



**INFLUENCE OF STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN GILGIL SUB COUNTY,
KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out the influence of stakeholder participation practice by BOM on pupils KCPE performance in Gilgil sub county, Kenya. The study employed the descriptive survey research design and the target population comprised of all the 69 head teachers, the public primary schools BOM chairs and class six, seven and eight class teachers in the 69 primary schools in Gilgil Sub-county and the Sub County Education Officer. The stratified random sampling method was used for segmenting the respondents in the different strata because the target population was heterogeneous. Fifty percent of the population in all the strata's was considered for the study .The researcher used questionnaires and an interview guide as the instruments for data collection. The study found out that: Most of the respondents deemed their schools as having enhanced capacities to engage parents in the activities carried out the schools had suffered situations of disharmony attributed to feelings of non-involvement in the decision making processes. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should put in place measures to ensure the governance systems in the public primary schools instill the essence of democratic governance.

Keywords: *Stakeholder Involvement, Academic Performance*

INTRODUCTION

Corporate governance is the system of ensuring structured association between the management and shareholders with regard to corporate decision making and control in an organization (Hermes, 2012). Governance is dictated by the legal system and an agreed standard of systems of behaviour allowable within the membership of the institution. Corporate governance is generally concerned with conformance and performance. In conformance the issues of concern are compliance with legal requirements, industry standards and accountability to relevant stakeholders (Hermes, 2012).

The linkage between corporate governance and performance lies in the multi-dimensional nature of institutional governance whereby there are internal and external environments (Jensen, 2013). Corporate governance aims at enhancing internal governance practices through structures and control mechanisms that result in efficient and effective operations (Higgs, 2014). Primarily, good governance practices demand a separation of roles between boards of directors and the management to strengthen adequate oversight and supervision, critical in avoiding conflict and ensuring clear accountability. Poor governance renders an organization an underperformer which fails to accomplish stated goals, and stands to lose the backing and goodwill of various stakeholders (Mace, 2012).

The practice of corporate governance in institutions of learning is gradually evolving owing to the high demands with regard to social accountability (Shreetal, 2013). The institutions of learning are charged with the responsibility of ensuring accountability to the membership and thus ought to exercise the ideal standards of corporate governance. Guidelines given by UNESCO, as regards the envisaged standards of corporate governance show that many schools globally in varied jurisdictions do not adhere to the expected standards (UNESCO, 2014).

In the United States of America the individual states are charged with the mandate of continuous supervision to ensure that the prescribed standards are actualized as pertains to governance in the institutions (Slarhabi, 2011). The task of running the institutions is charged on the individual administrators but they also work in harmony with the boards of management mandated to oversee the institutions. Instances of failure to have harmonious coexistence within the schools are minimized.

In many Asian countries the local communities are obligated to provide responsible persons who assist the school administrators in running and overseeing the schools (Mushar, 2011). This infuses a sense of ownership of the administrative programmes in place and forces the

institutions to adopt consultative approaches as regards the issue of running the institutions. It confers an element of inclusivity in the administrative programmes (Burke, 2013).

In Africa the challenge of day to day administration in the institutions of learning is charged to the authorities who exercise delegated power by virtue of statutory obligation (Wanzare, 2008). Governments are obligated to ensure that the academic programmes run efficiently and different jurisdictions have their own systems of running the academic programs. The schools in concert with local communities ensure that the obligation to parents and learners are met.

In Kenya the Basic Education Act 2014 has provisions for greater scrutiny in the running and management of public institutions of learning (GoK, 2014). The Act specifies the need for the invocation of stakeholder participation by virtue of constituting Boards of Management. It ensures inclusivity in the management programmes and demystifies the administrative programs. The enactment of the Public Procurement and Disposal Act has provisions for general financial management of public institutions (GoK, 2005). The Public Finance Management Act 2012 equally has stipulated standards as regards the conduct of public institutions in the wake of running and managing their fiscal operations (GoK, 2012). The Ministry of Education has made efforts to ensure training of the head teachers in public finance administration and management as a measure of instituting the requisite corporate governance standards (GoK, 2012).

The practice of ensuring continuous teaching and learning supervision is equally core to the management of public primary schools as a measure of seeking to have conformity to the expected standards. Surveys carried out by the World Bank (2015) showed that teacher's absenteeism was a factor which negatively impacted on the academic performance of pupils in public primary. The sub county had previously posted very good performance in KCPE in comparison to the other sub counties (Nakuru County Education Office, 2016). The trends depicted declining performance from the year 2012 to 2015 in Gilgil Sub County which is a contrast to the overall performance of Nakuru County which was fairly stable. Gilgil also showed lower mean scores from 2010- 2015. The researcher sought to find out whether the previous situation whereby the schools operated without due checks and balances as pertains corporate governance is a factor that had contributed to the declining performance.

Statement of the problem

Corporate governance is an emerging field of management and it has been adopted in the education sector (Namisi, 2012). The need to ensure optimal academic performance is essential. Stakeholder inclusivity in the systems of administration has been encouraged by MOEST through BOM, PTA/ PA and school sponsors as well as corporate bodies (Metrick, & Ishii, 2012). Previous studies on management have focused on financial management skills of head teachers of secondary schools (Irungu, 2013) while studies on corporate governance practices have emphasized on institutional performance as a measure of achievement (Kabaiya, 2012).

Kenya Certificate of Primary Education performance in Gilgil Sub County has been declining. There is little literature on the influence of corporate governance practices on pupils academic performance in public primary schools in Gilgil Sub County despite the interventions made to ensure improved academic performance. The study thus sought to fill this gap by investigating the influence of stakeholder participation practice on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Gilgil sub county, Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Stakeholder participation in decision making in public primary schools and pupils academic performance

Good administration and governance programmes may translate into goodwill stimulating improved pupil academic performance. This can only be achieved at the advent of ideal participation by parents, sponsors and adjoining communities around the public institutions of learning (EFA, 2012). Participation by local communities in the school activities provides goodwill in the academic programmes. This enhances the governance prism owing to collective responsibility that spurs improved academic performance (EFA, 2012).

Parental involvement enhances the management of public learning institutions. The leadership in the schools assures the ability to have optimal parental participation in the schools governance (UNESCO, 2011). Sound structures in the administrative systems assure public institutions the ability to realize the value of inclusivity. Consultative leadership enhances the participation of communities around the schools entailing the parents to assure the success of the programmes in place (UNESCO, 2011). This gives the school communities leverage as pertains to decision making.

Involvement of the parents and sponsors of the schools can be key to assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. A study carried out in Australia showed that the ability to ensure mutual participation by parents and community stakeholders enabled delivery of the envisaged ideals by the schools (Fitzberald, 2011). The study found out that in schools whereby the local community leadership was directly involved decision making, the capacity to post good academic performance was assured.

Failure to involve the parents and local administrative leadership in decision making negatively affects management of public institutions in African countries. This occasion's lack of goodwill and failure to appreciate the decisions made (Matt, & Matt, 2010). The prevailing situation can be attributed to the failure to synchronize community aspirations with the leadership systems employed. It is also a pointer to shortcomings in the governance structures in place. The underlying factor contributed to poor academic performance in the public schools.

The need to realign the organizational systems and structures in the leadership of public schools in Kenya has been vouched for. This is evidenced by the leadership systems in many schools which do not conform to organizational ethos and practices. The challenge of poor leadership owing to the failure to ensure consultative decision making was evident in many schools Too, Keter, Kosgei, (2012). This caused frosty relations accrued from misgivings occasioned by the aggrieved parties.

Theoretical framework

The study was premised on the Stewardship Theory as postulated by Donaldson and Davis (1991). The theory is based on the human relations perspective. In the context of the study, it takes charge of the internal relations in the public schools as motivated by the influence of the association between the Board of Management and the head teachers. The theory is premised on the aspect of stewardship which places the burden of guidance provision on the managers and prods them as effective stewards of the organizations resources (Pastoriza, 1991).

The Boards of Management are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the resources of the organization are protected and safeguarded. This fulfills the provisions of corporate governance tenets (Arino, 1991). The premise of Boards of Management ensures that board members are selected on the basis of their expertise and previous wealth of experience. The theory has an emphasis on provision of guidance and leadership which are key tenets of corporate governance. The theory identified with the provisions for the tenets employed by

the individual schools gradually translating to the requisite goodwill which motivates improved academic performance. This may ensure that they get to realize good academic performance. In the event of having a Board of Management constituted in line with the dictates of the requisite provisions, the schools may enjoy the right leadership standards and have the same translate to good academic performance.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised of all the 69 head teachers, the public primary schools 69 BOM chairs, 105 class six, seven and eight class teachers in the 69 primary schools in Gilgil Sub-county and the Sub County Education Officer. The schools were distributed in the three zones of Elementaita (25), Karunga (22) and Mbaruk (22). The stratified random sampling method was used for segmenting the respondents in the different strata. The sample entails Elementaita 13, Mbaruk 11 and Karunga 11 head teachers, 35 BOM chairs and 105 class teachers for standard six, seven and eight which is 50% of the respondents in every stratum. The study thus had a sample size of 141 respondents who were the head teachers, BOM chairs and the sub county education officer. The head teachers, teachers and BOM chairs were picked by way of simple random sampling method from each stratum. The researcher used questionnaires and an interview guide as the instruments for data collection. Data analysis entailed both quantitative and qualitative procedures. Quantitative data analysis entailed descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics entailed mean, mode and percentages. Inferential statistics entailed the chi-square tests, Spearman Rank Order.

RESULTS

Good administration and governance programmes may translate into goodwill stimulating improved pupil academic performance. This can only be achieved at the advent of ideal participation by parents, sponsors and adjoining communities around the public institutions of learning (EFA, 2012). Participation by local communities in the school activities provides goodwill in the academic programmes. This enhances the governance prism owing to collective responsibility that spurs improved academic performance (EFA, 2012). The study sought to find out how the stakeholder involvement affected pupils academic performance in the study area.

The respondents were asked to rate their schools in terms of their abilities to engage parents in the activities carried out.

Table 1 Ability to engage parents

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
to a high degree	29	45.3
to a fair degree	21	32.8
to a low degree	14	21.9
Total	64	100.0

The responses showed that most of the respondents (45.3%) (n=29) deemed their schools having enhanced capacities to engage parents in the activities carried out. This was attributed to the responses proffered whereby they deemed the engagement between the parents and the schools to have been to a high degree. This was an indication that the schools strived to ensure that the parents were involved in the pertinent activities undertaken in the realms of ensuring optimal academic performance by the pupils. The BOM chairs shared similar sentiments as the teachers. They were of the view that their schools ensured that the parents fully participated in different activities that were undertaken with an aim of enhancing the academic performance of the pupils. It can be interpreted to mean that the schools strived to ensure that the pupils perform well in the academic activities and parental involvement was a key imitative undertaken to enhance pupils academic outcomes.

The activities that entailed participation by parents included engagement in pupil and teacher motivation programs with a view of assuring improved academic performance. Interaction in academic clinics was also confirmed with a view of monitoring and having updates on individual pupils progress reports as pertains to the academic achievement. These responses were confirmation that the parents were involved in specific programs clearly earmarked towards assured pupil academic performance improvement. They were also effectively involved in programs that enhanced their positions as pertinent stakeholders in the school academic programs.

The study findings confirmed previous works by (UNESCO, 2011) which called for parental involvement to enhance the management of public learning institutions. The leadership in the schools assures the ability to have optimal parental participation in the schools governance. Sound structures in the administrative systems assure public institutions the ability to realize the value of inclusivity. Consultative leadership enhances the participation of communities

around the schools entailing the parents to assure the success of the programmes in place (UNESCO, 2011). This gives the school communities leverage as pertains to decision making.

Responses on the instances of failure by some members of the school communities to appreciate the activities carried out were as shown in table 2

Table 2 Failure to appreciate activities carried out

Responses	frequency	Percentage
Often	58	90.6
not at all	6	9.4
Total	64	100.0

Responses in table 2 show that there were many instances whereby the members of the school communities had not appreciated the activities carried out within the institutions. The responses proffered by the teachers and head teachers were a reflection of instances of discontent by the school communities as regards the activities undertaken within them. This was an indication that in some situations certain decisions and programs of events did not go down well with some stakeholders thus their misgivings about them. This was an indication that situation whereby the stakeholders felt that they had not been fully involved in particular events and activities sufficed in the schools leading to their non-appreciation. The BOM chair equally proffered similar sentiments. The study findings can be interpreted to mean that the schools had evidenced internal strife attributed to disenchantment with the decision making processes about the activities undertaken leading to their non-appreciation. This can be alluded to non-participatory decision making processes within the institutions.

The responses confirmed previous works by Fitzberald, (2011) who called for involvement of the parents and sponsors of the schools can be key to assuring and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. A study carried out in Australia showed that the ability to ensure mutual participation by parents and community stakeholders enabled delivery of the envisaged ideals by the schools. The study found out that in schools whereby the local community leadership was directly involved decision making, the capacity to post good academic performance was assured.

The teachers and head teachers confirmed that their individual schools had suffered situation of disharmony attributed to feelings of noninvolvement in the decision making processes and

the conduct of school activities. The responses were an indication that the schools had instances whereby engagement between them and all the stakeholders had been compromised to the situations of creating disharmony. This was an indication that there was breakdown in the internal communication processes occasioning feelings of alienation in some stakeholders when certain decisions did not go down well with them. It can be interpreted to mean that the situation of stakeholder participation and involvement in the school activities had been compromised in some institutions leading to resentment in the stakeholders within the institutions thus impairing the organizational order.

The study findings identified with the position of Matt, & Matt, (2010) who were of the view that failure to involve the parents and local administrative leadership in decision making negatively affects management of public institutions in African countries. This occasion's lack of goodwill and failure to appreciate the decisions made. The prevailing situation can be attributed to the failure to synchronize community aspirations with the leadership systems employed. It is also a pointer to shortcomings in the governance structures in place. The underlying factor contributed to poor academic performance in the public schools.

Table 3 Chi-square test on the activities carried out not being appreciated and provisions for democratic systems of governance in the schools

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.345 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	30.827	3	.000
N of Valid Cases	64		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .75.

Table 3 shows χ^2 (46.345^a, N=64) = 30.827, $p < 0.000$. The calculated statistic $\chi^2 = 46.345$ was found to be more than the tabled critical value of $\chi^2 = 30.827$. It can be interpreted to mean that, statistically, there was a very significant relationship between the activities carried out not being appreciated and presence of democratic systems of governance at $\alpha = 0.75$. It denoted the essence of the governance systems playing a great role on the capacity to ensure democratic systems are in place.

Responses by BOM chairs on involving parents in setting academic targets

Table 4 Parental involvement in setting academic targets

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	28	88

No	4	12
Total	32	100

Table 4 shows that most of the BOMs involved parents in setting academic targets thus confirmation of their participation. This reflected wide stakeholder participation in the school management programs.

Table 4 Lickert scale on stakeholder involvement in the school activities

		BOM affected the pupils academic performance		Total
		Yes	No	
provisions for democratic systems of governance	Strongly disagree	2	0	2
	Disagree			
	agree	19	0	19
	strongly agree	3	8	11
Total		24	8	32
school administration and teachers agree on academic targets	agree	9	13	22
		42	0	42
	Strongly agree			
Total		51	13	64
parents are involved in monitoring the achievement of academic targets	Strongly agree	0	4	4
	Disagree	0	8	8
	Agree	32	1	33
	strongly agree	19	0	19
Total		51	13	64
pupils appreciate provisions for parental involvement in meeting academic targets	Strongly disagree	0	4	4
	Disagree	3	9	12
	agree	31	0	31
	strongly agree	17	0	17
Total		51	13	64
mutual relations between the wider community	Strongly disagree	0	5	5
	Disagree	0	6	6
	agree	32	2	34
	strongly agree	19	0	19
Total		51	13	64
employment of extra teachers	Strongly disagree	0	13	13
	Disagree	21	0	21
	agree	14	0	14
	strongly agree	16	0	16

Total	51	13	64
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Most of the respondents had the view that their schools had made provisions for democratic systems of governance to ensure ownership of the decisions made. This was an indication of the fact that the schools appreciated ideal systems of governance whereby the contributions of all the pertinent stakeholders in the decisions made mattered. This was a reflection of situations whereby respect for different shades of opinion and participation in the decision making processes was taken care of as a measure of ensuring inclusivity hence ownership of the decisions. It can be interpreted to mean that the institutions had strived to employee stakeholder involvement as a measure of allowing the appreciation of individual positions and the ultimate collective ownership of the decisions made. Instances whereby democratic systems of governance had not been embraced sufficed in some institutions. This was a pointer to situation of entrenched positions by the leadership which were forced on the membership with no option for recourse. This may portend danger to the institutions with regard to capacity to fully undertake their internal programs cohesively.

The capacity of the school administration and teachers agree on academic targets was confirmed by most of the respondents. This was an indication that the schools administration and teachers had mutualism to the extent of agreeing on the targets for the academic performance envisaged. This was an indication of collective ownership of the school programs thus the mutualism in terms of setting the performance targets in the schools. The responses equally reflected synergy between the schools administration and the teachers in terms of having a sense of purpose and clarity of vision in the envisaged ideals of improved academic performance. It can be interpreted to mean that the responsibility of setting academic targets was a collective initiative between the administration and the teachers and it confirmed the inclusivity with regards to stakeholder participation in the academic programs in the institutions. Dissent as regards the capacity of the school administration and teachers to agree on academic targets reflected instances of failure to have good working relationships. In some cases as pertains to the setting of academic targets. This was a pointer to disharmony in the affected institutions.

Most of the respondents' affirmed that the parents were involved in monitoring the achievement of academic targets in the schools. This was confirmation that academic target setting was a collective initiative between the schools teachers, administrators and parents. The responses brought to the fore the ability of all the critical stakeholders in the school

fraternities to forge common positions as pertains to the academic performance of the pupils' involved.

Most of the respondents confirmed that the pupils appreciated provisions for parental involvement in meeting academic targets. The responses denoted enhanced capacities with regards to the ability to have mutual relations between the parents and the schools. The relations had assured the involvement of parents in monitoring the pupils' academic performance in collaboration with the schools. Most of the respondents confirmed that mutual relations between the wider communities and the schools ensured achievement of academic targets. The responses denoted the essence of harmonious coexistence between the schools and the wider communities which served as their catchment areas. The responses were confirmation that the schools worked towards ensuring inclusivity as a measure of having the goodwill cascading to the level of assuring them harmonious interaction with the communities. Harmonious interaction was a feat which assured the schools non disruptive activities and the ability to ensure that the pupils benefitted from the resultant goodwill. The responses brought to the fore the essence of having the schools relate well with the communities around them as a measure of ensuring a good environment for the pupils enough to have them attain improved academic performance.

The BOM chairs confirmed that their schools established the organs of management in democratic ways which was confirmation of the stakeholder involvement practices carried out. This was an indication that the BOM's in office drew general acceptance from the school stakeholders. It was also confirmation that the requisite provisions laid down by statute were adhered to in the constitution of the BOM's. Parental involvement in academic activities was confirmed by the BOM members and this was a measure that had played a positive role in the improvement of the academic performance in the schools. Similar sentiments were shared by the Sub County Director of Education who confirmed that the schools had strived to ensure stakeholder participation in the decision making processes and other activities pertinent to them as a measure of ensuring improved academic performance.

The study findings confirmed the position taken by Too, Keter, Kosgei, (2012) who argued that the need to realign the organizational systems and structures in the leadership of public schools in Kenya has been vouched for. This is evidenced by the leadership systems in many schools which do not conform to organizational ethos and practices. The challenge of poor leadership owing to the failure to ensure consultative decision making was evident in many

schools. This caused frosty relations accrued from misgivings occasioned by the aggrieved parties.

Conclusions

Most of the schools had made provisions for democratic systems of governance to ensure ownership of the decisions made by employing stakeholder involvement. There was collective ownership of the school programs thus the mutualism in terms of setting the performance targets in the schools. The schools worked towards ensuring inclusivity as a measure of having the goodwill cascading to the level of assuring them harmonious interaction with the communities.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should put in place measures to ensure the governance systems in the public primary schools instill the essence of democratic governance. This is by way of stakeholder participation in the decision making processes with a view of ensuring that the decisions made are owned by all the stakeholders. Provisions should equally be made to ensure that school administration and teachers relate in a harmonious manner with a view of reducing incidences of strife within the institutions. Emphasis should also be placed on enhancing the relations between the community members and the schools with a view of ensuring that the institutions achieve amiable environments enough to warrant the participation of the membership in all the activities that are called for.

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