Hindrances of Secondary School Principals to Effective Management of Public Secondary Schools; Gatundu North, Kenya

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Abstract: *The quality of management at the institutional level continues to be a major concern of the Ministry of Education in Kenya. This is because the quality of the school largely depends on its leadership. It is on bases of the above assumption that this study set out to investigate the hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management of public secondary schools in Gatundu North, Kenya. To accomplish this task survey method was used in conducting the study. A total of 13 schools out of 26 were selected comprising of 9 mixed secondary schools, 2 boys schools, and 2 girls secondary schools. Stratified random sampling technique and purposive sampling were employed to identify study sample. A questionnaire and interview were used for data collection. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to data analysis. The study revealed the following hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management: shortage of staff personnel; inadequate school finances; misappropriations of funds, insufficient physical facilities; poor performance in national examinations; lack of support from the local community; and interference in the running of school by the local communities. In conclusion, urgent measures should be put in place so as to minimize the hindrances.*
Key Words: *Hindrances, effective management, public secondary schools, development, implementation of policies.*

I. Introduction

This paper presents findings of a research study carried out in Gatundu North, Kenya to find out the hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management of public secondary schools.

II. Background to the Study

School as a social system is a small society that is situated within the larger one, the community. The school as an organization and has its managers who are in charge of all its functions. To achieve its objectives, proper management practices are required. Form a global perspective, majority of school principals are appointed into offices out of their experience (Balansikat and Gerhard, 2005). In United Kingdom and Switzerland secondary school principals were required to have trained in school management and certification in school.

In Bangladesh, management of education is entirely under the Ministry of Education and is responsible for policy making, planning, directing and controlling all aspects of secondary education (Banglapedia, 2004). He states that Secondary school management is entrusted to the school managing committee under school-based management. In addition the school principal is the secretary to the Board of Governors and the managing director responsible for co-ordination and running daily activities of the school. In Uganda the ministry of Education and Sports requires secondary school principal to be holders of a degree and are responsible for school management.

The history of secondary school management in Kenya can be traced back to the colonial times and in early years of independence when education was highly decentralized as the colonial government controlled education (Sifuna, 1990). In those days, school systems were small and management was relatively easy. The school management was entirely in the hands of missionaries who provided teachers, finances, spiritual and moral guidance. The local communities were involved in the provision of labour for building educational facilities (Olembo, 1992).

At independence following the recommendations by the Kenya Education Commission (1964), the government took over the management of public secondary schools. The report adds that management of education was centralized to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities throughout the Country. Consequently, the government advocated for expansion of all secondary schools (Ominde Report, 1964) leading to increased enrollment and management problems.

This put education under the hands of the Minister of Education with the duty and responsibility of managing and promoting education in line with the national plan for socio-economic development, developing

educational institutions and securing effective co-operation of all public bodies, (Education Act, 1968; 2012). According to the Education (Act 2012) the cabinet secretary of education is responsible for the development and implementation of policies of Education for secondary education. The County Director of Education is responsible for management of secondary education at the county level assisted by sub- count Education officers (Education Act, 2012).

The position of the school principals in Kenya was established under Education Act (2012) and conferred with the responsibility of management of public secondary schools. The school principals are the agents of the Ministry of Education and work in conjunction with them TSC. They were the chief executive officers responsible of promotion of quality education in the schools, protection of all the movable, non-movable properties and ensure security of school finances and grants.

The school principals are also responsible of the day to day running of the schools with full responsibility for internal organization, discipline of the students and supervision of the teaching and non-teaching staff. The school principal is assisted by the deputy Heads of Departments, assistant teachers and the support staff (Education Act 2012). Okumbe (2002) states that the functions of the school principals are to provide assurance that the policies and goals are formulated and that the methods are determined for achievement of the stated objectives.

Okumbe (2007) states that appointment of the school principal is based on training and experience in management. However over 300 secondary schools in Kenya went on strike resulting to destruction of property and millions of shillings protesting against bad management and poor living conditions (Afro News report (2008). Such incidents raise questions and therefore it becomes important for this study to evaluate hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management of public secondary school.

III. Statement of the Problem

Every country's foundation and destiny lies with its people being given quality education. The quality of management especially at institutional level was and continues to be a major concern of the government of Kenya. The school principals were appointed with the express task of managing schools on behalf of the minister. It was assumed rightly and sometimes wrongly that the school principals would be equal to the task, however, this was not always the case as some school principals experienced problems while others succeed.

The effectiveness of some school principal had been questioned by many studies both in Kenya and other countries that use similar models. In Kenya for example, the official government reports such as the Kamunge (1988); Koech (1999); and task force on students discipline and unrest in secondary school (2001) indicated clearly that school principals in Kenya experienced many challenges. In addition Koech report (2000) showed dissatisfaction in management of physical facilities and the implementation of curriculum and instruction.

On the other hand, the school principals were accused of misallocation, mismanagement and even embezzlement of school funds, Daily nation 11th May (2006). In addition there were many issues relating to staff personnel and students discipline that resulted to public cry, strikes, up heels and disasters such as destruction of property and loss of lives, Standard May 18th (2006). Over and above all, they face many hindrances in their management.

Given the importance of proper school management against hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management of public secondary schools, there was need for immediate attention and proactive approach to providing a comprehensive and long-term solution. It was, therefore, in this context that the researcher chose to investigate the hindrances of secondary school principals to effective management of secondary schools in Gatundu North.
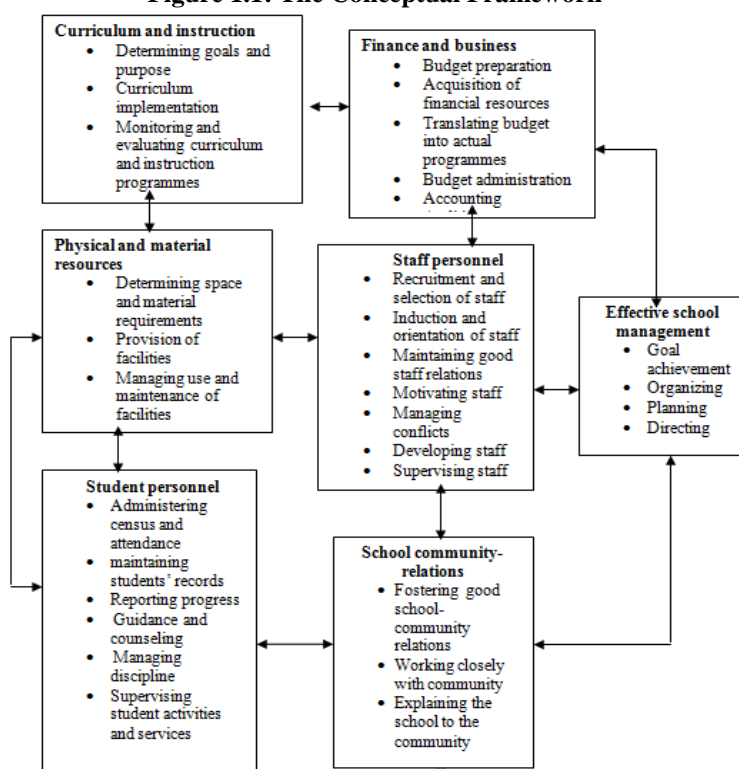
IV. Objectives of the Study

The study focused on the following objectives:
1. To analyze the hindrances of secondary school principal to effective management of secondary school in staff personnel, finance and business, physical and material resources, curriculum and instruction, students' personnel, and school-community relations.
2. To examine the extent to which the hindrances affect secondary school principal in school management.
3. To identify possible solutions to the hindrances facing the secondary school principals in school management.

V. Conceptual Framework

In the conceptual frame work, the researcher postulated the hindrances to secondary school principals in public secondary school management were dictated by external factors as shown in Figure 1.1

Figure 1.1: The Conceptual Framework

Curriculum and instruction
- Determining goals and purpose
- Curriculum implementation
- Monitoring and evaluating curriculum and instruction programmes

Finance and business
- Budget preparation
- Acquisition of financial resources
- Translating budget into actual programmes
- Budget administration
- Accounting

Physical and material resources
- Determining space and material requirements
- Provision of facilities
- Managing use and maintenance of facilities

Staff personnel
- Recruitment and selection of staff
- Induction and orientation of staff
- Maintaining good staff relations
- Motivating staff
- Managing conflicts
- Developing staff
- Supervising staff

Effective school management
- Goal achievement
- Organizing
- Planning
- Directing

Student personnel
- Administering census and attendance
- maintaining students' records
- Reporting progress
- Guidance and counseling
- Managing discipline
- Supervising student activities and services

School community-relations
- Fostering good school-community relations
- Working closely with community
- Explaining the school to the community

VI.   Methodology

The study adopted survey design. Mwira (1995) describes survey as the collection of data concerning variables or subjects as they are found in a social system. Kerlinger (1983) asserts that survey design allows the researcher to study variables as they exist. The survey design allows the researcher to gather information, summarize, and interpret for the purpose of clarification (Orodho 2004). According to (Oordho and Kombo, 2002) the aim of survey is to obtain information from people's attitudes, opinions, and habits on a variety of educational issues or social studies. Survey was therefore found suitable for this study because the researcher wanted to establish the hindrances facing school principals in management of public secondary schools in Gatundu North,Kenya.

Sample

A sample size is a definite plan determined before data are actually collected for obtaining a sample from a given population, (Orodho 2004). According to Mugenda (1995), a sample is a small group obtained from the accessible population.

Sampling Procedure

In this study stratified random sampling techniques was used. According to Fraenkel and Wallen, (2000) simple random sampling technique gives each and every member an equal opportunity of being selected. Stratified random sampling technique is the most used technique in survey and it is important because of validity and reliability. The technique ensures that all the categories of school are considered. This technique was used to select 13 schools out of 26 schools in Gatundu North categorized according to Boys, Girls and mixed secondary schools. The researcher worked with a sample size of 50% according to Jacob and Razariah (1972). The sampled schools constituted 50% of the target population. There were 26 principals in 26 public secondary schools. The researcher hoped that the school principals would provide the required information for this study. Therefore, the secondary school principals in the sampled school formed the sample size for this study.

Data Collection Procedure

A research permit was obtained from the Ministry of Education and a copy was given to County Director of Education, Kiambu before the start of the study. The researcher also got approval from the Sub-County Education Office, Gatundu North to do research in schools within the District. The researcher visited the sampled secondary schools, explained the purpose of the study and administered school management

questionnaire and observation guide to both pilot and main study schools. The respondents were assured of confidentiality and the questionnaires were left behind to be collected at a later date.

Data Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed in data analysis. In qualitative analysis data was collected through the school management questionnaires which were grouped into specific themes according to research questions. Quantitative data was analyzed according to research questions using frequency counts and percentages

VII.   The study Findings and Discussions
Table 1: Age of the respondents

Age	School Principals		
	(Years)	n	%
	30-39	4	30.8
	40-49	8	61.5
	50-59	1	7.7
Total		13	100

The background information shows that majority 8 (62%) of the school principals aged 40-49 while 4 (31%) were of the age 30-39 and only one school principal was over fifty years. The findings reveal that age was a factor in school management.

Table 2: Sex of the respondents

School principals		
Sex	n	%
Male	6	46
Female	7	54
Total	13	100

Another finding on the background information of secondary school principals showed that a high percentage, 7 (54) school principals were female and 6(46%) were male. Of importance for this study is that sex distribution was heterogeneous.

Table 3.Professional qualifications of respondents

Qualifications	School Principals	
	n	%
S1	1	8
Diploma	1	8
BED	10	77
M.ED	1	8
Total	13	100

Another findings on the background information of the school principals shows that a high percentage, 10 (77%) were at degree level, while 1 (8%) of school principals held been trained at the diploma, S1, and MED respectively. This implied that school principals had the academic qualifications required for management of public secondary school.

Table 4.Years of experience as secondary school principals

School principals		
Years	n	%
1 – 3	3	23
4 – 6	3	23
7 – 9	2	15
> 10	5	38
Total	13	100

This study revealed that 5(35%) of the head teachers had experience for over ten years while 3(23%) had worked as principals for a period of between 1-3 and 4-6 years respectively. The findings therefore reveal that work experience enabled principals to make informed decisions for effective management in public secondary schools.

Hindrances of school principals to effective management of secondary schools

Table 5.Hindrances of school principals to effective management o schools

1.	Hindrances in Staff Personnel	n	%
	Inadequate staff	8	62
	Discipline	8	62
	Staff motivation	3	23
	Grand mean	**49**	
2.	Hindrances in school finances	n	%
	Inadequate funds	13	100
	Budgeting and accounting procedures	7	54
	High maintenance cost	3	23
	Grand mean	**59**	
3.	Hindrances in school facilities	n	%
	Inadequate facilities	13	100
	Lack of control over the use of resources		
		6	46
	School plant	7	54
	Grand mean	**66.67**	
4	Hindrance in curriculum and instruction	n	%
	Monitoring and evaluation	8	62
	Interpretation and articulation of curriculum policies	5	38
	Instructional leadership	7	54
	Poor KCSE results	9	69
	Grand mean	**55.75**	
5.	Hindrance in students Activities	n	%
	Discipline of students	8	62
	Family related issues	7	54
	Poor entry behavior	8	62
	Grand mean	**59.33**	
6.	Hindrances in School community Relations	n	%
	Integrating school interest with those of the community	9	69
	Interface from community	10	77
	Illicit brews/drugs supplied	9	64
	Grand mean	**70**	

Findings in Table 5 reveal that majority 8 (62%) school principals faced the challenge of inadequate staff personnel. This concurs with Makori (2009) who state that lack of adequate teachers is a hindrance to quality of teaching learning because teachers are unable to provide special tuition to learners due to heavy teaching workload. On school finance indicate that majority (100%) of school principals reported that the biggest hindrance was inadequate funds.

The school principals 7(54%) lacked skill`in budgeting and accounting procedures. This is in agreement with Mikiko et el (2009) that the accounting skills given to school principals were not enough for

effective school management. All 13(100%) school principals faced the hindrance of lack of physical facilities while 7 (54%) hindrance of the school plant. The findings of this study conform to the findings of Oketch and Ezeh (2008) that lack of facilities makes learners to operate under poor conditions and individual interaction with teachers becomes difficulty. In curriculum and instruction the main hindrance 9(69%) was poor performance in national examinations. It is worth noting that in 10(77%) faced the hindrance of interference from the local community.

Table 6.The extent to which the hindrances affect management of school principals

	Large extent		Small extent	
Hindrances	n	%	n	%
Extent of hindrance of staff resource	9	69	4	31
Extent of hindrance of financial management	12	92	1	8
Extent of hindrance of physical facilities	12	92	1	8
Extent of hindrance of curriculum and instruction	13	100	-	-
Extent of hindrance of student personnel	9	69	4	31
Extent of hindrance of school-community relations	8	62	5	46

Table 4.6 indicate that in school management the school principals 9(69%) were affected by the hindrance of staff management to a large extent while 4 (31%) to a small extent as shown in Table 4.7. 12 (92%) reported that the hindrance of finance and business affected management to a large extent. on the other hand the hindrance of physical facilities 12 (92%) affected school management to a large extent. Likewise, 13 (100%) school principals faced the hindrances in curriculum and instruction to a large extent. Another management area that posed a challenge to school principal 9(69%) was students' activities. The findings from the above study suggest the above hindrances affected the principal in school management for a large extent.

Table 7.Strategies Used to overcome the hindrances faced by principals on school management

		N	%
1.	**Strategies on staff personnel**		
	Training and development	5	38
	Careful selection process	10	77
	Sought advice from experts	4	31
2.	**Strategies on finances**		
	Monitoring expenditure in the light of approved budget	6	46
	Source funds from different quarters	7	54
	Training financial officers	7	54
3.	**Strategies on facilities**		
	Prioritizing school projects	9	69
	Repairs and maintenance	5	38
	Adapting available space to need	5	38
4	**Strategies on curriculum**		
	Co-ordination and consultation with curriculum experts	7	54
	Employment and staff development	6	46
	Constant appraisal of curriculum and instruction	8	62
5.	**Strategies on students activities**		
	Communication system	7	54
	Involving stake holders	9	69
	Favorable climate	7	54
6.	**Strategies on community relation**		
	Provision of services and facilities to community	5	38
	Enforcing security	7	54
	Effective communication	10	77

Table 7 indicate that majority of school principals 10(77%) indicate that there is need for careful selection of staff personnel. On the school finance, some strategies suggested by school principals 7(54%) were sourcing funds from different quarters and training school financial officers such as the account clerks and the school bursar. In addition there was need to prioritize school projects due to the limited funds. The school principals 8(63%) recommended constant appraisal of teachers in of curriculum and instructional, 9(54%) stated the importance of involving the stake holders in students' actives and 10 (77%) the need for effective communication.

VIII.   Conclusion

This study found that the school principals faced hindrances related to school finance, staff personnel, curriculum and instruction, physical facilities, curriculum and instruction, students' activities, and school community relations. Such hindrances include inadequate teachers, indiscipline, inadequate funds, poor performance in national examinations, and interference from the local community. The study also revealed to a great extent hindrances affecting the effective running of school by principals. The study further identified strategies to curb the above hindrances; careful selection and recruitment processes, public private partnership in financing education, prioritizing school projects, constant appraisal of teachers and effective communication.

IX.   Recommendations

Based on the findings there is need to for TSC County Director of education to address teacher shortage, appoint principals of integrity and competence with a minimum requirement of university education. In addition school management should hire honest and committed accounting personnel with ICT skills for efficiency in financial management. There was need to create awareness of public private partnership in financing education and in school management.

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