



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS ON THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL DYNAMICS ON MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA

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Abstract:

Management of public secondary schools has always been a serious issue to stakeholders including those in government and the civil society. 'A school is as good as its Board of Management'. This is what prompted on this study, which sought to critically analyze the impact of political dynamics on management of public secondary schools in Kenya. The main goals were to critically analyze and find out the impact of Political Dynamics and how it influences the criteria used in the selection process, objectives of the ad-hoc nominating committee and the personal attributes of the so nominated members on the management of public secondary schools. The study made use of both qualitative survey methods and critical analysis design. The study was able to establish that most Boards of management were either based on clanism, ethnicism, cronyism, nepotism or political and religious inclinations. All these factors had a significant influence on how schools were run and the overall effectiveness of the school boards of management. This study explored new strategies of putting in place an effective school board of management which focuses more on managerial and leadership skills rather than clanism, nepotism, cronyism and other political dynamics. This would enhance efficiency and effectiveness in an effort to realize the school's goals and objectives. The study recommended that prudent measures be put in place to ensure that only people of integrity, excellent management and leadership skills with a commitment to serve the schools' interests are nominated into the board of management. Those selected into the board be taken through proper induction and

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continuous capacity building in leadership and management. The study also recommended that the ad – hoc nominating committee be transferred into an oversight board that walks along the board of management and continuously mentors, monitors, trains and evaluates the management board.

Keywords: board of management, public university schools, political dynamics, ad-hoc nominating committee leadership skills

1. Introduction

Worldwide, education is considered a key element for social - political, economic and cultural development. Therefore, management of our public educational institutions must be founded on well researched and tried professional management practices. Several countries world over have developed own systems and policies that address their specific educational goals and aspirations (Okumbe, 1999). According to Mbiti; Foundations of School Administration, Oxford (2007), Administration refers to the formalized systems which are geared towards planning, supervising and making decisions about Worldwide, education is considered a key element for socio-political ,economic and cultural development the different activities that an organization is engaged in, based on established authority. According to Sharma (1982), effective decentralization of management is mainly anchored on efficient and effective leadership. There have been debates on the management by Boards of Management in schools for effective curriculum implementation in most countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa and especially in Kenya (Oketch & Ngware, 2012; Orodho, 2014).

The Education Act 2013 provided for the establishment of Boards of management to run schools on behalf of the Ministry of Education. This has widely been acknowledged as one way of enhancing management in public secondary schools. Membership into Boards of management is drawn from the sponsor; special needs representative, special interest group representative County Education Board representative, Students representative and parent representatives. The principal of the school is the Secretary to the Board whereas the students' representative is only an ex-officio member of the Board. The ad-hoc nominating committee that considers and actually nominates members into the Board consists of the Member of the County Assembly, Area Chief, The representative of the sponsor, The County Education Board representative, Member of the National Assembly, County Director of Education and The School Principal. The researcher chose to investigate the factors that come into play in the process of electing and nominating members into the Board of management and

how it affects the envisaged effective discharge of duties as provided for in the Board of Education Act 2013.

2. Statement of the Problem

There exists evidence that Boards of Management in public secondary schools face numerous challenges in trying to fulfill their mandate as spelt out in the Education Act 2013. This is despite the fact that schools have got legally constituted Boards which are charged with the responsibility of running schools on behalf of the Ministry of Education. Why then are there issues of mismanagement in public secondary schools? Why are Boards of management not effectively discharging their duties and obligations as stipulated? How is the management affected by the process of nominating its membership? How efficient and committed is the Board of management towards achieving the school and Ministry of Education objectives? What are the priorities and interests of the Ad-hoc nominating committee in the selection of members into the school Board of Management? These issues need to be critically analyzed if decentralization of management of public secondary school is to bear fruit. The study therefore sought to establish the impact of political dynamics on the management of public secondary schools in Kenya.

3. Purpose of the Study

The study sought to critically analyze how issues of political dynamics impact on the quality and efficiency of leadership and management levels in public secondary schools in Kenya.

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To critically establish the criteria applied during nomination and election of members into school boards of management in public secondary schools in Kenya.
2. To critically establish if the goals and objectives of the nominating ad-hoc committee are in tandem with goals and objectives of the school and Ministry of Education in public secondary schools in Kenya.
3. To critically determine the relationship between the nomination process and challenges faced by Boards of Management in public secondary schools in Kenya

4. To critically determine personal attributes of members of the school Boards of Management in public secondary schools in Kenya

5. Research Questions

1. How are members of the Board of management nominated in public secondary schools in Kenya?
2. To what extent is the nominating ad-hoc committees objectives similar to objectives and goals of the ministry of Education in public secondary schools in Kenya?
3. What is the relationship between the nomination process and challenges faced by the resulting Boards of Management in public secondary schools in Kenya?
4. What are the personal attributes of the members of Boards of Management including leadership skills in public secondary schools in Kenya?

6. Research Methodology

The study intended to established and analyze the relationship between political dynamics and the management of public secondary schools in Kenya. Therefore, the researchers used qualitative research methodology with a critical analysis research design. The researchers choose this design because it gives room for constructive critical analysis better than the statistics results used in similar qualitative research. Here the researchers argue their critique as positive evaluation of impact of political dynamics on managements of Public Secondary schools in Kenya.

7. Significance of the Study

The intention of the study was to critically examine and find out the relationship between the effectiveness of school Boards of Management and the criteria of selecting the numbers It sought to bring new knowledge to guide in the nomination of numbers based on positive individual attributes devoid of political dynamics. The ad-hoc nominating committee needs to be transformed into a body that walks along the school Board of Management, progressively mentoring and evaluating its performance and achievements. Positive personal attributes of potential Boards of Management .members and their collegial leadership skills should be overriding factors during the nomination process. This study sought to inform future policy on the nomination

process which may enhance management of public secondary schools resulting into improved academic and societal outcomes.

8. Theoretical Framework

The study was based on Functional Leadership Theory. The Leadership theory (Hackman and Walton, 1986; McGrath, 1962 Posner, 1995) is a leadership theory responding to specific leaders behavior aimed to positively develop to organization or to increase its effectiveness at different levels. It requires that the leader's main function is to give the necessary support needed for an organization to reach its goals. That means a successful leader is one who contributes to group effectiveness and cohesion by so carrying the functions such as providing conducive environment, supervising organizing subordinate activities, educating and facilitating coordination of junior staffs, motivating co-workers and participates actively in the team work. A summary of (Kalousek, et al., (1996); (Zaccaro Et Al. (2001), Hackman & Walton (1986). Therefore, the Board of Management should ensure that there is effective cohesiveness amongst its members so as to realize its objectives. It should not work for its personal gains but acts as a link between the school administration, the teaching and non-teaching staff, the school community, student's council and other students. The principal should be a motivator for any progress and little advancement of the student council. The Board of Management should do what it takes to provide a conducive environment, monitor effective running of the school and mobilize resources towards realizations of the school goals. If the Board Of management actively applies this theory, each member will feel much thrilled to support the school and build bridges to enhance unity, harmony and teamwork that will impact on the overall good of the school. Application of this theory may enable the Board of Management to overcome issues of clanism, ethnicism, cronyism, nepotism or political and religious inclinations.

9. Critical Literature Review

9.1 Critical Analysis on Boards of Management of Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

Educational administration is essentially the art and science of management applied to education. Participation in policy making processes, Setting of both short and long term goals, planning on strategies of achieving the set goals, Proper management of human and capital resources and carrying out continuous evaluation, all of which are the educational administration. The Ministry of Education or even its Cabinet Secretary

cannot promote education without the cooperation of other stakeholders. These include Parents Associations and Boards of Management. It should also not be lost to Kenyans that Religious Organizations such as Church Missions played a big role in establishing learning institutions and still continue doing so up to now. For this reason, the Education Act recognized their importance and gave provision for them to be represented at various levels of school management.

Henry Fayol (1949), in his classical definition of management stated that Management has to do with forecasting, planning, organizing, commanding, coordinating and controlling. This was further eluted by Okumbe (2001) citing Koontz and O'Donnell who looked at management as an operating process that can primarily be best explained by analyzing, planning, organizing, staffing, directing, leading and controlling. The school handbook on effective management (2008) also states that management of schools involves planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, monitoring and controlling the education process. It involves focusing or planning for all the education resources including financial resources, material resources, time and human resources for best utilization and in the best interests of the school. In any organization there is need to focus on efficiency, effectiveness and human relations, Clearly spelling out Aims and objectives, promotion of Division of labor, observing hierarchy of authority, ensuring unity of command and the importance for coordination

9.2 Critical Analysis on the Nomination of Boards of Management in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

According to the basic education act 2013, members of Boards of Management are nominated by a committee comprising of County Assembly representative, the Area Chief, the Sponsor, the County Education Board representative, the school Principal, Member of the National Assembly and the County Director of Education. The members so nominated into the Board of Management should be drawn from the three representatives of the sponsor, one person representing people with special needs, person representing the special interest groups, one a representative of the County Education Board and six Parents' representatives The principal of the school is an automatic member and acts as the secretary to the Board. The president of the students' council is also an ex-officio member of the Board. Members of boards of management should be persons with proven commitment, competence and experience which can be harnessed so as to enhance management and development of learning institutions.

A board member should not tender for any Project in the school while in office and should be a person of high morals and ethics. Due to their crucial role, the

Kamunge report (1988) emphasized the need to have boards in time and their membership wisely selected so as to ensure that they have high levels of commitment and with complementary talents to enrich management and maintenance of high education standards. However, no clear parameters have been set to evaluate performance and level of achievement of Boards of Management. When vested interests in the nominating process override and influence the committee decisions, the school and ministry's goals and objectives may not be realized. Nepotism destroys morale of the staff, creates public suspicion and becomes an impediment to teamwork, effectiveness and efficiency which are requirements in quality performance.

Cronyism is defined as partiality to close friends, especially by appointing them or influencing their appointments to positions of authority irrespective of their qualifications and abilities. Cronyism can also be defined as participating in any employment decision or awarding of contracts, which may appear to be considering more of the close or long standing friendship, business partnership or professional, political, commercial connections that would lead to partisan treatment or compromising any evidence of fairness.

Cronyism often involves friends, families or colleagues and other connections. Cronyism is a practice found within a closely knitted group of insiders – “the good old boys” who reciprocate favours to each other. A report released by the Manhattan Borough president, Dinkrins (1987) said “*cronyism and conflicts of interests on public school boards are depriving New York city school children of good education while the Board of Education “an isolated fortress” looks the other way.* Cronyism is another form of favoritism, specifically practicing partiality or preference towards acquaintances, connections and other associated networks of persons. It has always been said before that “it is not usually what you know that matters but who you know” or according to Ferguson, “*it is not what you don't know but rather who is known to your college roommate*” Cronyism interferes with fairness by giving undeserved treatment to someone who does not necessarily qualify or deserve the preferential treatment. It also undermines our common good.

Clanism, racism and ethnicism have too found their way into public secondary school Boards of management. According to KUPPET and KNUT, the star 22/8/2014, political and religious interference were to blame for declining education standards in Kisii and Nyamira Counties The Daily Nation of 14/7/2016 also reported that politicians had exerted influence on who sits on the school Boards of management. Over the recent arson cases in public secondary schools, educationists in Kisii decried the interference in school administration and management by some board members and politicians who elect principals based on ethnicity, clanism and political or religious inclinations instead

of performance and merit .Some school boards had been hijacked by local politics and clanism. All these thrive on the assumption that if school leadership is not from their area, then they do not benefit from the school. The above analysis points to a strong relationship between political dynamics and effectiveness of Boards of management in public secondary schools in Kenya.

9.3 Critical Analysis on the Similarities between the Nominating Committee's Objectives and Those of the Ministry of Education

In Kenya, the basic education act 2013 stipulated that all basic education institutions be managed by Boards of Management on behalf of the cabinet secretary, Ministry of education. Shared governance of the school is emphasized strongly in education literature world over. It is therefore imperative that the concept of decentralization be adequately embraced. Persons entrusted with the responsibility of school leadership must be able to effectively work with others. All should acknowledge that inputs from other stakeholders are necessary to achieve optimum results in performance. In Kenya, education continues to enjoy significant support from other stakeholders including Development Partners, the private sector, civil society and other individuals such as parents.

Landers and Myers (1977) noted that in America the school board is that agency of government created by the state and given the legal power to govern the affairs of the local school on behalf of the government. Smolley (1999) carried out a research about effectiveness of school boards in Delaware United states of America. The intention was to find out the level of effectiveness of the boards and strategies that could improve their performances. Duttweiler and Hord (1989) said that educational leaders who are exemplary in their work will always have a participatory leadership and supervision style. These are leaders with the ability to encourage, motivate and stimulate others in the school set-up so as to participate in school improvement programs. The Functions of the Board of Management include Recruitment of teachers, Management of financial resources, Management physical facilities, Promotion of school-community relations, Recruitment of support staff, Promotion of equality education and Ensure student/staff welfare.

In discharging the above functions, the board of management works closely with politicians, sponsors, local administration, alumni members, business people, NGOs and other stakeholders including government officials. This enhances communication between stakeholders which facilitates incorporation of options, ideas, advice and suggestions into the school programs (Okumbe, 2001). To effectively perform their duties members require certain minimum competences. Magni (2005) noted that after

the nomination of members, they were normally not taken through a proper induction so as to prepare them for the huge responsibilities ahead. They therefore performed most of their responsibilities by experimenting, resulting into under-performance and misplaced priorities. The same study indicated that members usually lamented that there were no clear guidelines in school policies and objectives.

9.4 Analysis on Challenges Faced by Board of Managements in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

According to the study of Ibrahim (2012) main obstacles faced by Board of management in the management of secondary schools are inadequate funding lack of enough teaching and learning resources, insufficient inductions and training for some Board of management members and lack of commitment by some board members to school matters shown by lack of enough quorum during board meetings. In addition Board of Management Leadership styles was found not to be a major challenge since democratic leadership styles which involved consultation among board Of Management members has always been used.

Even though, many schools have experienced negative effects due to inadequate school resources preventing effective learning and teaching. According to (Waweru, 2005). Many studies have pointed out pitfalls of Boards of Management owing to rampant issues of inefficiency in school management (Njenga, 2003; Anyang' 2003). They also mentioned irregularities and corruption in recruitment of teachers in most parts of the Kenya to an extent of the Teachers Service Commission nullifying the outcomes of the exercise. In addition, Mumo (2004) found out lack of managerial skills, low levels of education, dishonesty and vested interest in school tenders Government reports such as the Kamunge (1988); Koech (1999) and task force on students discipline and unrest in secondary school, (2001) showed that Board of Management in Kenya faces many challenges. The Koech report (1999) documented dissatisfaction in management of physical facilities, curriculum & instruction and poor community relations. On the other hand, Board of Management have been accused of misallocation, mismanagement and even embezzlement of school funds, Daily nation 11th May (2013). Other challenges regarding staff personnel and students' discipline have resulted to public cry, strikes, up heels and disasters such as destruction of property and loss of lives, Standard May 18th (2014).

9.5 Critical Analysis on Leadership Skills of Board of Managements in Public Secondary Schools

Staff qualifications and leadership skills are necessary and useful to the Board of Managements in promoting the collective expertise for the quality and improvement of the school. Effective and efficient management of public secondary school requires professionalism and training in leadership skills. Kindiki (2009), documented that the Ministry Of education should put compulsory training vocations for all board of management members after nomination to equip them with the necessary managerial skills. Due to changing trends in curriculum implementation there was need to facilitate short courses for the Board Of management. Findings of Kindiki established that Members with bachelors and PhD Degree make better curriculum implementers contrary to those who owns secondary and Diploma level Education

Among the responsibilities of the school board of management is recruitment of human resource both teaching and non-teaching staff. Hiring an employee who is a relative, family member or a close friend to a member of the board of management is one form of nepotism. In this case, an employee gets a position due t o a relationship or familiarity rather than merit. The board of management is also mandated to manage schools physical facilities and ensure students and staff welfare. Nepotism manifests itself when tender for a school project is awarded based on family relationship rather than merit and competence. The same case applies to procurement of goods and other services. Due to heavy task vested on them, they should be of ethical moral and people of integrity. After selection they should be inducted on their constitutional mandates and professional roles

10. Conclusion

From the findings above, it is evident that political dynamics have got an impact on management of public secondary schools in Kenya. These elements of nepotism, cronyism, ethnicism, clanism and racism influence the appointment and operations of boards of management to the detriment of the general good goals and aspirations of the ministry of education and the country as a whole.

11. Recommendations

On the strength of the above findings and conclusion, the study came up with the following recommendations:

1. The ad-hoc nominating committee should be replaced by an oversight board that not only does recruitment/ nomination but walks along the Board of Management.
2. The oversight board should mentor, monitor, train and continuously evaluate the performance of the school board of management.
3. Board members, upon nomination should be adequately inducted.
4. Each member should accept and sign against the specific duties and responsibilities.
5. The ministry of education should prepare short refresher courses to enhance management and leadership skills.+

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