PERCEPTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE PRINCIPALS’ LEADERSHIP STYLES IN SCHOOL MANAGEMENT IN KAKAMEGA CENTRAL DISTRICT, KENYA: IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030

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Abstract

Enrolment at secondary school level continues to rise as a result of FPE and subsidized secondary tuition coupled with pressure to produce quality results. However, questions about the ability of secondary schools to produce quality grades have generated a lot of debate among the stakeholders. This has greatly been attributed to the principals’ leadership styles. The study explored the perceptions of secondary school teachers on leadership styles of principals in school management in Kakamega Central district. The main objectives were; to establish the characteristics of teachers engaged in school management; to identify the leadership styles of the secondary school principals in school management and to identify perceived challenges of teachers’ engaged in school management in Kakamega Central district. The study adopted an exploratory approach using a descriptive survey. A sample of 13 secondary schools were selected. A sample of sixty five teachers consisting of 13 deputy principals and 52 class teachers participated in the study. The main tool of data collection was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis. The findings reveal that school management is a preserve of male and those who had served long in the teaching profession. The type of leadership style of the sampled schools is transformational. This is a good sign as the attainment of Vision 2030 and the educational millennium development goals are hinged on learning organizations. It is expected that more workshops and seminars be organized so as to sensitize school managers on the importance of learning organizations.

Key words: Participatory, perception, leadership style, performance

Background to the study

Educational leadership in the 21st Century is expected to be focused for purpose of the MDGs and vision 2030 especially in Kenya. This requirement necessitates a leadership that is clearly defined for all involved. Leadership involves authority and responsibility in terms of deciding the way ahead and being held responsible for the success or failure of achieving the agreed objectives. The success or failure of managers can be judged on their leadership qualities. In a constantly changing social, economic, and technological environment, leadership is a more important attribute of management today than before. Whereas managers are concerned with bringing resources together, developing strategies, organizing and controlling activities to achieve agreed objectives, leadership performs the influencing function of management. Leadership increases the effectiveness and proficiency of management and sustainable performance (Reed, 2005) and effective management of resources. Organizations and environment have changed rapidly over the past years and as a result a new type of leadership that is less and more democratic is needed in order to ensure survival of the organization (Johnson, 1995). Maicibi (2005) observes that proper leadership style leads to effective performance in learning institutions. Leadership effectiveness is most conveniently quantified by organizational outcomes (Johnson, 1995).

Kenya is ranked 17th out of 54 countries in terms of efficiency in education sector based on students’ performance, staff turnover, motivation and managerial competence (World’s competitiveness report, 2009). Performance of the academic institutions in meeting the goals and objectives of education in Kenya relies heavily on the type of leadership that prevails in the institutions. Malusu, (2007) observes that the increase in secondary education necessitates instituting responsible leadership in secondary education institutions. It has been observed that many schools still perform poorly due to poor leadership besides inadequate funds and poor facilities (Malusu, 2005.)
In Kenya, secondary school principals are appointed by the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). The principals are accountable to a District Education Officer (DEO), the school’s Board of Governors (BoG) and the school’s Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) on the management of secondary school resources (World Bank, 2007). BoGs of secondary schools are appointed by the minister of education and are charged with the responsibility of overseeing the overall secondary school management. The BoGs functions among others include setting up secondary school fees using government guidelines, ensuring sound financial management, mobilizing resources for the school development, monitoring academic performance, setting priorities for spending and authorizing all school expenditures (Republic of Kenya, 2006).

On the other hand, PTAs were created as a result of the 1980 presidential directive and are elected on a yearly basis by parents during Annual General Meetings (AGMs). They are charged mainly with the responsibility of ensuring the quality of education offered in the school. In particular, PTAs are responsible for the development of school projects on behalf of the parents besides overseeing the academic performance of the students (World Bank, 2007). In Kenya, secondary school management is participatory in the sense that various stake holders are involved. Thus the principals’ participatory leadership management styles have a great impact on the overall school achievement. Hall (1987) observes that the principal's leadership roles (responder, manager, and initiator) contribute to teachers’ morale either by fostering a rough atmosphere or by supporting and collaborating with them. Research on organizational psychology demonstrates the relationship between leadership effectiveness and subordinates’ confidence. More recent research has integrated the relationship between the perceived leadership style of principals and the acceptance of teachers in professional matter (Thomas, 1986). These research findings indicate that the principal's leadership style has an effect on the teacher and subsequently the instructional process. Lall and Lall (1988) observe that true leadership must lead and not dominate. In addition they observe that leadership should be able to inspire and encourage. According to White (1962) leadership is about sharing responsibility among the stake holders.

Studies done indicate that teachers and stakeholders involvement in decision-making yield salutary results (Doyle and Wells 1996; Wong, 2003). Studies have also shown that employee satisfaction, motivation, morale and self-esteem are positively affected by involvement in decision making and implementation (Doyle and Wells, 1996). Other studies (Gamage, 1996; Owens, 1998; Wong, 2003) do show that collaborative school management tends to create a sense of ownership of change initiatives and eventually extend stronger support to realize the goals of such efforts. They also argue that such leadership results to better decisions and greater efficiency since issues are discussed extensively via open communication among people having varying viewpoints involved in participative set-ups. Lienhart and Willet (2002) argues that by implementing participative management practices teachers are given a sense of control over their own working lives, power inequalities are balanced and additional resources become available to the organization.

Research has also demonstrated that the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed rather than on the abundance of available resources (IIIEP, 2000). Other studies have also shown that there exists a strong relationship between the quality of the leadership provided by the head teacher and the capacity of schools to improve teaching and learning (IIIEP, 2000).

Therefore participatory management leadership is an important aspect that cannot be wished away especially in this era of technological advancement and emphasis in the attainment of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Kenya like other countries is in the race of attaining MDGs alongside the Vision 2030 where it is expected to be an industrialized nation. Therefore management of secondary schools is an important aspect towards attainment of the set national and international obligations. However, there has been criticism in the way schools are managed in Kenya. This may hinder the achievement of the most spoken out educational MDGs and the set Kenya’s vision 2030. Yet no one can tell with certainty, which participatory management leadership styles are practiced by principals in Kenya and more so in Kakamiga central district and to what degree their co-workers are involved in the school management. This is despite the districts’ dismal performance in national examinations over the years in most of the once renowned secondary schools. This study realizes the importance of participatory management leadership styles and sets to investigate the situation in secondary schools in Kenya by taking Kakamiga central district. It is hoped that the information will be relevant to policy makers in addressing some of the management issues facing secondary schools in Kenya.
Problem statement

Secondary schools in Kenya continue to face pressure to attain set international and national goals, among them the educational MDGs and Kenya’s Vision 2030. Worldwide there is increasing efforts to improve student-learning outcomes at all levels in the education sector. This is greatly changing the way secondary schools are now being managed. In this era there is increasing need for formal change in the structures of school governance that leads to a more democratic administrative approach in which planning and decision-making are devolved to BOGs, PTAs, principals, HoDs, teachers, students and subordinate staff. The presence of these governing groups provides abundant opportunities for the practice of participatory school administration, leadership and management (PSALM). However, secondary schools in Kenya continue to face a myriad of management problems. Various stakeholders have continued to raise accusing fingers on the management styles used by secondary school principals. This has continued to create disharmony between the principals and other stakeholders (BOGs, PTAs, HoDs teachers, students and subordinate staff). The continued disharmony could be precipitated by the way school principals manage their respective schools. The problem to be addressed therefore is what leadership styles do the principals adopt in their day-to-day management of schools? Indeed, we operate in the era where each secondary school is expected to achieve highly in both national and international educational agenda such as the MDGs by 2015 and Vision 2030 objectives for Kenya. It is therefore imperative to move forward with ascertainment of which management leadership styles is practiced by principals in Kenya and to what degree their co-workers are involved in the management of schools. These are the issues that shall be herein understudied in Kakamega central district.

Research Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives.
1. To establish the characteristics of teachers engaged in school management in Kakamega Central district.
2. To identify the leadership styles of the secondary school principals in Kakamega Central district.
3. To identify perceived challenges of teachers’ engaged in school management in Kakamega Central district.

Theoretical framework

This study was based on the theory of learning organization as propounded by Peter Senge in 1990. The theory is based on the concept that organizations in this era of globalization need to enable people to continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire. This implies that learning organizations nature new and expansive patterns of thinking where people are continuously learning to see the whole together. The theory asserts that involvement in decision-making improves the understanding of the issues involved by those who must carry out the decisions. Further when people make decisions together, the social commitment to one another is greater and thus increases their commitment to the decision. As social institutions it is increasingly important that secondary schools deliver the expectations of the community in terms of quality grades. This can be achievable based on the management leadership styles of secondary school principals.

The principals’ management leadership style has an effect on the learning outcomes of the school. A participative leader, rather than taking autocratic decisions, seeks to involve other people in the process, possibly including subordinates, peers, superiors and other stakeholders. Weber (1987) acknowledges the fact that leadership should be shared at all cost to reduce animosity. He contends that shared leadership responsibilities with the teacher promotes better instruction and improve student morale. Often, however, as it is within the managers’ whim to give or deny control to his or her subordinates, most participative activity is within the immediate team. The question of how much influence others are given thus may vary on the manager’s preferences and beliefs. One dimension of this has to do with control and one’s perception of how much control one should give to people. The laissez-faire style implies low control, the autocratic style high control and the participative lies somewhere in between.

Research methodology

The study adopted an exploratory approach using descriptive survey design to study the leadership styles of principals of secondary schools and the degree of co-workers indulgence in school management in Kakamega Central district. According to Best (1970) descriptive design is concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail, processes that are ongoing and attitudes that are developing. The design was ideal as it enhanced collection of data from the subjects on the current status of principals’ leadership styles in secondary schools within a short period of time.
Cohen and Marion (1980) assert that the intention of a survey research is to gather data at a particular point in time and use it to describe the nature of existing conditions. Orodho (2002) observes that descriptive survey is used in preliminary and exploratory studies to gather information, summarize, present and interpret for the purpose of clarification. It is also intended to produce statistical information about aspects of education that interests policy makers and educators.

The unit sample of the study was the secondary schools in Kakamega central district. The forty secondary schools in the district were stratified as either day or boarding. The cluster yielded 33 day and 7 boarding schools. The study selected randomly 30% of each school category. A total of 13 (10 day and 3 boarding) schools were sampled. All the 13 deputy head teachers and four teachers (one per class) per school were purposively sampled. A total of 65 respondents participated in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. Questionnaires were considered ideal as they addressed issues of neutrality and anonymity. Each item on the questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective of the study. The questionnaire had both structured and unstructured questions. The questionnaires were self-administered and collected on the same day. The questionnaires were pretested on a selected smaller sample similar to the actual sample that was used for the study but not including the group to be surveyed. Same procedures were used for the pre-test as those of the actual data collection and this allowed the researcher to make meaningful observations and reveal analytical techniques appropriate.

The subjects were also encouraged to make comments and suggestions concerning the instruments, clarity of questions and relevance and the feedback was used to refine the testing instruments. Content and construct methods were to validate the data collection instruments. The test re-test method was used to test the reliability of the data collection instruments. The data collection instruments were administered to the same piloting group twice in a span of two weeks between the two tests. Spearman’s rank order correlation coefficient was used to compute the correlation coefficient to establish the extent to which the content of the instruments was consistent in eliciting the same responses every time the instrument was administered. A correlation coefficient of 0.75 was considered high enough to judge reliability of the data collection instruments. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Items from questionnaires were coded and packaged under different variables to allow the usage of SPSS. The results of different variables are presented in form of frequency tables and simple percentages.

Discussion of findings

The study solicited views from deputy principals and class teachers on their perceptions about the principals’ leadership styles and their perceived challenges in their indulgence in school management. The results are presented in the order of the objectives of the study.

1.0 Characteristics of teachers engaged in school management

The study sought to establish the characteristics of teachers engaged in school management in terms of gender and years of service in the teaching profession. The results are presented in Table 1.0.1 and Table 1.0.2 below

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>Males’ %</th>
<th>Females %</th>
<th>Totals %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Head teachers</td>
<td>0861.5005</td>
<td>38.5</td>
<td>13100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class teachers</td>
<td>3669.2416</td>
<td>30.76</td>
<td>52100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>4467.6921</td>
<td>32.31</td>
<td>65100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.0.1: Respondents’ gender and school management

Table 1.0.1 does reveal gender inequalities in the management of secondary schools in the district with males having an upper hand than females.
The second authority in management of schools in the district is dominated by males (61.5%) compared to 38.5% of their female counterparts. The same applies to the lower cadre management where a larger proportion of males (69.2%) take charge than females (30.7%). The table show that at all levels male (67.69%) dominates in the leadership in the sampled schools. There are varied reasons for this disparity in school management. This may be attributed to the disproportional academic achievement of males and females where boys tend to outshine girls at primary and secondary school levels as evident in the national exams. This minimizes the female chances in higher training and by extension in the management of institutions. Another reason could be that females fear responsibilities due to the nature of their roles at home as mothers and where they could prefer to spend little time at work and more time at home. Lastly the disparity could be attributed to the biasness of the appointing authority. Deputy Head teachers are appointed by TSC with the recommendation of their principals while class teachers’ appointment remains the sole responsibility of the principal. The findings may indicate that principals could be more comfortable working with males than females in school management. However, this disparity has implications in the overall management which generally require a reasonable representation of either gender for balanced and reasonable decisions. This disparity may to some extend be a contributing factor on the type of leadership and achievement in the schools in the district.

1.0.2 Respondents years of service and school management

The study also sought to establish whether years of service does influence the teachers’ appointment as managers at various levels within the school. To do these teachers were asked to indicate their years of service and their responsibility. The results are tabulated in Table 1.0.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RESPONSIBILITY</th>
<th>Deputy principals</th>
<th>Class Teachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YEARS OF SERVICE</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 years</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>07.7</td>
<td>05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5 years</td>
<td>02</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-9 years</td>
<td>07</td>
<td>53.8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10 years</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field data

Table 1.2 does indicate that there is a relationship between the number of years of service and appointment of teachers to the various levels of school management. Majority of the teachers engaged in school management as deputy principals or class teachers had six years and above of service in the teaching profession. This implies that appointment of this category of teachers by the principals is mainly guided by the experience of the teachers. This may be termed a good practice as these teachers are expected to provide leadership within the various sections they head.

2.0 Leadership style of principals in Kakamega central district

The second objective was to identify the leadership style of secondary school principals in Kakamega central district. This study grouped the leadership styles into two extremes namely transformational and transactional. The study intended to identify which of the two leadership styles is practiced by the principals in the sampled schools. To address this objective deputy principles and class teachers were asked to accept or reject the proposed leadership style indicator in their school. The leadership style indicators were phrased in such a way that acceptance of the leadership style indicator implied high likelihood of transformational leadership while rejection implied likelihood of transactional leadership style. Acceptance was assigned a value 1 and rejection 0. This yielded a scale of 0-1. This scale was transformed to a percentage by multiplying by 100 to yield a scale of 0-100. The mean responses of acceptance and rejection were generated and observed on a scale 0 -100. Since the leadership styles were categorized into two, the scale range was divided by two. A mean response falling between 0-50 implied transactional leadership while a mean response of 51-100 implied transformational leadership. The results are tabulated in Table 2.0 below
Table 2: Leadership style of secondary principals in Kakamega Central district

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Leadership Style Indicator</th>
<th>YES (%)</th>
<th>NO (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In your school you work together to develop and articulate a shared purpose and a clear educational vision focused on learning</td>
<td>91.7</td>
<td>08.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The principal takes collective responsibility for school practices and outcomes</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The principal emphasizes power through people rather than power over people</td>
<td>72.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The principal bases authority more on professional knowledge and competence than on position and rules</td>
<td>82.2</td>
<td>17.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>The principal facilitates and guides others to adopt practices that advance student performance.</td>
<td>94.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The principal communicates his/her passion for learning by challenging ineffective practices and teachers</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>You have regular staff meetings/Briefs to discuss issues arising</td>
<td>88.9</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Departments are fully functional and autonomous in decision making</td>
<td>63.9</td>
<td>36.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The principal has encouraged wide scale participation of stakeholders parents, community members and students</td>
<td>86.2</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>In your school roles are flexible and interdependent rather than rigid and hierarchical</td>
<td>69.4</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>The principal allows teachers to have considerable autonomy and discretion to plan curriculum and organize instruction within an overall framework</td>
<td>77.8</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Most of the resolutions agreed in the staff meetings/HODs meetings/Briefs are fully supported and implemented</td>
<td>50.0</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>In your school you share information and make decisions together</td>
<td>72.3</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The principal has created an atmosphere of trust and respect among staff, students, and the school community</td>
<td>68.3</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>The principal provides formal and informal means for staff and students to raise and solve problems</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The principal accepts conflict as normal and use them as a stimulus for change</td>
<td>80.6</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The principal encourages use of teams to plan and implement school improvement</td>
<td>83.4</td>
<td>16.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The principal has forged partnerships with community, organizations, agencies, and businesses to address the needs of children and families</td>
<td>78.7</td>
<td>21.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The principal allows time and supports professional development that improves curriculum, instruction, and student learning</td>
<td>86.1</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean Response</td>
<td>78.89</td>
<td>21.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For a long time secondary school principals’ have been perceived to be autocratic and running schools with an iron fist. However, the findings in Table 2 reveals that this is not so. The result does indicate that indeed most of the principles in the sampled schools do practice transformational leadership style. This is indicated by a mean response of 78.89% of the responses for transformational leadership as indicated by the various leadership style variables. This implies that most of the teachers on average do perceive head teachers of the sampled schools to practice transformational leadership in comparison to a few (21.11%) who perceive transactional type of leadership in the sampled schools. The large percentage is a strong indicator of presence of transformational leadership style which is expected in school management in this era of 21st century. Various studies have associated transformational leadership to successful organizations (IIEP, 2000; Lienhart and Willet (2002).

The implication is that most of the sampled schools have established a school culture that is collective in nature; this has been shown to be a driving force in academic achievement. This is indicated by a large response (91.7%) where teachers are convinced that their schools have worked together to develop and articulate a shared purpose and a clear educational vision focused on learning. This aspect is important as it is the focal point for the school to achieve its core function of producing quality grades. Some studies (Demna, 2011) do observe that a good vision is that which is collective rather than imposed. Other studies (Dream Cacioppe, 1997) have observed that transformational leadership has the potential to influence the subordinates to adopt an organizational vision as their own inspirations. Other desirable outcomes of transformational leadership relate to giving stakeholders an opportunity to lead. In the sampled schools teachers did indicate that the principles do lead through others as indicated by 72.2% of the respondents. This implies that power in the sampled schools is devolved.
The interpretation is that the various school organs such as the departments and school committees are functional and do exercise their full mandate. Another aspect of transformational leadership is professionalism and professional growth. Transformational leadership emphasizes professionalism in discharging duties. This is an important aspect in school management to avoid issues of personalization of leadership. The aspect is attributed strongly as to be practiced in the sampled schools as indicated by 82.2% of the respondents with a paltry 7.8% disagreeing. This is a desired trait in school management and every employees output heavily depends on it. In addition professional growth is an important attribute of transformational leadership which emphasizes both institutional and professional growth. This aspect is widely practiced in the sampled schools as indicated by a large percentage (94.5%) of the respondents who agreed that the element of professional growth in the sampled schools exists. Transformational leadership expects that subjects are given as much knowledge, skills and right attitude so as to be key players rather than recipients’.

The ministry of Education has in deed endeavored to empower the teachers’ by organizing in service workshops. It is expected that the knowledge gained is able to be shared among the teachers to create a learning organization. This has a spillover effect in terms of best practices that can advance students’ performance. The reasons for transformational leadership in the sampled schools are varied. This could be attributed to the fact that the MoE did adopt a devolved kind of management which is expected to trickle down at the school level. Another reason could be the intense workshops and seminars mounted by the MoE and other partners where school managers are trained on best management practices.

However, there is an element of autocratic leadership in the sampled schools as evident by the mean response of 21.11%. This is regrettable given that the attainment of the Kenya’s Vision 2030 and by extension the educational millennium developments goals heavily depends on schools which adopt the best practices in school management. Autocratic leadership has been shown to be detrimental in attainment of institutional culture and collective responsibility hence creating disharmony, suspicion and mistrust. Schools need to move away from this kind of leadership style.

3.0 Perceived challenges teachers face while indulging in school management.

The third objective of the study relates to how the teachers perceived the challenges they face while performing their duties. To achieve this objective the study posed questions to the respondents regarding their work. The results are tabulated in Table 3.0 below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived challenges</th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Is school management a collective responsibility</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 You have an appointment letter for the position you are holding</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 You are adequately informed by the principle to make right decisions</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The school avail resources required to discharge your duties</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 You feel demoralized while performing you responsibility</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Your school support the decisions relating to your docket</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is evident that majority of the teachers do agree that school management is a collective responsibility. 84% of the respondents hold the fact that schools should be managed collectively. However, this involvement is coupled with a number of challenges. For instance as much as a large proportion supports the idea of collective responsibility, 60% cited that as much as they were involved in school management they had no appointment letters for the positions they held. This may have varied effects. For instance it has been a tradition for principals to appoint teachers as class teachers without issuing them appointment letters. This can be demoralizing to the teachers concerned. The possible effect could be lack of commitment by such teachers to discharge their duties since they perceive their engagement as not official. Another challenge cited is that of inability of the school management to induct the teachers on the roles of their position. This is indicated by a large proportion (64%) who reported to lack adequate information while faced with an opportunity to make a decision within their jurisdiction. This implies that most likely the appointing authority either conceals information, or delays it or there is bureaucracy in school management. This may likely hamper decision making and implementation of some programs. Another challenge cited by the teachers involved in school management is that of availability of resources that enable them to discharge their duties.
The issue of resources has been a concern in many schools. 78% of the teachers engaged in school management felt that they were inadequately resourced to perform their duties adequately. Surprisingly, the teachers engaged in school management felt that there is absolute division when it comes to staff issues such as staff motivation, support of decision made by section heads and so on. Most of the teachers (93%) cited existence of staff division/camps in the schools. This has mainly been attributed to situations where principals practice favoritism, nepotism or existence of a cabinet kitchen that is presumed to advice the principal at the expense of the established school organs such as departments and school committees. This group is perceived to have the principal’s ear and may undermine the decisions of the section heads. The effect is that the section heads are demoralized in discharging their duties.

Lastly, respondents feel that they have a challenge of being overruled by the principal on decisions arrived at their sections. Majority of the respondents (89%) felt that some of their views are not considered in the final analysis in decision making in the school. There have been concerns for example where decisions arrived by the tendering committees are just on paper but the same committee afterwards in neither consulted further or involved in the execution or implementation of the tendering decisions. This has been cited as the most demotivating aspect and where such committees are seen as a rubberstamp.

The cited problems have far reaching repercussions in the overall achievement of school objectives. It is necessary that the Ministry of education takes up these issues and try to address them so as to enable schools fully achieve its educational goals.

**Conclusions and recommendations**

This study attempted to establish the characteristics of teachers engaged in school management in terms of gender and professional qualifications. The findings reveal gender inequalities in school management. The study also revealed that most of the schools practice transformational leadership; this is commendable as this type of leadership over time has proved successful in attainment of institutional goals. This is the kind of leadership thus is expected to drive the Kenya agenda in the attainment of the educational millennium goals and the Vision 2030. Over the years learning organizations have proved successful. There is need to lay emphasis on the adoption of this kind of leadership where each member of the school is given an opportunity to contribute to the school vision, mission and objectives. There is need to emphasis more training and workshops by the ministry of education and other interested partners to empower teachers so as to make prudent decisions that are focused on attainment of the schools educational goals. Besides, there is need to engage teachers in curriculum training in school management so as to adopt practices that strategically place their schools on the map for quality grades. Despite this achievement it is evident that those engaged in school management face some challenges. It would be prudent that the identified challenges are addressed adequately so as to enable teachers to fully participate in school management.

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