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

Napoo John Lokuruka
Kenya School of Government
P.O BOX 23030 – 00604, Lower Kabete, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Richard K. Ronoh
Maasai Mara University
P.O BOX 861 – 20500, Narok, Kenya

Abstract

The objective of this study was to examine the role of Head Teachers in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County. The study adopted descriptive survey design with a total of 160 teachers selected from 16 public secondary schools. The instrument was tested in three public secondary schools and a reliability coefficient of 0.7 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The study findings suggested that to improve performance; availability of teaching and learning resources, good teacher-head teacher working relationship, teacher quality and consultative decision making process should be enhanced. In light of these findings, the study concluded that Head Teachers successfully performed their role of managing the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance. It is expected that the study findings will help stakeholders to realize the importance of collective responsibility in the achievement of excellent performance.

Keywords: Head Teacher, Management, Performance, Principal, Role

1.0 Introduction

Education according to Farooq et al. (2011) is "a first step for every human activity". To them education is a means of acquiring knowledge and skills required to increase individuals' productivity and improve quality in life. With a similar view Battle and Lewis (2002) posited that "education plays an important role in the human capital development and is linked with an individual's well-being and opportunity for better living" (as cited by Farooq et al., 2011). In the same vein, Asikhia (2010) attest that "education at secondary school level is supposed to be the bedrock and the foundation towards achievement of higher knowledge in tertiary institutions".

Asikhia (2010) further contends that "education is an investment as well as an instrument that can be used to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, technological, scientific and cultural development in the country". Secondary education therefore is very important in national and individual development. This study focused on the expected management role of Head Teachers or Principals in the performance of public secondary schools in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education with the aim of improving school performance and the learning outcomes of students. As noted by Lydiah and Nasongo (2009), "students' academic performance depends on effective leadership".

According to Heck (2009), students' achievement data are used in the evaluation of schools. Thus, Head Teachers or Principals as administrators cannot delink from schools performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. It is believed that the role of Head Teacher or Principal of public secondary school is to ensure that learners become productive members of the society through improved academic performance. However, in the quest for quality improvement in academic performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, several research studies have pointed out the role of Head Teachers in the management of performance as being more of instructional and transformational.

2.0 Literature Review

The role of Principal or Head Teacher as a leader in public secondary school is ultimately a vital ingredient in creating conditions that lead to higher academic performance. Moreover, according to Leithwood et al. (2008) "Principals are essential for setting the tone of the learning community and modeling good teaching practice" (as cited by Weinstein et al., 2009). "Principals are expected to be all things to all people" Laffey (1980) as cited by King (2006) and according to Education Commission of States (1983) "one determinant of excellence in public schooling is the leadership of the Principal" (as cited by King, 2006). According to these studies Principals are expected to be effective managers especially on issues related to student achievement as they play their role as instructional leaders.

Wan and Jamal (2012) posit that "the role of a Principal is to emphasize his or her role as transformational and instructional leader because effectiveness is ultimately determined by the impact of the Principal on student learning". In the same vein, Andrews (1987) found out that "Principal's instructional leadership is positively related to student achievement in school examinations" (as cited by Sim, 2011). Andrews (1987) further reaffirms that "teachers have positive perceptions towards the effectiveness of instructional leadership when the classroom environment is good" (as cited by Sim, 2011). However, Scott (1983) attest that "Principals and other significant groups who work with them have expectations regarding the Principals managerial role but disagree significantly about the role of the Principal as instructional leader" (as cited by King, 2006).

Crum and Sherman (2008) argue that "the Principals provided valuable insights into their daily practices that foster an environment which is supportive of high-student achievement. These practices are categorized in developing personnel and facilitating leadership, responsible delegation and empowering team, recognizing ultimate accountability, communicating and rapport, facilitating instruction, and managing change" (as cited by Wan & Jamal, 2012). Similar Research studies by Leithwood et al. (2008) and Firestone et al. (2001) posit that "the role of the Principal is crucial to promoting and supporting teachers achievements, creating a positive work environment for teachers, and improving staff morale, which also creates the right learning environment for students" (as cited by Weinstein et al., 2009). Moreover, Firestone et al. (2001) further suggest that "an effective Principal can shape the outcomes on test scores by supporting creative and effective teaching" (as cited by Weinstein et al., 2009).

Farooq et al. (2011) reaffirm that "the quality of students' performance remains a top priority for educators". In light of their argument local, regional, national and global differences are created by education. With a similar view, Blumende (2001) attest that "the decline in the quality of education cannot be ignored because of the significant role education plays as an instrument of societal transformation and development" (as cited by Akinsolu, 2010). Therefore, education has been seen to play a pivotal role in human and societal development agenda.

The Head Teachers role is very important for provision of quality secondary education (Musungu, 2007). According to this study Head Teachers role has been associated with high student achievement and to attain this teacher motivation, improved internal teachers' supervision and provision of more relevant textbooks and equipment for use in libraries and laboratories respectively should be enhanced. Ubben and Hughes (1997) are of the similar view that "schools can make a difference to the level of students' performance; however, good or poor school depends on the person who leads it" (as cited by Sim, 2011). In the same vein, (Austin, 1979; Brookover, 1977; Goodlad, 1984; Lezotte, 1992; Malen and Ogawa, 1988) contend that the key figure in a school's success or failure is the school principal (as cited by King, 2006).

Wan and Jamal (2012) refers to the Principal as a leader and went further to suggest that complex organizations such as schools need Principals with leadership characteristics to play an active role in steering the organization towards excellence. Beare et al. (1989) concur with this view by pointing out that "outstanding leadership has invariably emerged as a key characteristic of outstanding schools" (as cited by Wan & Jamal, 2012). With a similar opinion to that of Wan and Jamal (2012) and Beare et al. (1989), Heck (1992) contends that "strong Principal leadership can result in improved student achievement, despite a variety of environmental problems such as low socio-economic status, students backgrounds, and limited parental participation in a child's education" (as cited by Scot, 2008). According to Acheson and Smith (1996) "the Principal must play a role in the teaching and learning of teachers in terms of supervision, assessment, staff development and training services" (as cited by Sim, 2011).

The studies by Ubben and Hughes (1997), Acheson and Smith (1996) and Wan and Jamal (2012) clearly point out that the role played by the Head Teacher is instrumental in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance. Musungu and Nasongo (2008) contend that "Head Teachers are required to improve the management of schools by setting clear vision and communicating the vision to students. The Head Teachers should also provide instructional leadership of achieving the vision and should themselves be present in all institutional activities that account for students' academic performance".

A study by Heyneman and Loxley (1983) reaffirm the existence of a high association between students' performance and length of training of the Head Teachers. This study implies that Head Teachers qualification and managerial skills play a vital role in improved performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. Similarly, research study by Odubuker (2007) clearly pointed out that the Head Teachers management training was critical to the performance of the school (as cited by Nsubuga, 2008).

3.0 Statement of the Problem

The performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education which is measured by the accomplishment of an examination task through examination results posted as marks or scores and mean grade remain one of the major goals of a school. However, it has been noted that while some students in some public secondary schools in Turkana County perform well, others perform below the expected standards. This has raised concern about schools whose students do not perform well and the role the Head Teacher play in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

As much as the trend in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County causes concern, it is not yet established why performance of students in some public secondary schools falls below the expected standards. However, there is lack of sufficient research in the case of public secondary schools in Turkana County with regard to the role of the Head Teacher in the management of Kenya Certificate Secondary Education performance. Therefore, this study intends to ascertain the role of Head Teachers in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County.

4.0 Theoretical Justification for the Study

This study was informed by Role theory (Organizational theory). This theory according to Getzels and Guba (1957) social model, viewed the school as a social system with two primary components; the individual and the institution, respectively. To them, management is an organizational structure made up of a hierarchy of super ordinate - subordinate relationships which are both independent and interactive. In light of their argument, the hierarchy forms the basis of assigning roles and assists in achieving goals of an organization. Therefore, role theory based on the analysis of human behavior is suitable in explaining the role played by the Head Teacher in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

5.0 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework represents the relationship between the independent, intervening and dependent variables. It has been developed from retrieved literature and related theory.
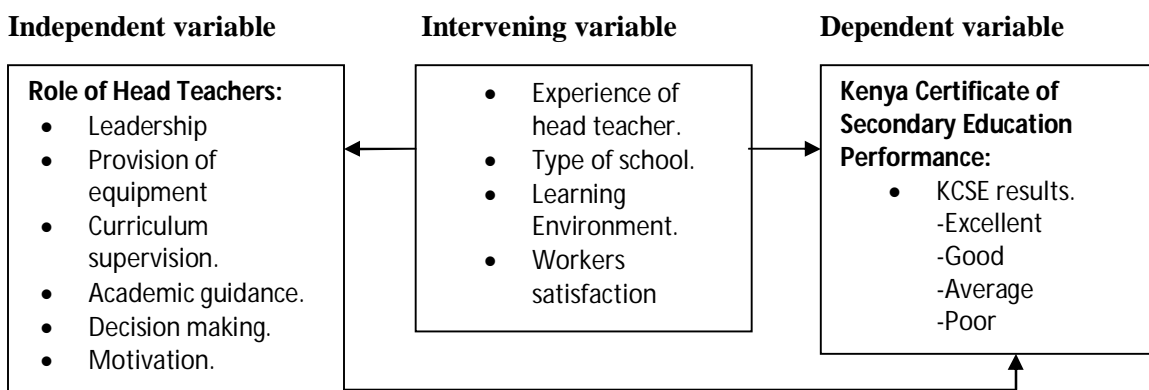
Independent variable   **Intervening variable**   **Dependent variable**

Figure 1: The Role of Head Teachers in the Management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance in Public Secondary Schools

6.0 Research Question

This study explored this research question: Which role do Head Teachers play in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County?

7.0 Research Design and Methodology

This study was conducted in public secondary schools in Turkana County, Kenya. This was because performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in some public secondary schools was falling below the expected standards. The target population for the study included 29 public secondary schools in Turkana County with a population of 29 Head Teachers, 213 teachers and 8309 students. There are 8 Boys, 7 Girls and 14 mixed public secondary schools. The accessible population was Teachers in 16 public secondary schools which have presented students for Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examinations. The study collected data from teachers from the sampled public secondary schools in Turkana County. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The information for the study was obtained from a sample rather than the whole population. A sample is any group on which data is obtained (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

According to Chadwick (2001) and Cochran (1977) a researcher can use Slovenes formula to estimate the sampling size. Slovenes formula for sample size was used to determine the number of schools and teachers to be included in the sample and thus, $n = N/\{1+N[e]^2\}$ where n = sample size, N = total population and e = acceptable error margin of 5% for categorical data. From this formula a total of 57 teachers from boys, 38 teachers from girls and 65 teachers from mixed schools were randomly selected from the 16 public secondary schools as indicated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Sample size

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

According to Huck and Cormier (1996), a stratified random sample is one in which the population has been divided into subgroups, with a random sample then selected from each subgroup. To obtain teachers for the sample, stratified sampling method was used. The teachers were grouped into various strata according to gender, type of school and population size of all schools. Thus to achieve the proportional allocation, a school was taken as a stratum. Proportional allocation was achieved using the formula adopted by Agresti (2002) for categorical data as illustrated $n_i = N_i \, n/N$ where N_i = Stratum (school) population size, n = Total sample size and N = Total strata (All schools) population size.

8.0 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

The content and face validity of the research instrument was determined by the researcher discussing the items with the supervisors and colleagues in the department of education for proper scrutiny and further advice on validity of the content. To test and establish reliability of research instrument, Piloting was done in three public secondary schools not included in the sample. This is because these schools shared similar characteristics with schools under study. The reliability coefficient of 0.7 was obtained indicating that the instrument was reliable.

9.0 Results and Discussion

Head Teachers Role in the Management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education Performance

The objective was to examine the role of Head Teachers in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County.

The results of the study were presented in table 2 below.

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

Variable	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
Adequate curriculum supervision is provided by head teacher	2 (1.3%)	10 (6.3%)	25 (15.6%)	99 (61.9%)	24 (15.0%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher checks students class work and teachers records regularly	7 (4.4%)	42 (26.3%)	13 (8.1%)	86 (53.8%)	12 (7.5%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher provide instructional materials for teaching various subjects	2 (1.3%)	13 (8.1%)	20 (12.5%)	86 (53.8%)	39 (24.4%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher pays serious attention to discipline	5 (3.1%)	17 (10.6%)	25 (15.6%)	49 (30.6%)	64 (40.0%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher is dedicated to teaching his or her subjects	11 (6.9%)	11 (6.9%)	14 (8.8%)	63 (39.4%)	61 (38.1%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher has adequate teaching skills	3 (1.9%)	1 (0.6%)	10 (6.3%)	68 (42.5%)	78 (48.8%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher solicits for qualified teachers	3 (1.9%)	2 (1.3%)	8 (5.0%)	84 (52.5%)	63 (39.4%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher provides guidance to teachers and students	2 (1.3%)	16 (10.0%)	15 (9.4%)	58 (36.3%)	69 (43.1%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher motivate teachers, students and support staff	15 (9.4%)	41 (25.6%)	5 (3.1%)	35 (21.9%)	64 (40.0%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher relates well with teachers, students and support staff	10 (6.3%)	8 (5.0%)	35 (21.9%)	64 (40.0%)	43 (26.9%)	160 (100%)
Head teacher is always available in school	12 (7.5%)	50 (31.3%)	24 (15.0%)	44 (27.5%)	30 (18.8%)	160 (100%)
Decision making process by head teacher is consultative and inclusive	20 (12.5%)	45 (28.1%)	14 (8.8%)	49 (30.6%)	32 (20.0%)	160 (100%)
Total	**92 (4.8%)**	**256 (13.3%)**	**208 (10.8%)**	**785 (40.9%)**	**579 (30.2%)**	**1920 (100%)**

9.1 Adequate curriculum supervision is provided by Head Teacher

The majority of the respondents; 123 (76.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed that Head Teachers provide adequate curriculum supervision, 12 (7.6%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed while 25 (15.6%) of the respondents were undecided. This showed that teachers accept that their Head Teachers played their role in supervising the curriculum. This finding is in tandem with Mahmood (1993) who observed that "most of the research findings in the literature strongly imply that the Principal is the most important person in providing leadership for improved instruction and better curricula" (as cited by Wan & Jamal, 2012). Sarason (1982) however, has a different view that most Head Teachers spend more time on supervision of financial and discipline matters than supervision of curriculum instruction (as cited by Ambogo, 2012).

9.2 Head Teacher checks students' class work and teachers' professional records regularly

Regarding whether the Head Teacher checks students' class work and teachers professional records regularly; the majority of the respondents 98 (61.3%) either strongly agreed or agreed, 49 (30.7%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 13 (8.1%) were undecided. This indicated that the teachers recognize Head Teachers efforts in enforcing the school academic guidelines that enhance students' academic performance. These findings are in tandem with that of Musungu and Nasongo (2008) who argued that provision of instructional leadership and the involvement of Head Teacher in all institutional activities that accounts for students' academic performance have significant influence on students' performance.

9.3 Head Teacher provide instructional materials for teaching various subjects

On provision of instructional materials for teaching various subjects; majority of the respondents 125 (78.2%) either strongly agreed or agreed while 20 (12.5%) were undecided and 15 (9.4%) of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed. The findings from this study are in agreement with that of Musungu (2007) who attest that the role of Head Teachers is strongly associated with high student achievement and to attain it the Head Teacher should avail more teaching materials.

9.4 Head Teacher pays serious attention to discipline

Concerning whether the Head Teacher pays serious attention to discipline; majority of the respondents; 113 (70.6%) either strongly agreed or agreed, 25 (15.6%) were undecided while 22 (13.7%) either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

9.5 Head Teacher is dedicated to teaching his or her subjects

In regards to Head Teachers dedication to teaching their subjects; the majority of the respondents (77.5%) either strongly agreed or agreed while 13.8% either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

The study findings point out that apart from curriculum supervision the Head Teacher does the effective teaching of his or her subjects in order to enhance academic performance. These findings are in tandem with those of Sergiovanni (1984) on leadership and excellent in schooling where he defined instructional leadership as "the ability to develop educational programs which include abilities to interpret the curriculum and determine objectives of teaching, the diversity of teaching methods, determine classroom management, provide learning climate, implement instructional innovation, able to influence and coordinate the teachers and students in order to achieve goals of school education" (as cited by Sim, 2011). Along the same thought, Sim (2011) stressed that "Principals need to have the knowledge of learning theory and effective teaching". In this context the Principals as instructional leaders must have sufficient knowledge, experience and skills to participate in effective teaching of their subjects".

9.6 Head Teacher has adequate teaching skill

Majority of the respondents (91.3%) either strongly agreed or agreed that the Head Teachers have adequate teaching skill and 2.5% either strongly disagreed or disagreed. This showed that teachers perceived that their head teachers played their role in expressing the teaching skill. These findings are in tandem with that of John West-Burnham (2001) who argued that "knowledge and skills are needed to build personal values, self awareness, feelings and moral capabilities" (as cited by Sim, 2011).

9.7 Head Teacher solicits for qualified teachers

In relation to whether Head Teacher solicits for qualified teachers; most of the respondents (91.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed, 3.2% either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 5% were undecided.

9.8 Head Teacher provides guidance to teachers and students

With Regards to whether the Head Teacher provides guidance to both teachers and students' majority of the respondents (79.4%) either strongly agreed or agreed while 11.3% and 9.4% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed and undecided respectively.

9.9 Head Teacher motivates teachers, students and support staff

The majority of the respondents (61.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed that Head Teachers in their schools motivate teachers, students and support staff while 35.0% either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 3.1% of the respondents were undecided. Sergiovanni (1990) concurs with these findings by suggesting that "a leader should lead by bartering, offering something in exchange for something else because exchange is satisfying to both parties". In the same vein Ngala and Odebero (2009) contend that a positive relationship between teacher motivations practices and student achievement exists.

9.10 Head Teacher relates well with teachers, students and support staff

In regards to whether the Head Teacher relates well with teachers, students and support staff most of the respondents (69.9%) either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement while 21.9% were undecided and 11.3% either strongly disagreed or disagreed. Ambogo (2012) concurs with these findings when he says that "school managers require self understanding and acceptance as well as appreciation, empathy and consideration for others".

9.11 Head Teacher is always available in school

On whether the Head Teacher is always available in school; it was found that the majority of the respondents (46.3%) either strongly agreed or agreed that Head Teachers were always present in school while 38.8% either strongly disagreed or disagreed.

9.12 Decision making process by Head Teacher is consultative and inclusive

Majority of the respondents (50.6%) either strongly agreed or agreed that their Head Teachers advocate for consultative and inclusive decision making process. 40.6% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the item while 8.8% of the respondents were undecided. This finding is in tandem with that of Marks and Printy (2003) which revealed that "school leaders seeking to improve academic performance of their schools often involve teachers in dialogue and decision making" (as cited by Mwangi, 2009).

10.0 Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the study made the following conclusions in relation to teachers' views concerning the role Head Teachers play in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance in public secondary schools in Turkana County.

i. Most teachers had positive views towards Head Teachers role in the management of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

ii. There was awareness among teachers on the role of Head Teachers in ensuring and determining the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

iii. Head Teachers successfully performed the role of managing the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education performance.

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