

Effects of Board of Governor's Decision Making in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Uriri District, Kenya

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges faced by the BOG in the management of public secondary schools in Uriri District Kenya. Objective of the article was to establish the effect of Board of Governors' decision making in the management of public secondary schools in Uriri District Kenya. The research question was; how do the BOGs decision making affect the management of public secondary schools Uriri District Kenya? The study employed survey design. The study population included all head teachers, all PTA chairpersons and all BOG members in the 18 public secondary schools. Purposive sampling was employed in the study. Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview guide. Four of the schools were used in pilot study to act as pre-test to the instruments of data collection to ensure their reliability. Face validity of the instruments was determined by three experts in the department of Educational Administration and Planning of the University of Nairobi and the impressions on the instruments improved based on the supervisors' advice before using them for data collection. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics in form of frequency counts, percentages. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software was used for data analysis. Findings revealed that BOG members were involved in decision making but most of their contributions were controlled by principals. It was recommended that the BOG members should be more empowered in decision making so as to assist the head teachers effectively. It was also recommended that the BOG and the PTA should be trained in areas of secondary schools management and finance so that they can effectively take part in the running of the schools.

Keywords: Kenya, Principals, Board of governors, Decision making, schools management

Introduction

School management has run a long race over the past years all over the world. Beaty (1985), traces the school management Boards to a period as early as between (1870) and 1902. In Kenya, the Education Act (1968), Cap 211 laws of Kenya, section 10, gave rise to the establishment of Board of Governors (BOG) for any maintained or assisted schools, other than a primary school and maintained by a local authority. Therefore, the Act in essence paved the

way for the establishment of school boards for secondary schools, teacher colleges, polytechnics, institutions of technology, except universities. BOGs were established to manage public secondary schools on behalf of the government. The Gachathi Committee Report (Republic of Kenya, 1976) endorsed that secondary schools be run by BOG and given a larger degree of delegation in order to enhance effective management of schools, especially the need to maintain discipline. The BOG consists of 13 members appointed by the Minister (Republic of Kenya, 1980; Ali; 2005) through a selected committee comprising of provincial administration, local leaders, and members of parliament and local councilors, sponsors, local education officer and the head teacher. This committee selects three persons representing local community, 4 representing bodies and organizations like sponsor and 3 representing special interest groups. Once officially appointed by the minister, the ten members select the chair person / the chairman of the board and co-opt 3 other persons from the Parents Teachers Association (PTA) into the board (Opot, 2006). Members of Board of Governors and school committee are appointed from among persons who have qualities of commitment, competence and experience which would enhance the management and development of educational institutions (MOEST, 1988). The head teacher of every secondary school is a member and a secretary of the board. He/she reports and is accountable to the board (World Bank, 2008). Secondary school heads are experienced teachers/ principals selected on the basis of their seniority (Mulkeen, 2005). They manage at least three different aspects of school life including academics, finances and general administration. They are part of the BOGs and have an influence on the appointment of members of the BOG. Kindiki, (2009), indicated that many school head teachers often emphasize the selection of less educated BOG members who will rarely question their ineptitude in running of school. Thus, rather than selecting more qualified BOG members they end up selecting close relatives or less qualified members of the BOG. This anomaly confirms the Kenyan report of task force of student unrest in schools which pointed out the poor educational background of BOGs as a factor towards the unrest (MOEST, 2001). Age and experience is also mentioned as another challenge considered alongside academic qualifications that face members of the BOGs (Kindiki, 2009). Another challenge that is facing the BOGs in their daily management of secondary schools is the issue of school sponsor. According to the Education Act, a school sponsor is allowed to nominate four (4) of the thirteen members of the school Board of Governors and to propose the chairman who is to be ratified by the Ministry (Republic of Kenya, 2004) . This organ champions the sponsor's interest in school management. The Act allows for an agreement to be made between the Ministry of Education and the sponsoring churches as regards the rights and responsibility of the church sponsor in management of schools in Kenya (Banr, 1990). This affects the management of public schools where churches that were managers of schools before became sponsors of such schools (Wachira and Kigotho, 2007). The word is first used in section 8(1) of the Education Act, in relation to schools formerly managed by a church which were transferred to a local authority. Here, the local authority was empowered to appoint the former church manager a sponsor if the community served by the school wished the religious traditions of that school to be respected.

Statement of the problem

Board of Governors as managers of the schools have specific roles that they should perform as spelt out by the M.O.E despite the challenges they face. Various commissions like Gachahi Report (1976), Kamuge Report (1988) and Koech Report (1999) had recognized their roles. A lot of researches have been done on various areas pertaining to improvement of secondary schools in Uiri District. Such issues as discipline, girl child education among others, have been captured but no proper decision has been made in the areas of challenges facing school management in schools in Uiri district despite the government efforts to empower BOGs. It is for this reason that the study sought to find out challenges faced by Board of Governors in decision making in the management of public secondary schools and make recommendations to enhance the improvement of the secondary schools management in Uiri District.

Effects of Board of Governors' Decision Making in the Management of Public Secondary Schools

Studies done by Campbell (1970), cites that there are "appropriately one hundred thousand American citizens serving on school boards in United States. These laymen make the decisions, which affect the educational welfare of millions of youngsters" enrolled in our schools; they are people who give countless hours of their time to this particular public service. In Papua New Guinea, community participation and sharing of decision making in education, developed from 1956 when the Education Advisory Board and the District Advisory Committee were set up. The 1969 Weeden report and the 1970 Education Act extended the powers of those bodies and established schools Boards (O'HARA, 1980). In Kenya, The Education Act (1968), cap 211 laws of Kenya, section 10, gave rise to the establishment of Boards of Governors for any maintained or assisted schools, other than a primary school managed and maintained by a local authority. The establishment of Board of Governors as provided for by the Education Act (1968) was necessitated by the shortcomings of the colonial education.

Bell(1976) commenting on the local board of education in America says that, "of all governing bodies, the local board of education carries the weight of many decisions that daily touch the lives of your child and his education." A guide to school boards and trusteeship in Manitoba, Manitoba Association of school trustees, November,(2004) reports that a part from decision making, most schools boards deal with matters such as finance, personnel, curriculum and facilities.

In Kenya, the functions of BOG members on the management of secondary schools are spelt out in the Kenya Education Act (KEA) cap 211. These secondary schools governing bodies are entrusted with the daily management of secondary schools' resources, finances, administration and academic in such schools. The Gachadhi Report (Republic of Kenya, 1976) endorsed that secondary schools be run by BOG and be given a larger degree of delegation in order to enhance effective management of schools, especially the need to maintain discipline. Kamunge Report (Republic of Kenya, 1988) saw the establishment of BOG by the government as a noble intention to decentralize the day to day management of educational institutions to the boards and head teachers. It further acknowledged that the role played by the BOG in the management of educational institutions was crucial and therefore, boards should be appointed on time and members carefully selected to ensure that the boards had committed members. BOG members are also charged with the approval and discussion of the school budget (Ministry

of Education, 2000). Having looked at the composition of the boards and their functions, Okumbe (2001:29) in his book, Human Resource Management states: “since the overall management of secondary schools and colleges is vested in the Boards of Governors, it is imperative that the members of these boards not only be person with good education but also people with sufficient practical knowledge in educational management.

Results and Discussion

The demographic information of the head teachers was based on their gender, highest level of education, age and the sponsor. Data on the gender of head teachers indicated that 8 (53.3%) were males while 7 (46.7%) were female. These data shows that there was gender disparity in terms of gender representation in the schools.

Asked to indicate their duties as BOG members, they responded as presented in table 1.

Table 1

Duties of the BOG members

Duties of BOG members	F	%
To implement what the PTA has recommended	9	15.0
To give advices	20	33.3
To attend BOG meetings and bring harmony among teachers	9	15.0
Employment of BOG teachers	13	21.7
Ratification of school budget	9	15.0
Total	60	100.0

Data indicated that their duties included implementation of PTA recommendations, giving advice, attending meetings to bring harmony among teachers and recruiting BOG teachers. Data on how long they had served as BOG members indicated that they had all served for more than three years. A time they agreed that they were required to stay in office. These findings show that the BOG members had a wide experience in different tasks and hence are able to provide information of the challenges they faced in the management of schools. The BOG members were asked to indicate whether they had attended any managerial course in relation to school management. Data showed that 33 (55%) had attended a training on school management. They added that the courses they had attended had made they perform their duties better.

They were further asked to indicate what common challenges that the BOG faced. The data is presented table 2.

Table 2

PTA chairpersons' responses on common challenges faced by the BOG

Challenges faced by BOG	F	%
Lack of finance	10	71.4
Lack of government support	2	14.3
Influence from the community	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

Data indicated that financial challenge was the major challenge facing the BOGs. This accounts for 71.4 percent. Asked to indicate the possible solutions, they indicated as presented in table 3.

Table 3

BOG response on the challenges faced when deliberating their decisions

Challenges	F	%
No change of government policies	9	15.0
Conflicts of interests of various BOG members	9	15.0
Lack of support	10	16.7
Lack of cooperative from heads	22	36.7
Political influence	10	16.7
Total	60	100.0

Data revealed that majority suggested that there was need for government support as indicated so by 10 (71.4%). The BOG members were asked to indicate what challenges that they faced when deliberating their decisions as BOG members.

Asked to suggest the possible suggestions, they responded as indicated in table 4.

Table 4 Possible suggestions to the challenges

Solutions to identified challenges	F	%
Sensitization of BOG members	18	30.0
BOG to attend meetings regularly	29	48.3
Discourage politics in school	13	21.7
Total	60	100.0

The BOG members were also asked to indicate whether there were cases where decisions were imposed on them. The BOG responded that they were not consulted in matters of extending the school term as indicated by 18 (30%), they were not also consulted in the regulation of school fees and in the regulation of school administration as shown by 29 (48.3%). The BOG members indicated that they did not attend BOG meetings regularly as was indicated by 32 (53.3%).

When asked to indicate what challenges the BOG faced in making decisions, data indicated as presented in table 5

Table 5

Challenges faced in making decisions

Challenges in making decisions	F	%
Some decisions have financial implications	7	46.7
Lack of cooperation	6	40.0
Politics are involved	2	13.3
Total	15	100.0

Data showed that some decisions had financial implications as indicated by 7 (46.7%), 6 (40%) reported that there was not cooperation in decision making procedures, whereas 2 (13.3%) were of the opinion that some decisions were politically involved. These shows that BOGs faced challenges in decision making. The head teachers were also asked to indicate what challenges they normally faced during the election of the BOGs members. Data showed that 9 (60%) indicated that there was interest of the politicians while 6 (40%) indicated that nepotism was rife during elections.

The BOG on the other hand indicated that they felt they were not fully involved in decision making. Data showed that some decisions had financial implications as indicated by 7 (46.7%), 6 (40%) reported that there was not cooperation in decision making procedures, whereas 2 (13.3%) were of the opinion that some decisions were politically involved. These shows that BOGs faced challenges in decision making. The head teachers were also asked to indicate what challenges they normally faced during the election of the BOGs members. Data showed that 9 (60%) indicated that there was interest of the politicians while 6 (40%) indicated that nepotism was rife during elections.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that The BOG members should be involved in decision making by the head teachers. It was also recommended that the BOG and the PTA should be trained in areas of secondary schools management so that they can effectively take part in the running of the schools. The study recommended that the BOG should effectively monitor financial matters in the school.

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