

Management Constraints Facing Board of Management in the Implementation of Educational Policies in Public Secondary Schools in Mandera County, Kenya

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Abstract: The study examined the management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in Mandera County, Kenya. The study was premised on the Goal Path Leadership Theory propounded by Martin Evans and Robert House 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 involved a survey design of five secondary schools in the County. 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 participants. Focus group guideline for members of Board of Management was the main research instrument used to collect data. The qualitative data obtained through interviews were analyzed thematically. 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, insecurity due to attack by radical Alshaabab group and inter-clan conflicts among others. It was recommended that members of the Board of Management should be appointed on merit and provided with appropriate managerial training to enable them effectively play their respective roles as school managers in the study locale of Mandera County (256 words).

Keywords: Managerial skill, Board of Management, Constraints, Secondary education, Mandera County, Kenya.

I. Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

This paper is cognizant of the fact that a variety of new thinking in the management of school education has existed as 'site based management', 'effective school movements', and 'school based initiative', which are few ideas that strive to find a model of effective school management in tandem with uniqueness of the school organization (Orodho, 2014; Waweru, Ndichu, Thinguri & Orodho, 2013; Shukor, 1998). Invariably, effective characteristic of school management has basically focused on four dimensions of environmental, restructuring program, strategic leadership, and school climate. In this case, school-based management (SBM) is a new and increasingly popular idea of the decentralization process in the education area around the world (Robertson & Briggs, 1998). In the context, SBM offers administrative and decision making power at the school level but in a controlled environment (Waweru, Ndichu, Thinguri & Orodho, 2013). Thus, it still remains within the framework of control monitoring (Boyd, 1992). SBM becomes increasingly popular among educators and policy makers so, when school autonomy and flexibility enhance, school hopes to create and implement programs that are beneficial, and consistent with the need of student (Brown, 1990). In the Kenyan context, the Basic Education Act provides that basic educational institutions should be managed through the Board of Management. It is against this backdrop that this paper attempted to examine the management constraints facing Board of Management (BoM) in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County, Kenya.

1.2. The State of the Art Review

There is a growing body of literature that attempt to focus on school management and policy enforcement in schools (Boyd, 1992; Brown, 1990; Ibrahim & Orodho, 2015; Freshton & Pennel; Orodho, 2013; Waweru, Ndichu, Thinguri & Orodho, 2013). The concept of SBM was a result of the crisis steaming from the flexibility and control structure that exist in the school system. So, suggestion to improve the accountability, control on subordinate, construction of comprehensive and specific goal, and strict control of the great

opposition adhere to the concept of loosely-coupled. Which means to have a loosely control over the individual or unit enable to move freely without the need for co-ordination and control, accountability and collaboration arise as an alternative. However, studies of Firestone and Pennel (1993); Sacney and Dibski (1994) found evidence for SBM to bring success is still unclear. With the hope that SBM will improve the effectiveness of schools causing many countries tries it, including Malaysia. SBM also means that management and decision making in curriculum, personnel, financial and budget planning made at school level (David, 1989). It is believed that this change will improve the productivity of schools, school effectiveness and improve student achievement (Odden&Wohlstetler, 1995). In addition influence, role and accountability of principals and teachers will increase in management and administration of the school better than the traditional way. This precisely means additional workload, and even risk management and administrative accountability of principals and teachers.

In consistent with this, in term of implementation, teachers are encourage to design curriculum, selecting teaching and learning materials as well as actively participate in school planning and decision making (Dunlop and Goldman, 1991). However, the involvement of teachers depends on the principal and it varies from one school to another (Calvert, 1990).

School is a social institution that plays a crucial role in the lives of our society. School is a mind transformer and also the mark of a country's culture and development. It points toward the vision and building the nation. Therefore, all educational issues become focus and main interest of all parties because without an effective education system, the country will collapsed. Being important person in school, principals serve as administrators, managers and leaders. An effective principal administrative in-charge involves a group of employees in a way that was accepted and appreciated. There are various theories of leadership and the most important in the implementation of SBM is charismatic theory to guide in the early stages.

The characteristics of the leader is fascinating personal and likable. Secondly, theory of human relations, which displays the characteristics of a leader who gives serious attention to the task and to collaborate with his people and not be autocratic (Cheng, 1995). Third, theory X and Y in a nutshell, if the principal considers his subordinates lazy and irresponsible then they will be so, and conversely if the principal considers his subordinates diligent and responsible then they will become so. Lastly, situational leadership theory, which give different conditions require different style of leadership and necessary intelligence to understand the culture, and the environment, and the local community.

Management is the utilization of physical and human resources through cooperation efforts in order to realize the established areas (Waweru & Orodho, 2013). It is accomplished by performing the planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Management in education broadly involves the running of educational instituteand includes school finances and business, the schools plant and guidance of teachers and organizing pupil personnel services (Nyaga, 2003). Management is also described 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 (Orodho, 2013).

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. In the context of this study, the above descriptionwas useful in the study since they helped in laying some of the fundamental background and tenets of understanding management issues in secondary schools and the management constraints faced by school governing and management bodies like the BoMs' in secondary schools within Manderu County.

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. Educationmanagers of yester years had to deal with some change but change was not at a rapid pace, scope or range asevident 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 thequality 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 andDEB'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 fairdistribution of teachers by ensuring that high teacher turnover was to be based on the needs of the schools and districtsleading to proper utilization of teachers (Republic of Kenya, 2012). This study however established

the management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County, in the context of security management constraint, policy on discipline on the management skills of BoM members and the extent to which resources available in the schools managed by BoM enhance equality maintenance.

In most African countries, the responsibility for overseeing the management of school is entrusted to a school BoM or a management committee. In order to ensure that governing Boards operate on some common principles, every Board has a constitution which provides basic guidelines and the legal framework for its operation (Ibrahim, 2011). The constitution is usually approved by the Minister for education and it provides the blue print for the Boards operation as a large entity.

Just like in Africa, in European countries such as England, Wales and Northern Ireland, school governors are members of a school's Governing Body. In state schools they have responsibility for raising school standards through their three key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability and monitoring and evaluating school performance. In Zambia for example, the government has created and regulated High School Education Boards (HSEB) linking upper and lower secondary schools with ministry offices and the local civil administration. HSEB members represent the district education office, the local administration, the school, and the PTA, and meet on an as-needed basis to oversee financial and general school management. Zambia's PTAs are elected, rather than voluntary, and raise funds for school materials and activities and also for teacher salaries. Thus, they, feel somewhat responsible for teacher performance, a role that overlaps and occasionally puts them in conflict with the Zambian Teaching Service, which is responsible for hiring, deploying and firing teachers (World Bank, 2008).

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 (Orodho & Ibrahim, 2014).

In Kenyan secondary schools, boards of Management have the responsibilities of running schools under their area. This is according to section 59 of the New Education Act, which gives Board of Management (BoM) to promote 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 non-teaching staff and others, parents and community, and other stakeholders to render voluntary services to the institution, amongst others. According to Orodho (2014), Boards of Management have received top priority in most sub-Saharan African countries for effective implementation of curriculum to yield high quality educational output.

According to Sifuna (1990) the 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.

In order to mitigate the management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies 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. Nsubuga (2008) asserts that schools only perform well when the BoM functions well and when the school is well supervised. 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 in secondary schools (Ibrahim, 2011).

During his study on challenges faced by the board of governors (BoG) in the management of secondary schools and their impact on KCSE performance in Mandera County Ibrahim (2011) established that the BoM is important in the governance and management of the school for several reasons which include, but are not limited to, 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. It is against this background that this study was prompted and delved into management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County in Northern Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Boards of management are task with the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in Kenya. Despite the enormous roles and functions of a school board of Management, research done in some developed countries like USA, UK and Australia unravels various challenges they face in management (Kitavi&Westhuizen, 1997). 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 security management constraint as a result of attack by radicalized groups like Alshaab who mostly target non-local people including teachers and inter- clan conflicts, policy on discipline, impact of resource scarcity and the extent to which resources available in the schools managed by BoM affect equality maintenance. Because of the remote nature of the area, non-specific studies have been done to explore the specific challenges faced by BoMs in Mandera County in management of boarding secondary schools. This study, therefore, explores and examines management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools and how these affect the overall organization of schools in the entire Mandera County. This problem therefore needs to be addressed urgently.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

- i. To establish the security management constraint affecting the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools in Mandera County
- ii. To examine the impact of policy on discipline on the management skills of BoM members of secondary schools
- iii. To find out the extent to which resources available in the schools managed by BoM enhance equality maintenance
- iv. To establish the impact of resource scarcity and school fees on the implementation of educational policies in public secondary schools.
- v. Establish ways of overcoming these constraints faced by BoM members in management of secondary schools.

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 constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies affected public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County.

II. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research to examine the strategies being applied by Boards of Management to mitigate constraints they face in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County. 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 three boys' boarding secondary schools and two boarding girls' secondary school in Mandera County. Similarly, Purposive and snowball sampling

techniques were utilized to draw 8 out of 14 key members of the Board of Management from each of the five schools, yielding a sample of 40 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 focused group discussions 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 in indirect quotes and narrative form.

III. Findings And Discussion

Security Management Constraint

The researcher asked respondents to state whether there was any relationship between management of school and academic performance. In response to this, all the respondents (100%) agreed that progress in any learning institution depends on proper management of schools. One of the school principals interviewed intimated to the researcher 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 his school. The performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education exams changed because the entire school management which includes the principal and all board members showing concern toward the plight of the students and the entire staff.

Excellent management of strategies will utilize the school resources towards realization of school objectives and goals said Mr. Osman Mohammed a board member in one of the secondary schools. If board members constantly meet the students and their teachers to share ideas and advise 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. According to Ibrahim and Orodho (2014), tribal and ethnic balancing while nominating board members was a major constraint as any decision 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.

A study carried by Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) established that constant political interference particularly in the girl's secondary schools in Mandera County was rampant. For instance principals and Board members could recommend 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. This tendency extended to issues of insecurity where there is no good will to decisively deal with insecurity in the area by both Government and the locals. The insecurity has been escalated to schools to the extent that non local teachers migrate to other safer regions. According to Daily Nation, January (2015) Mandera Governor Ali Roba asked the Teachers Service Commission to sack teachers who have refused to return to work in Mandera, Wajir and Garissa Counties citing insecurity. Inter-clan conflicts and attack by radical Alshabab group especially targeting non-local teachers and students are major security challenges hindering efficient management of schools in Mandera County by BoM members.

Policy on Discipline

The researcher asked the respondents to indicate whether the schools had enough teaching and learning materials in their respective schools. In response to the question, 11 (45.8%) said they had enough teaching and learning while 13 (52.4%) said they did not have. The respondents who said they had enough resources were asked to state how they utilized some of the school resources in realizing the school objectives, policies and overall development. In response to the question, the respondents gave the following methods and approach. Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) found out that enforcing Government policy on discipline was a serious challenge in implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools as powerful officers in provincial administration on many occasions overturn important decisions made by the entire board. This made members of the board afraid of being victimized by these same officers.

Effect of Resources Management on Equality Maintenance

From the study majority of the schools 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 equipment. Some schools also shared their resources with other neighboring schools and this enhanced the relationships between the neighboring schools as those schools which did not have enough resources suffered from understaffing, water shortages, and lack of adequate classrooms, toilets and adequate funding. These inadequacies affected both the performance of students and the running of the school.

Managerial styles and Constraints

The study established that management of security issues faced many constraints by the BoM because only 7 (29.2%) had taken the management training course while 17 (89.8%) had not taken. The few members who had undergone trainings, were trained mainly in administration courses and a little of financial management but no security management. The average number of board members who underwent management training were two (2) BoM members with most schools having no BoM members trained while there was a school with a maximum of six (6) members all undergoing short courses in management. It is thus evident that most BoM 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. However the schools were within the Ministry of Education stipulations in the school safety manual which states that a school should have clearly demarcated school grounds with proper fencing and secure gates/boundaries (GoK, 2008).

In terms of relationship between board members themselves, 5 (20.8%) of the respondents said that the relationship is excellent, 17 (70.8%) said that the relationship is good while 2(8.3%) said that there is bad relationship between board members. As evidenced from this study, the working relationship between board members themselves was good and therefore was not considered as a challenge in school administration. This study shows that 15 (62.5%) of the BoM members met at least once per term, (12.5%) indicated that they meet twice per year while (25.0%) said in this study that they met at least thrice per year. In the previous study to examine the strategies applied by Board of Management to enhance students' academic performance in National Examinations in secondary schools in Mandera County, Ibrahim and Orodho (2014) established that apart from financial constraints, most board members did not know their roles as members of the Board of Management. They went 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. This was established as part of the management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County.

IV. Conclusion And Commendations

The availability of resources available in the schools managed by BoM plays a fundamental role in the implementation of educational 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 and insecurity which is currently a menace in the whole of North Eastern region which sometimes made the implementation of some policies and running of the school difficult. The ideal school solution would however be one that allows children to grow up within their homes and families and receive an education. However because of low population densities, it may not be cost effective to constitute a normal school. There would be problems posting teachers to such a school due to staffing norms that calculate teachers on the basis of pupil numbers. The answer to having a community school, for sparse populations, would therefore lie in constituting an entirely different form of provision in which one teacher teaches across different grade levels. Such a provision is not available in Kenya.

In terms of the management style and procedures used in the coordination of schools, it was evident that most BoM 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 BoMs experienced in the management of schools in Mandera County which may translate to lack of or poor policy implementation 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. The Draft Nomadic Education Policy (2008) is the most comprehensive document within MoE that attempts to address some of the above mentioned omissions. This Policy identifies three groups: pastoral nomads, fishing nomads and hunters/gatherers. The value of this policy is twofold. First it articulates issues related to nomadism and education that are generally absent in the broad education policies (e.g. need for a multi-sectoral approach that incorporates contingent measures to alleviate effects of emergencies like insecurity). Second, the document stresses the need to institute practical practices for arid districts. In order to mitigate the management constraints facing board of management in the implementation of educational policies in public boarding secondary schools in Mandera County, the study therefore makes the following recommendations:

1. Board of management members should constantly meet the students and their teachers to share ideas and advise them, as this builds a harmonious relationship between teachers, students and the entire support staff which is also healthy for the students as it helps them to embrace educational policies without resistance.
2. Board of management members should inculcate management strategies that attempt to keep constant track performance and rewarding teachers for good results achieved by students. This enables teachers to perform well particularly when their efforts are recognized and adequately rewarded.
3. Members of BoM who have vast knowledge in management should be involved in supervisory duties in policy implementation, development and regular meeting between principal and teachers in planning strategies to enhance general school management. 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).
4. For BoM members to enhance equality maintenance, they must 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). Proper security measures should be put in place to ensure learners and teachers are safe while at school and while travelling home during school holidays.
5. Learners and teachers in North Eastern Region should be given basic safety and military skills to help them defend themselves during disasters and attack by enemies.

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