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REVIEW ARTICLE

A Review of Issues on the Importance of Head Teacher's Management to Academic Excellence in Public Primary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract

Leadership has to do with the execution of those policies and decisions which help to direct the activities of an organization towards the achievement of its specified aims. The necessity for leadership stems from the fact that each organization or group has needs which must be met. This paper is based on a review of existing literature on the role of head teachers and their management in ensuring academic excellence in public primary schools in Kenya. The methodology adopted, is theoretical, as the paper engages in interpreting the relationship between head teachers' management of schools and performance. The greatest challenge facing head teachers is to effectively manage public primary schools. Their effectiveness in school management is determined by whether they perform their assigned roles in managing pupils, staff, curriculum implementation and school finances as required by the Ministry of Education. From the information discussed in this paper, the Education Officers, among other stakeholders, may see the need of getting head teachers to undergo in-service training on their roles in managing pupils, staff, curriculum implementation and school finances for Free Primary Education in order to realize their effective management of public primary schools.

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Introduction

The core role of the head teachers is to provide professional leadership and management for a school in order to secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work. To gain this success, a head teacher must establish high quality education by effectively managing all forms of teaching and learning, resources and processes, and should provide leadership and direction for the school and ensures it is managed and organized to meet its aims and targets (Investor in People, 2004). Leadership is central to the effective management of educational institutions, and is about managing teams, creating appropriate structures and being as concerned with the people as the tasks (Davies, 1991). Leadership is a force in the sense that it initiates action towards common goals among people. Leadership involves accomplishing goals with and through people. That is, in a certain situation and at a

certain time, an individual may attempt to influence the behaviour of someone else. As leaders, head teachers are expected to influence the behaviours of pupils and staff among other stakeholders, in order to achieve the objectives and goals of their schools (Barasa & Ngugi, 1990). One of the factors influencing school effectiveness is the nature and quality of the leadership and management provided by head teachers of public primary schools. At the very least, head teachers should be able to manage and deploy school resources efficiently, guide curriculum implementation and change, and create professional ethos within the schools by involving teachers and other stakeholders in decision-making (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

Effective head teachers contribute to the development of cultural patterns in schools. These cultural patterns reflect the school climate which is believed to be a consequence of the Head teachers' knowledge of and effective practice of educational administration and

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management. Effective management of schools is vital for the enhancement of quality education, prevention of wastage of resources and provision of guidance to staff members and their motivation to enable them excel in their work (Sisungu, 2002). Management of people in the school context involves the skilful control and guidance of pupils and other stakeholders, for instance teaching and non-teaching staff in order to achieve the school's desired outcomes. The head teacher plays an important role in this respect (MOE & HR, 1999).

Pearsal (1998) defines management as the process of dealing with or controlling things or people and includes the responsibility for and control of an organization. According to American Heritage Dictionary (Milgram, 1999) the term management may be defined in three ways; first as the act, manner, or practice of managing, handling, supervision or control. Secondly, management can also be seen as the person or persons who control or direct a business or other enterprise. Thirdly, management can be defined as having skill in managing and/or executive ability. The Commonwealth Secretariat (1997) notes that as an art, management is about carrying out organizational functions and tasks through people. This art involves the application of techniques in human and public relations and the delegation of authority, which includes assigning and sharing responsibilities and duties. It also involves the application of techniques in communication, which include decision-making and problem-solving and managing change. School management involves the head teacher in developing school objectives and working with and through people, in this case teachers, pupils, Parents/Teachers Association and the community, to achieve school objectives by means of effective decision-making and coordination of the available resources (Sisungu, 2002).

Ngaroga (1996) defines management as the utilization of physical and human resources through cooperative efforts in order to realize the established aims and is accomplished by performing the functions of planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling. Management in education broadly means the running of educational institutions. This includes school business, school plant and the guidance of teachers and organizing pupils' personnel services. Henri Fayol (as cited in Hoy & Miskel, 1996) states that administrative behaviour consists of five functions, which he defined as follows; to plan means to study the future and arrange the plan of operations. The second is to organize which means to build up material and human organization of the business, organizing both people and materials. Third is to command, which means to make the staff do

their work. Fourth is to coordinate, which means to unite and correlate all activities. Fifth is to control, which means to see that everything is done in accordance with the rules which have been laid down and the instructions which have been given. Both Gulick and Lyndall (as cited in Okumbe, 1998), being strongly influenced by Henri Fayol, put forward seven administrative functions, namely: planning, organizing, staffing, directing, coordinating, reporting and budgeting. These processes are given the acronym "POSDCORB". Sisungu (2002) states that school administration refers to the process of developing and maintaining school procedures by directing and controlling the activities and behaviour of teachers, pupils and non-teaching staff and involves them in the acquisition and allocation of resources for achievement of goals in the school.

The Commonwealth Secretariat (1997) defines management as a collection of processes, including such things as decision-making, problem-solving and action-planning. These processes involve the management of resources including human, material, financial and time. Management entails the process of delegation and the creation of a special teacher-manager-subordinate relationship. Delegation leaves the head teacher free to make profitable use of time to concentrate on the more important tasks, and to spend more time in managing and less in doing. This should make the head teacher more accessible for consultation with the pupils, teachers, parents, superiors, and other peer managers and this will improve the process of communication.

Limitation

The issues discussed in paper are based on the analyses of existing literature only. The limitation in this approach is that an actual study could counter the views expressed by earlier scholars as documented in this paper. Despite this limitation, this paper generates a number of critical issues of concern on the need for effective management of public primary schools in Kenya. These issues could be of much interest to future studies on the same area.

Methodology

The methodology adopted in this paper involves a review of literature touching on issues of the role of head teachers' leadership and management for effective running of public primary schools in Kenya with an aim of attaining academic excellence. The review of literature illustrates the relationship between head teachers' leadership and their effectiveness in the management of public primary schools. From this conceptual framework, head

teachers' effectiveness in public primary school management cannot be attained in the absence of their leadership styles. These leadership styles are the conventional leadership styles which include: autocratic, democratic, laissez-faire and contingency styles. The leadership styles are acquired through training and experience and should be recognized within the context of an effective leader. A leadership style is the manner and approach of providing direction, implementing plans and motivating people. In this paper, head teachers' effectiveness in public primary school management is considered the dependent variable. Head teachers' effectiveness refers to whether they perform their assigned roles in managing pupils, staff, curriculum implementation and school finances as required by the Ministry of Education. Therefore, head teachers' effectiveness or lack of it is determined by whether or not they have performed their assigned roles in public primary school management.

Head teachers' professional qualifications and experiences could influence their leadership styles, and might go a long way in enhancing their effectiveness in public primary school management. Therefore, head teachers' professional qualifications and experiences act as moderating variables. Critical to the role of headship is working with the School Management Committee (SMC), Parents/Teachers Associations (P/TA), the Ministry of Education officers, religious organizations, school sponsors among others in order to achieve effective management of public primary schools. The role of the stakeholders in public primary school management may influence head teachers' leadership styles. Schools have a number of stake-holders in their activities. Their governance is therefore done through a coalition of interests working together, but performing different functions, all aimed at enabling each school to operate and to achieve its aims and objectives. The head teacher, who is overall in-charge, is responsible for directing and overseeing the day-to-day activities of the school, must know what agencies, groups and individuals, constitute this coalition of interests. However, the stakeholders' major role is to support head teachers in order to create a productive learning environment, which is both engaging and fulfilling for all pupils and teachers.

MAIN DISCUSSION

Head teachers' roles in the management of public primary schools include managing pupils and staff, curriculum implementation, and school finances, as discussed below.

Head Teacher's Roles in Managing Pupils

Pupils are the key stakeholders within the school. Managing them effectively is important in the overall management of the school. The establishment of an effective and efficient guidance and counselling programme is one way in which the head teacher can manage the pupils smoothly. It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the guidance and counselling services are offered to the pupils. Each school should establish a guidance and counselling (G&C) committee headed by a teacher appointed by the head teacher. The committee should be gender-sensitive and embrace sufficient members to make it a tool the head teacher can use to manage pupils effectively. Where possible, the guidance and counselling committee members should be trained in counselling skills (MOE&HR, 1999). The job of the guidance and counselling committee is of utmost importance within the modern school scenario and as such, the committee must lead by example. The members of the committee must uphold the highest standards of personal dignity. A misbehaved counsellor cannot be a role model and lacks the moral authority to advise students to change their wayward ways if he/she cannot stick to exemplary principles. Unlike other departments, guidance and counselling goes beyond academics, beyond passing exams and beyond the school environment, the very foundation of building responsible members of the society (Ongoma & Silsi, 2008). Head teachers, staff and pupils should see guidance and counselling as a positive means of correcting and improving the behaviour/conduct of the pupils. With an effective guidance and counselling committee in school, there would be no need for punitive measures such as caning, kneeling down for long hours, cutting grass or digging the school garden during class hours. The committee can instil a sense of responsibility in the pupils as early as possible to help them develop a positive attitude towards learning and their teachers (MOE & HR, 1999).

One aspect of school effectiveness is the extent to which head teacher introduces and manages a programme of guidance and counselling of the children. This involves ensuring good relationships between teachers and pupils, meeting the needs of individual pupils and working with all teachers to create a generally caring atmosphere. For effective guidance and counselling, the head teacher should note the need for effective organizational structures in the school and the need for effective communication. The school organization structure and procedures should ensure the effective care of the pupils (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

The school exists to be of service to pupils, parents and the local community. It is of great importance that the school head recognizes this fact and that no

arrogance is displayed towards either the community or the parents. For this reason, a school disciplinary system exists to establish an atmosphere of mutual confidence and respect both within the school and outside. Learning and teaching can then proceed efficiently. All school rules should be drawn up to emphasize their value to the individual and the community. They should not merely be a list of negative instructions. The smooth learning of a disciplinary system depends on a well-defined policy established by the head teacher in consultation with the teachers, pupils, school committee, among other stakeholders. This policy must be consistently enforced by all persons in authority. This can only be achieved by providing opportunities for discussion at all levels but the final decision rests with the school head teacher (MOEST, 1987).

The cooperation between the school staff and the parents is absolutely essential to the welfare of pupils. The Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) may assist in identifying pupils' needs and in finding solutions. For example, problems of attendance and dropouts may be shared. The PTA may provide a forum where the head teacher and the staff may explain school programmes, gain the support of parents, and thus help to ensure the school's success. Very often, the PTA is an important source of financial and material support essential for the development of the school (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

Discipline is the action by management to enforce organizational standards. In an educational organization, there are many standards or codes of behaviour to which teachers, students and non-teaching staff adhere. In order to successfully achieve the objectives of a school, all the members of the educational organization are required to strictly adhere to the various behaviour patterns necessary for maximum performance (Okumbe, 1998). For proper management of discipline in a school, the head teacher should involve the staff and the pupils among other stakeholders in developing a reasonable code of discipline. The formulation of rules and regulations should be guided by existing government policies, principles of management and ethos among others (MOE&HR, 1999). It should be noted that discipline is of vital importance for proper functioning of schools, and to achieve this, head teachers have to maintain proper relations with the staff, pupils, parents and the community at large (Mohanty, 2002). There should be prior knowledge of school rules and regulations among the pupils. The pupils should be well informed about the school rules and regulations, and the consequences of breaking them. The rules should be clear and copies given to both the pupils and the parents, among other stakeholders. The

school rules and regulations should be prominently displayed in the school notice boards, staff room and class notice boards. There should be clear regulations governing outings, sports meetings and other such functions in the school calendar (MOEST, 1987). Often, new rules are made or old ones are modified as situations dictate, and this should be communicated to the relevant people promptly. A disciplinary action should be applied immediately. All the infractions should be dealt with immediately regardless of their magnitude. Educational managers must ensure that any undesirable behaviour either by the staff members or pupils is dealt with immediately so that the offenders can see the close connection between an undesirable behaviour and its consequence. When there is a long time lapse between the undesirable behaviour and its consequence, then the association between the two becomes weak and this provides a stimulus for more undesirable behaviour (Okumbe, 1998).

The government policy is to achieve 100% enrolment for primary education by the year 2010. The head teacher therefore, has an important role to facilitate the achievement of this goal. Head teachers of schools with low enrolments should make deliberate efforts to increase enrolments and set strategies, which will enhance retention and minimize dropout rates. Some of these strategies include; seeking community support, involving local authorities, creating a conducive school environment for both boys and girls and improving academic performance. Other strategies are soliciting support for poor and needy children, ensuring that pupils with Special Education Needs (SEN) from the community are provided for in the school, avoiding levies that would keep pupils out of school when unable to pay and working closely with Head Teacher Support Groups (HTSGs) (MOE & HR, 1999).

School assemblies are important tools for communication and therefore head teachers should ensure that assemblies are well organized. Head teachers could hold successful assemblies by establishing venue, time and duration; identifying agenda, establishing an orderly system of parading, identifying speakers, avoiding prolonged assemblies and ensuring that announcements are made by as few as possible in every assembly. Similarly, the head teacher in collaboration with other staff members has the role of ensuring that school visits are well organized. School visits include both inward and outward excursions. Head teachers could make advance preparations by trying to identify places to visit, communicate with the relevant authorities, prepare a budget, prepare the pupils, prepare materials and equipment, inform parents and consider insurance cover. A similar approach should be

adopted for in-school visits followed by feedback (MOE & HR, 1999).

Although the head teachers are appointees of Teachers Service Commission (TSC) they represent the higher authorities in the hierarchy of educational management and are accountable for all the activities of the school including the discipline of pupils and teachers (TSC, 2004). The head teacher will have such a keen interest in the welfare of both his teachers and pupils as to facilitate self-fulfilment in all matters including spiritual and temporal matters. Although the head teachers may delegate responsibilities, they are responsible for actualizing the educational goals and the objectives of the institutions. Their personal devotion to work, and their ability to inspire the loyalty and trust of others to themselves, to their institutions and the country, are matters of vital importance (MOEST, 1987).

Head Teachers' Roles in Managing Staff

For the smooth and effective running of a school the head teacher needs to gain the support and commitment of both professional and support staff. Head teachers should motivate and encourage all staff to feel they are part of a team with a common mission. Head teachers should ensure that the teaching staff has an opportunity to develop personal and professional skills (MOE&HR, 1999). Educational management has no choice as to whether to train employees or not. All employees, including teachers and non-teaching staff, regardless of their previous training; education and experience must be given further training and development. This is because the competence of staff will never last forever; due to such factors as curriculum and technological changes, transfers and promotions. For instance, staff may be trained on the newer techniques of stimulus variations in the classroom, or on the methods of managing discussion groups in the lower classes. On the other hand, staff may be given development courses on the concepts of human resource development, or on the philosophy of humanizing the work environment. Training, therefore, implies the provision of specific skills, and development implies the provision of general and conceptual skills. It is important for educational managers to note that if no definite programme of training is planned then there will be higher training costs not only because staff will take too long to learn the required skills; but also because of the likelihood that they will not learn the best methods necessary for their specific assignments (Okumbe, 1998).

An effective head teacher is an active leader who creates a positive work environment in which the school and its teachers and pupils have the opportunity and the incentive to achieve high

performance. Effective head teachers devote everything they have to their task, and simply do not think about failure. They take the initiative to explore new ideas, methods, products, and services; and to develop creative solutions to old problems. They challenge the teachers and pupils to give their best in terms of hard work; and seek long-term success for their organization; their teachers and pupils; and themselves (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997). Some of the ways in which head teachers may develop and motivate staff to increase quality of performance include; ensuring that the deputy head teacher is fully able to deputize/take charge for the head when necessary and giving teachers a chance to attend appropriate in-service training (INSET) and other activities. Head teachers should delegate important responsibilities such as chairing a subject panel; and invite role models to talk to teachers, pupils and support staff. The head teacher should also organize educational visits and tours; take a positive and objective stand in recommending deserving teachers for promotion and pay attention to the general welfare and individual problems. It is also the responsibility of the head teacher to supply all the basic resources required to teach; and regularly consult with all stakeholders including the teachers' union representatives (MOE & HR, 1999).

Job description refers to a written statement of what a jobholder does, how it is done, and why it is done. A job description, thus, defines the scope of responsibility and continuing work assignment which are sufficiently different from those of other jobs to warrant a specific title. An employee's job should be clearly spelt out so that conflicts that may arise from role ambiguity are avoided (Okumbe, 1998). Head teachers should ensure that all staff members have a clear statement of their job roles, which should have been developed and agreed upon between the head teacher and the staff. The roles that are specified should have an appropriate title, e.g. senior teacher; and a brief description summarizing the overall responsibilities and expectations, e.g. a deputy head teacher's role may be stated as, thus, to assist the head teacher in all professional aspects of the management of the school among other roles. Further, all specific duties and tasks should be spelt out clearly, e.g. chairing a panel, responsible for school stores etc; and the job role should clearly show who the staff member is accountable to and or who the staff member is responsible for (MOE & HR, 1999).

Performance appraisal refers to the evaluation of the effectiveness of staff in their work assignments. It is aimed at finding out the potentials of an individual staff. Performance appraisal helps in evaluating how a staff member succeeds in his present job and this is

important for estimating how well he/she will perform in the future (Okumbe, 1998). The purpose of appraisal is for the head teacher to assess the teachers' performance, identify their professional needs and plan for future improved performance. An appraisal meeting takes place between the head teacher and individual staff members after an agreed period of time has elapsed. The appraisee should be alerted to prepare for the meeting in the following areas; the kind of questions/topics that will constitute the main areas of discussion, and prepare his/her own appraisal or self-appraisal and use the evidence for the appraisal discussions. The main areas for discussions could cover the following: commitment to the job, classroom management/control, teaching/learning skills, competence, administrative skills e.g. record-keeping, report writing etc, and projections/objectives/plans including needs for future improvement in specific areas. At the close of the appraisal meeting, both parties should agree on the level of past performance and how future performance can be addressed (MOE & HR, 1999). The head teacher is required to ensure that all staff members are informed about the terms and conditions of their employment, and rules and regulations of the organization in which they work. This should be done during orientation or induction (Okumbe, 1998). In every educational environment, new teachers have to be inducted and given adequate opportunities to practice their skills in a relevant and appropriate context. Teaching Practice (TP) is an essential activity that has to take place in schools. The head teacher play an important function in welcoming, placing and supporting the student teachers during teaching practice. The head teacher, therefore, should ensure the following measures are in place throughout the TP period: that regular teachers should be available to advice and support the student teacher both in and outside the classroom during the Teaching Practice period, and that professional and personal needs are catered for (MOE & HR, 1999).

Head Teacher's Roles in Managing Curriculum Implementation

The word curriculum refers to all that is taught in a school including the time tabled subjects and all those aspects of its life that exercise an influence in the life of the school (Farrant, 2004). Curriculum for public schools in Kenya is uniform throughout the country, and the head teacher should be aware of all policies that guide the management of curriculum (MOE & HR, 1999). Curriculum involves all subjects taught and all activities provided by the school and may include the time devoted to each subject and activity. Curriculum should be dynamic and impress on the philosophy and educational purposes of the

school and the nation. Other considerations in the management of the curriculum are: allowing for Special Education Needs (SEN), providing practical experience and learning, taking into consideration culture, customs/traditions of the local people, soliciting support for implementation, the learning ability of the pupils, and gender issues pertaining to the community or school environment (MOE & HR, 1999). Curriculum may be seen as the sum total of all the experiences the learner undergoes for which the school accepts responsibility. It includes both the planned academic programme and all co-curricular activities and other events, as well as that which pupils learn through the major and quality of the school ethos. The main task of the head of each school is to provide and deliver effectively an appropriate curriculum using all the resources namely: human, material and financial resources, which are readily available. This involves mobilizing all possible resources including those from the Ministry of Education, the community and other organizations, and then ensuring their full and effective use (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997). Curriculum delivery involves guidance in the professional preparation of lessons, effective teaching/learning strategies, appropriate methods of assessment and effective mode of supervision. Timetabling is the programme by which the curriculum is delivered. The resources required for curriculum delivery include: teachers, teaching areas, finance, time, supplies and instructional materials. The head teacher uses the timetable to mobilize resources to provide the greatest possible educational opportunities for pupils in the most cost-effective manner. The timetable should be pupil-centred. Allowance has to be made to cover all activities within the school; namely, assemblies, registration, pupil guidance and welfare, staff development, etc (MOE & HR, 1999).

The head teacher should encourage enrolment and retention of both boys and girls in primary school and sensitize the staff and the community on gender issues affecting the performance of all pupils. In particular, head teachers should be familiar with issues related to gender and education especially the Ministry's policies on access, equity, retention and quality education for girls and boys, and be able to advise teachers on the choice of teaching and learning materials that are gender friendly. They should be able to discourage classroom practices that are gender blind and gender biased (MOE & HR, 1999). It is important that the head teacher encourages and assists the staff to identify pupils with SEN. Special Education Needs in integrated schools may include partial blindness, partial deafness, mild physically handicapped pupils, gifted,

talented and slow learners, long and short sightedness, partial mental retardation and emotionally disturbed pupils. Children with such needs may display certain anti-social behaviour such as truancy, bullying, lateness or drug abuse as a way of attracting attention. Such behaviour should be properly investigated and corrective strategies put in place. Such strategies include, group work, peer teaching, remedial teaching, guidance and counselling, among others (MOE & HR, 1999). Special Needs in Education (SNE) are conditions or needs that hinder normal learning and development of individuals. They may be temporary or life-long. These conditions may include disabilities as well as social, emotional or health needs. They may be referred to as barriers to learning and development and they may be a major cause of repetition and related problems (MOEST, 2004).

The head teacher should see that the school calendar is collected from the Ministry of education and ensure that all school activities coincide with the school calendar. The head teacher must see that textbooks, stationery, furniture, games equipment and library books are ready before school resumes. Syllabuses of all the classes must be available and; with the assistance of the deputy head teacher, teachers will be helped to prepare schemes of work. The head teacher should ensure that lesson notes are made daily and that teachers teach according to the lesson notes. Assignments, tests and examinations should be marked and recorded promptly and corrections done where necessary. Teachers should do corrections with their pupils so that pupils can understand their mistakes. This will help to improve effectiveness in teaching (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997). Records of work provide information on what has been covered in a given subject area. These records help head teachers and the substitute teachers to keep track of work done. At the same time, keeping up-to-date records on pupils is equally valuable. This will show the growth and progress of each pupil. Records on each pupil should include; continuous assessment tests (CAT), responsibilities, termly class reports, special incidents and other normal data pertaining to the pupil. The head teacher needs to maintain proper books and documents to record pupils' information, and that the information is accessible when required (MOE & HR, 1999).

For the school to implement curriculum effectively, the head teacher should adhere to the punctuality and discipline of both teachers and pupils; and school examinations should be used to measure pupils' progress throughout their school life (MOE & HR, 1998). Head teachers should ensure that the subject teachers are carrying out continuous assessment of

the pupils' work (MOEST, 1987). Tests provide a means of determining the extent to which understanding and skills have been achieved. There is a great variety of classroom testing procedures. Some short tests may be given daily to test pupils' recall of work covered. Some may be more elaborate for example: fortnightly, monthly, termly or yearly exams to assess deeper understanding. Continuous assessment of pupils' achievement and progress will provide important information to the pupils, teachers, parents and education authorities. Such information will assist in motivating staff to improve their performance and benefit pupil learning achievement and promote discipline among staff and pupils. Any form of assessment must be pupil-centred, tests should be standardized and relevant, clear guidance should be available for all syllabuses. All efforts must be made to create satisfactory conditions for assessment, which will lead to an overall evaluation of the school's performance (MOE&HR, 1999).

It is important for the head teacher to supervise the curriculum implementation and provide effective advice on programmes that will improve teaching and learning in schools. This is by identifying specific curriculum needs and preparation of a supervisory plan that would promote teacher/pupil achievement. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring syllabus coverage, and establishing and maintaining the quality of teaching/learning. It is important for the head teacher and staff to measure teaching and learning achievement by means of agreed performance indicators. These include success rates in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), and/local examinations; and low repetition and dropout rates, among others (MOE & HR, 1999). Apart from in-school supervision, the head teacher can determine areas that require improvement by referring to Head Teacher Support Group (HTSG) reports, subject panel review, reports and feedback from inspectors, pupils, parents, TAC tutors, community and Education Officers, and school committee minutes and other information available. To improve performance of the staff and the learning achievement of pupils, the head teacher in collaboration with teachers should initiate school-based support programmes, which will improve the performance of staff and enhance pupils' achievement, involve parents in the process of improving pupils' performance, and encourage formulation of functional subject panels. Once the needs have been identified, it is the responsibility of the head teacher to organize support programmes to improve performance (MOE & HR, 1999). Ngaroga (1996) states that the head teachers are responsible for the overall running and control of the school and maintenance of the tone and of all-round standards,

and has the responsibility for creating a healthy environment conducive for effective teaching and learning.

A school library offers children an additional choice of reading material with a variety of reading levels and topics. Through instructed and controlled use of the library, pupils are encouraged to develop life-long reading habits and skills which will support their own self-development. A school library does not have to be a purpose-built building; it can consist of an adapted classroom or series of boxes containing books kept by different classroom teachers. The main purpose is that pupils have access to books and related materials, which will enhance individual reading, advance knowledge and stimulate the imagination (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997). The head teacher must emphasize the need for teachers and pupils to make use of the school library or class library as a resource centre. The library offers pupils and teachers an additional selection of reading material with different levels of reading materials and topics. To contribute to improved performance, a library should be a center for active learning to supplement specific subject areas taught in the curriculum, a centre to develop pupils/teachers reading skills etc. For proper use of the library, the head teacher must ensure that pupils are trained in the care and use of library books and other reading materials. The school library should be open for use during and after school to encourage reading enjoyment and supplement specific subjects in the curriculum (MOE & HR, 1999).

Where weaknesses in pupils' performance in different areas of the curriculum have been identified, the head teachers in collaboration with other teachers should set up appropriate remedial programmes rather than intensive coaching or whole class teaching. Remedial teaching should form an integral part of teaching specifically designed to address the needs of individual pupils and should take into consideration lesson presentation, personal capabilities of the pupils, and their individual differences and varying attitudes to work (MOE&HR, 1999). Remedial work is part and parcel of syllabus coverage. It is a continuous process and can come after subtopic, topic or end of syllabus. However, teachers are advised to conduct both short and long-term remedial work. This can be done weekly and monthly on short-term basis to avoid pile up of work. Also this should be done termly, annually, and at the end of syllabus coverage to create a coherent masterly and comprehension of work covered. In remedial work, one assesses how much has been achieved or retained from the work covered. If any anomaly is identified, then the work

must be revised. Both the teacher and learner have to look again at the work already covered, diagnose the problem and then find a solution (Otula, 2007).

Head Teachers' Roles in Managing School Finances

Proper financial management is important to the general development of the school. The responsibility for collecting and accounting for school funds in the school lies with the School Management Committee (SMC). However, the SMC through the head teacher must seek the approval of the District Education Board (DEB) in order to collect and use the funds. The head teacher as the secretary to this committee is the Principal Accounting Officer for the school. Head teachers need to acquaint themselves with the principles governing sound management of funds. Some of these include: proper recording of all finances, funds should be used for the benefit of the pupils; finances must be approved by the School Management Committee; funds received must be receipted and the official receipt issued immediately; and that any expenditure must be made on a payment voucher (MOE & HR, 1999). As the financial controller as well as the accounting officer of the school, the head teacher is responsible for all the revenue and expenditure made on behalf of the school (Investor in People, 2004).

Management of the resources of a learning institution shall be the responsibility of the head of that institution. In discharging this responsibility, the head teacher may delegate to teaching or support staff as appropriate in writing. The SMC, the PTA or other stakeholder group may lend their support to the head teacher of the institution in respect of resources management but that support does not constitute a change to the primary responsibility of the head teacher (MOEST, 2003). Head teachers are expected to have knowledge of finance, accounting, construction and maintenance of physical facilities (Sisungu, 2002). Head teachers are overall in charge of all matters pertaining to budgeting and accounting of school funds, record-keeping and maintenance of facilities and supplies in the school (Ibid.). Head teachers have to make budgeting; correspondence, accounting verification, checking up-to-date entries in the registers and documents of the school (Mohanty, 2002).

A budget is an educational programme which is expressed in financial terms. A budget for an educational organization has an educational plan with an estimate of the amount of money to be received (receipts) and the amount of money to be spent (expenditure) in order to achieve the educational objectives. A budget plan is made for a given period

of time, usually one year. A well-formulated school budget should consist of an education plan; an expenditure plan and a revenue plan (Okumbe, 1998). The budget guides and controls the school's income and expenditure plans while fulfilling the educational objectives of the school. It provides a means for those providing the funds to measure whether the head teacher, who is the custodian, is worthy of their trust and confidence. It provides an instrument for controlling expenditure and evaluating performance. It can also serve as an instrument for delegating authority. The head teacher should involve the staff, the school committee members and PTA in the preparation, approval and administration of the budget. The budget must be discussed and approved by the school committee, PA/PTA, and the District Education Officer. The preparation, presentation and approval of the budget by the school committee, in conjunction with the PA/PTA, should be completed before the end of December of every year (MOE & HR, 1999).

It is the responsibility of the head teacher to present and interpret the budget to the concerned stakeholders, especially the parents. The budget should be adopted by the beginning of the fiscal year for which it is to serve, but only after the School Management Committee which has the legal power to adopt it, has had ample time to analyze and review it (Okumbe, 1998). The administration of the budget is the responsibility of the head teacher on behalf of the School Management Committee, and the head teacher must seek the cooperation of the parents, teachers, and all other stakeholders in the preparation of the budget. When the School Management Committee and the Parents Association are satisfied with the final budget estimate, the head teacher is authorized to forward the budget to the Ministry of Education, which in turn should approve the budget estimate before the beginning of the year (Okumbe, 1998).

Financial accounting is concerned with the maintenance of records in which financial transactions of an educational organization are summarized. An adequate financial system ensures effective operation in an educational organization. Financial accounting is thus the process of recording, classifying and summarizing, financial transactions of an educational organization and interpreting the results of these transactions. Bookkeeping is the art of recording business transactions capable of being measured in monetary terms. The primary value of bookkeeping records is that they are readily available when required. Some of the various books of accounts in use in educational organizations include: cash book, ledger, journal, receipt book, commitment register, stores ledgers, inventory, payment voucher

(Okumbe, 1998). The cashbook is a book detailing money received and paid out of the school on a daily basis. A cashbook is a book of accounts in which all financial transactions with respect to receipts payments and banking are recorded. It is the responsibility of the head teacher of every school to ensure that the cash book is written daily so that, through reconciliations, the cash in hand can be checked by the head teacher against the balances reflected in the cash book (Okumbe, 1998). It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the transactions must balance at the end of the day (MOE & HR, 1999).

Official receipt books are printed either by the institution or the District Education Board (DEB). Where the DEB prints the receipts, the institution should submit its requirements on a yearly basis to facilitate bulk printing. The receipt books must be serially numbered and provided with duplicate counterfoils. Where the institution prints its own receipt books, the serialized receipt books, accompanied by the requisition; deliveries and printer certificates, should be taken to the District Education Office for registration and rubber-stamping. The officer controlling the main stock of receipt book will need to record in the numbered counter-foil / duplicate receipt books register, the number of books purchased and to whom issued, ensuring that a signature is obtained in the register for each issue (MOEST, 2003). A receipt is issued for all monies received by the school. The monies include school fees, grants from the Ministry of Education, or non-governmental organizations and other donors, rents, sales and debtors. The original receipt is given to the person or organization paying the money, while the duplicate is retained in the receipt book for record and audit purposes (Okumbe, 1998).

A payment voucher summarizes payment details and provides basis for approval of the payment. Head teachers are required to ensure that payment vouchers are serially numbered and should include: date of payment, payee, purpose; amount, account charged, approval by head teacher for payment, cheque number/evidence of payment. The payment voucher and supporting documents must be stamped "PAID" once payment is made to avoid re-representation for payment (MOEST, 2006). The head teacher must approve the payment voucher before payment is made. The payment voucher number and other details are used for completing the payments section of the cashbook. Supporting receipts, signed agreements or invoices must be firmly attached to the original payment voucher, which is filed in a sequential order. The duplicate copy of the payment voucher is given to the payee (Okumbe, 1998).

Head teachers are required to ensure that a Trial Balance is extracted every month, and properly filed for record purposes. Four copies of the trial balance must be submitted monthly, not later than on 15th of the ensuing month, together with bank reconciliation statements; a list of imprest holders, Return to Drawer (RD) cheque drawers, and each on hand certificates; as at the date of Trial Balance. These copies should be distributed as follows: - a copy each to District School Auditor, Provincial School Auditor, Teachers Service Commission, and a copy retained by the institution (MOEST, 2006). Head teachers are required to submit their schoolbooks of accounts and financial statements; and other necessary documents to their District Schools Audit by the 31st January of the ensuing year to enable the Audit Unit of the Ministry of Education to carry out the Audit. Other educational institutions with different financial years are required to submit their accounts within three months of the close of the financial year. The heads of the institutions; as accounting and supervising officers, are fully responsible for all financial transactions, and the preparation of financial statements at the institution, as well as any irregular accounting, which in some cases is not deliberately or otherwise brought to the notice of the auditors. The audit file to be submitted should hold the Trial Balance and Finance Statements for audit purpose (MOEST, 2006).

The Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2003) directed head teachers to purchase approved instructional materials, involve parents and communities, through Parents/Teachers Association (PA/TA) and School Management Committee (SMC) in making decisions on school expenditure and provide each pupil with the minimum specified supplies of stationery every year. The School Management Instructional Materials Selection Committee (SIMSC) is made up of parents and teachers. The head teacher is the chairperson and the deputy head teacher is the committee's secretary. The chairperson of the School Management Committee (SMC) is also a SIMSC member. The members of the SIMSC are of great help to the head teacher since an effective SIMSC has an important part to play in the management of teaching and learning materials, and in keeping all parents and the community informed of key issues and the committee's decisions (MOEST, 2004). The local communities are expected to create a learning friendly environment for children by promoting and supporting Free Primary Education and abolishing child labour and to participate in school management through selected school management committees and Parents Association. Further, they are expected to participate in decision-making and implementing

policies on physical facilities and procurement of teaching and learning materials (MOEST, 2003).

The main sources of the school funds are parents, government and community groups. These are the main beneficiaries of education and they provide funds for schools as a cost-sharing measure. The success of the school will to a large extent depend on the head teacher's active involvement of all stakeholders in the cost-sharing activities. This should start within the school through income generating activities. Parents should be made aware of their responsibility in providing the necessary resources that would enable their children to learn effectively. The fact that parents are the major contributors to cost sharing and yet they have limited resources should encourage teachers to take care of the available resources to avoid loss and wastage. Every primary school is required to establish a PA/PTA whose major function is to raise funds for school programmes. The key players in fund-raising include head teachers; chairpersons of school committees, PA/PTAs, the Provincial Administration, political leaders, education officials, sponsors, counsellors, business persons, the community, media, staff and pupils among others (MOE & HR, 1999).

The head teacher as the chief executive of the school does not act alone or on his own authority, but rather carries out his assignments within the context of laws, regulations, administrative instructions and directives originating from the government. Effective management of public primary schools depend on the efforts of a number of agencies such as, the Provincial Office, the District Office, Divisional Office, the local community and the school staff, as these stakeholders play an important part in the daily operations of the school. The head teacher is a pivotal link in this network and plays the most crucial role in ensuring prudent management of financial, human and material resources (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Studies have shown that more often than not head teachers in Kenyan public primary schools may not perform their assigned roles in managing school finances as required by the Ministry of Education because they are already overworked in class work and other administrative duties. Head teachers are expected to teach and to perform other office work. They are expected to develop and use various leadership styles in school management because there is no one leadership style suitable for all situations. The government should therefore consider employing accounts clerks in all public primary schools to assist head teachers to effectively manage school finances. Further, head teachers need to be trained through in-

service programmes on the importance of the various leadership styles and on effective performance of their roles in school management. This will lead to improved management of schools and better performance of pupils in National Examinations.

To ascertain the validity of issues raised by the many studies and other scholarly works reviewed in this paper on head teachers' management, the author suggests that research should be conducted in the following areas:

1. Teachers' perceptions on the influence of head teachers' leadership styles on effective management of public primary schools.
2. The influence of head teachers' leadership skills on their effectiveness in public primary school management.
3. Effective and ineffective head teachers in public and private primary school management.

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