38.8%)	36 (22.5%)	18 (11.3%)	38 (23.8%)	6 (3.8%)	160 (100%)
Chronic absenteeism of teachers and students from school	70 (43.8%)	62 (38.8%)	1 (0.6%)	26 (16.3%)	1 (0.6%)	160 (100%)
Students poor self esteem and lack of self confidence	17 (10.6%)	33 (20.6%)	1 (0.6%)	45 (28.1%)	64 (40.0%)	160 (100%)
Lack of parental involvement	10 (6.3%)	25 (15.6%)	2 (1.3%)	55 (34.4%)	68 (42.5%)	160 (100%)
Lack of a sense of community	15 (9.4%)	32 (20.0%)	14 (8.8%)	55 (34.4%)	44 (27.5%)	160 (100%)
Total	359(20.4%)	535(30.4%)	109 (6.2%)	440(25.0%)	317(18.0%)	1760(100%)

9.1 Physical learning environment is not conducive

When asked whether the physical environment is not conducive, the majority (62.6%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 33.8% either strongly agreed or agreed and 3.8% of the respondents were undecided.

9.2 Lack of adequate resources

On lack of resources most of the respondents (51.3%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 48.8% strongly agreed or agreed.

9.3 Inadequate and ineffective heads of departments

Regarding inadequate and ineffective heads of departments as a challenge Head Teachers face in the management of Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance, the majority (61.3%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 26.9% either strongly agreed or agreed.

9.4 Lack of collegiality among staff members

In relation to lack of collegiality among staff members the majority (58.8%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 27.5% either strongly agreed or agreed while 13.8% of the respondents were undecided.

9.5 Inadequate staff development

With regard to inadequate staff development, majority of the respondents (50.0%) either strongly disagree or disagree, 39.4% either strongly agreed or agreed while 10.6% of the respondents were undecided.

9.6 Poor relationship between members of staff and low staff morale

Concerning whether poor relationship between members of staff and low staff morale is a challenge faced by Head Teachers, the majority of the respondents (58.8%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed whereas 45.7% either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement and 5.6% were undecided.

9.7 Poor relationship between teachers and students

On poor relationship between teachers and students as a challenge, most of the respondents (61.3%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement while 27.6% either strongly agreed or agreed and 11.3% of the respondents were undecided.

9.8 Chronic absenteeism of teachers and students from school

In relation to chronic absenteeism of teachers and students from school as a challenge to Head Teachers, most of the respondents (82.6%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 16.9% either strongly agreed or agreed and 0.6% of the respondents were undecided.

9.9 Students' poor self esteem and lack of self confidence

In relation to students' poor self esteem and lack of confidence as a challenge to Head Teachers, most of the respondents (68.8%) either strongly agreed or agreed and 31.2% either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 0.6% of the respondents were undecided.

9.10 Lack of parental involvement

Regarding lack of parental involvement as a challenge to Head Teachers, the majority of the respondents (76.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed and 21.9% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 1.3% of the respondents were undecided.

9.11 Lack of a sense of community

Concerning lack of a sense of community as a challenge to Head Teachers, the majority of the respondents (61.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed while 29.4% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

10.0 Conclusion

Based on the above findings, it is important to note that teachers generally perceived lack of parental involvement as the main challenge Head Teachers face in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County. This was followed by students' poor self esteem and lack of self confidence; and lack of a sense of community. Comparatively, chronic absenteeism of teachers and students posed the least challenge to Head Teachers in public secondary schools in Turkana County. Conclusively, Head Teachers in public secondary schools in Turkana County are faced with various challenges in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

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