



INFLUENCE OF PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP VALUES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF TRANSITION RATES FROM PRIMARY TO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KAHURO SUB-COUNTY, MURANGA COUNTY, KENYA

Gibson Mwangi¹,

Anne Muiru²ⁱ

¹School of Education,
Mount Kenya University,
Kenya

²Dr., School of Education,
Kirinyaga University,
Kenya

Abstract:

The introduction of free and compulsory secondary education popularly known as 100% transition rate has met many schools unprepared. This has led to many principals facing various leadership challenges such as poor state of physical facilities; inadequate learning and teaching resources; inability to repair or provide learning furniture; inadequate trained teachers and high teacher turnover, low teacher student ration, and lack of supporting services. The study sought to examine the influence of principals' leadership values on the management of transition rate in Kahuro Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya. The study was be guided by the System Theory of von Ludwig (1968) and Situation Leadership Theory as explained by Dr. Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard. The researcher used mixed methodology approach and convergent parallel design. The study targeted 505 respondents comprised of 42 principals, 42 deputy principals, 420 BOM members and one Education Officer in the Sub-County. The researcher used purposive sampling method to sample 127 respondents comprised of 42 Principals, 42 Deputy Principals, 42 BOM Chairmen and the one Education Officer. The study used questionnaires for teachers and interview guides for the Principals, BOM Chairmen and Educational officer to collect data. To ensure reliability, validity, dependability and credibility, a pilot study was conducted in 10% sample size in Kigumo Sub-County. Reliability of the instrument was determined through split-half technique where, if the correlation coefficient (r 0.78 was obtained indicating that instrument was reliable. Content validity through supervisors and expert judgment was done to evaluate clearness of the questions in the research tools. Credibility and dependability were demonstrated through an audit trail, examining the documentation of data, methods,

ⁱ Correspondence: email annemuiru12@gmail.com

decisions and end product. Quantitative data in the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics while qualitative data obtained from interview guides was analyzed using thematic data analysis. Frequency tables, graphs and pie charts and correlation coefficient statistics was used to present the quantitative data. The qualitative data was presented in form of narratives. The study showed that some schools had large classes, beyond the recommended ratio of 40:1. This could be attributed to the introduction of subsidized public secondary education program. The free schooling enabled those who could not afford education to attend school, increasing enrollments in schools. The study concluded that the curriculum could not be implemented effectively, hence low academic achievement among the learners, prerequisite for increased indiscipline in schools which will call for principals in schools to improve their leadership values in order to manage the transition effectively.

Keywords: principals, leadership values, preparedness, transition

1. Introduction

Education is a cornerstone of development of any country. It has been a pillar for human civilization. Education impacts skills and knowledge to the youth and adult to become productive citizens in a country. The commitment to ensuring access to education started in 1948 with the Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration recognized education as a basic Human Right. The declaration pointed out that basic education ought to be free and mandatory at the primary level and should be easily accessible at a higher level on a merit basis (UNESCO, 2017). The world was aimed at achieving Education for All (EFA) by 2015. The 1990 Jomtien and 2000 Dakar world forums, formulated strategies to ensure Universal Free and Compulsory Education. The policies were guided by Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and later, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In some developed countries such as Britain, U.S.A and Sweden, education was realized to be an important tool for human capital, hence availed to the citizens long before the adoption of Education for All (EFA) initiative.

In sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), countries embraced with vigor, the millennium Development goals, ensuring free and compulsory education. Education was regarded as a yard stick, for the rapid development of the economies, which were just under colonial rule. According to S.E.I.A report of 2001 and 2007, enrolment in education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) grew from 4.3 million in 1970 to 39 million in 2007 after the introduction of free schooling. However, the growth varied from country to country. In some countries like Mauritius, South Africa, Botswana and Uganda have achieved almost 100 percent in universal basic education. This translated to increased retention and transition rates, indicating the need to expand human and physical resources. The countries being Third world countries, with inadequate finances, the provision of infrastructures, instructional and human resources was a problem for stake holders. In Malawi, for example, enrolment increased by over 50 percent from 1.9 million in 1993 to

about 3.2 million in 1994 (Riddell, 2003). In Tanzania, it was observed that one of the schools had 50 teachers instructing 2300 learners (Nkosi, 2005). The tremendous growth in enrolment did not go hand in hand with the provision of human and physical resources, affecting quality and standards of education.

The education sector in Kenya underwent a dramatic change with the advent of subsidized basic education in the year 2003 and subsidized secondary education in 2008. The introduction of free schooling resulted to a tremendous increase in enrolment. The Economic Survey of 2010 indicated that the pupils' population in private and public schools rose by 2.3 percent. This called for expansion of physical and human resources. However, by 2003, there were only 18,081 public secondary schools and 641 private secondary schools to absorb the increased number of graduates from primary education (Republic of Kenya, 2005). The research is geared towards assessing how the school process is influencing management of transition from primary to secondary schools. The study will be based in Kahuro Sub-County, Murang'a County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Following the introduction of compulsory free secondary education and the 100% transition policy, secondary schools in Kahuro Sub-County has been faced with challenges of preparedness in terms of physical facilities, teaching and learning resources. Olembo and Cameroon (2016), argued that school principals are faced with growing leadership challenges such as poor state of physical facilities; inadequate learning and teaching inputs; inability to repair or provide learning furniture; inadequate trained teachers and high teacher turnover, low teacher student ration, and lack of supporting services. This sums up the myriad problems which afflicted the education sector with the introduction of Free and compulsory Education. Guided by the millennium development goals (MDGs), and thereafter the sustainable development goals (SDGs) a firm foundation was established to realize the intended goals. The government of Kenya introduced subsidized primary education (S. P. E.) in 2003 and subsidized public day secondary education (S. P. D. S. E.) in 2008, with the aim of reducing cost of education to increase access and attain a transition rate of 50 percent by 2015. The tremendous growth in the education sector, witnessed increased enrolment rate (Galabawa, 2013).

The study was therefore geared towards determining how Principal leadership values, teaching staff, infrastructure and instructional materials influence the management of transition rates from primary to secondary schools in Kahuro Sub-County, Muranga County, Kenya.

1.2 Objective of the study

To assess the influence of Principal leadership values on the management of transition rates from primary to secondary schools in Kahuro Sub-County, Muranga County, Kenya.

2. Literature review

Leadership influences organizations; principal leadership influences schools. Just what constitutes leadership and precisely how leadership influences organizations have been the subject of research, speculation, and debate for decades, and the results are inconclusive. According to Stogdill (2004) there are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Research on what constitutes leadership and the ways it impacts organizations has continued to be a topic of study, however. A number of writers and researchers provide comprehensive reviews of the history of educational leadership theory and research (Hanson, 2003; Hoy & Miskel, 2008; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2008; Marion, 2002).

Considering the levels of teacher's commitment and attitudes to work, which invariably is the personality of the teachers and this count on the teacher and students' relationship, burned out teachers are less sympathetic towards students, have low tolerance for frustration in the class room, and feel more anxious and exhausted. They develop fewer plans to improve the academic quality of their instruction and are less likely to challenge authority when faced with rules that keep them from teaching in ways they define as effective (Marshal, 2004).

2.1 Theoretical framework

The study was based on the system theory postulated by Von Ludwing in 1968. The system by Ludwing Von Bertalanffy (1971) means complexes of elements standing in interaction. He drew a parallel between closed and open system when it comes to transfer of matter. The close system is called closed if it neither takes in nor emits matter on a continuum. Open system can be applied to school system because school interacts with the environment and its element of receiving inputs from external environment, processes them and supplies output to external environment. System approach is a management tool that allows administration to examine all aspects of the organization, to inter-relate the effects of onset of decision to another and to optimally use the available resources to solve problems.

This theory holds that teaching/ learning process is dynamic and has inputs and outputs. The best results are achieved when the most suitable materials are fed into the teaching/ learning process. The system approach involves the co-ordination management of components in the system for the best results. In education system, teachers, instructional materials, infrastructure such as classrooms, desks and so on, form components that supply inputs. The inputs must be available to achieve better results, in terms of good performance. The introduction of S. P. D. S. E. led to increased enrolment, stressing the available physical and human resources. To ensure better learning outcomes, principals should ensure availability of these resources (inputs), to ensure better results (output), to enhance progression of learners and enable them get employment opportunities in competitive labor market.

3. Research methodology

A mixed research methodology was adopted to investigate student dynamics influencing management of discipline in Kahuro Sub County, Murang’a County. Mixed research method means that this research would follow a combination of both qualitative and quantitative format. This research would therefore follow both formats in its presentation.

This research used concurrent triangulation design, this meant that this research was characterized by two or more methods used to confirm, cross-validate, or corroborate findings within the study (Creswel et al., 2003).

The target population for this study comprised of all the 42 principals, 42 deputy principals, 420 BOM Members of public secondary school in Kahuro Sub-County, Muranga County in Kenya and one Sub-County Director of Education. The questionnaires were administered to Principals and their deputies involved in management of transition from primary to secondary schools in each school while the interview guide was used to capture data from BOM Chairman and Sub-County Director of Education with the added advantage that additional information could be sought by the researcher who would be filling the responses. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively and presented in themes and through the use of descriptive and inferential statistics respectively.

4. Research findings and Discussions

This objective was to assess the influence of principal leadership values on the management of transition rates from primary to secondary schools in Kahuro sub-County, Murang’a County.

4.1 Descriptive statistics

Quantitative analysis was conducted on the data obtained. The findings obtained will be presented on the sub-headings that follow.

A. Principal makes an effort to motivate the teaching staff

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

Table 1: Principal makes an effort to motivate the teaching staff

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	13.0	13.0	13.0
	Disagree	40	43.5	43.5	56.5
	Agree	28	30.4	30.4	87.0
	Strongly Agree	12	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: The researcher, 2021.

From the findings above, 56.5% of the respondents disagreed that principals make an effort to motivate the teaching staff. 43.5% of the respondents agreed that principals make an effort to motivate the teaching staff. Majority of the respondents agreed that principals make an effort to motivate the teaching staff. According to Deci and Ryan (2005), experiencing responsibility for success is highly motivating and conducive to continuing successful practices whereas personal responsibility for failure motivates an individual to change what they do. It is important for principals to closely monitor the learning activities from both the teachers and learners' point of view. If any challenge is encountered, principal should find ways to guide their teaching staff and encourage them to try new practice that will produce good results.

B. When faced with challenges affecting the learning process, the principal tries his/her best to mitigate those challenges

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

Table 2: Our principal always tries to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	36	39.1	39.1	39.1
	Disagree	36	39.1	39.1	78.2
	Agree	20	21.8	21.8	100.0
	Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Researcher, 2021

From the findings above, 78.2% of the respondents disagreed that principals always try to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process. 21.8% of the respondents agreed that principals always try to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process. Majority of the respondents disagreed that principals always try to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process. According to Marion (2002), leadership influences organizations, principal leadership influences schools. The respondents disagreed on the issue of principals solving challenges affecting the learning process. The best way for principals to mitigate challenges is by having strong leadership values and knowing that the school relies their final decision. Principals should have strong personnel and management skills that will enable them to solve these problems.

C. Our principal is open to constructive criticism even when their authority is challenged in regard to school management

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

Table 3: Our principal is open to constructive criticism even when his/her authority is challenged

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	44	47.8	47.8	47.8
	Disagree	48	52.2	52.2	100.0
	Total	92	100.0	100.0	

Source: The Researcher, 2021.

From the findings above, all respondents disagreed that principals are open to constructive criticism even when their authority is challenged. According to Marshal (2004), when teachers are faced with rules that keep them from teaching in ways they define as effective, they will challenge the authority. In a secondary school setting, the teaching staff spend most of their time with the learners. They are able to understand their behavior, perception and attitude. If the rules that govern the teaching process hinder them from getting the best out of their students, they should challenge the regulations with a proposition to amend the existing ones or create new ones that will led to excellence.

4.2 Inferential statistics

Further quantitative analysis was conducted on the data obtained. The analysis techniques used were correlation and linear regression.

A. Correlation

The findings obtained were shown in the table below.

Table 4: Correlation for Objective I

		Our principal makes an effort to motivate teachers	Our principal always tries to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process	Our principal is open to constructive criticism even when his/her authority is challenged	Our principal takes the responsibility to ensure quality of education provided is at its best
Our principal makes an effort to motivate teachers	Pearson Correlation	1	.237*	-.487**	-.201
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.023	.000	.055
	N	92	92	92	92
Our principal always tries to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process	Pearson Correlation	.237*	1	-.351**	-.012
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.023		.001	.911
	N	92	92	92	92
Our principal is open to constructive criticism even when his/her authority is challenged	Pearson Correlation	-.487**	-.351**	1	-.047
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		.653
	N	92	92	92	92
Our principal takes the responsibility to ensure quality of education provided is at its best	Pearson Correlation	-.201	-.012	-.047	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.055	.911	.653	
	N	92	92	92	92
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					

Source: The Researcher, 2021.

From the table above, the following variables' combination had a positive impact in improving the management of transition rates from primary to secondary schools:

- Principals should make an effort to motivate their staff and principals should be open to constructive criticism even when their authority is challenged. This had a correlation coefficient of $-.487^{**}$.
- Principals should be open to constructive criticism even when their authority is challenged and principals should try their best to mitigate challenges facing the learning process. This had a correlation coefficient of $-.351^{**}$.

B. Linear regression

The sought data was shown in the table below.

Table 5: Linear regression for Objective I

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.101	.285		10.885	.000
	Our principal makes an effort to motivate teachers	-.033	.035	-.099	-.927	.357
	Our principal always tries to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process	.150	.038	.384	3.963	.000
	Our principal is open to constructive criticism even when his/her authority is challenged	-.257	.096	-.292	-2.674	.009
	Our principal takes the responsibility to ensure quality of education provided is at its best	-.054	.032	-.157	-1.682	.096

a. Dependent Variable: Transition Rate

Source: The researcher, 2021.

From the table above, principals should try their best to mitigate challenges affecting the learning process and principal should be open to constructive criticism even when their authority is challenged were significant predictors of improving transition rates from primary to secondary schools in Kahuro Sub-County, Murang'a County. They both had a significance level of less than .05 meaning that there was at least a 95% confidence level that they would increase performance.

The constant variable was also a significant predictor of improving performance.

C. Qualitative responses from interviews

One of the boards of management members stated the following:

“It is the ultimate responsibility of principals to ensure that they lead by example be aware of the decisions they make. Though the increase in students’ enrollment has not yet been dealt with, they should strive to strike a balance and ensure that they push their superiors to give the required resources to management of growth rate of enrollment while maintaining the appropriate learning processes and improve the academic quality.”

D. Mixing and interpretation of data

It is important for principals to closely monitor the learning activities from both the teachers and learners’ point of view. If any challenge is encountered, principal should find ways to guide their teaching staff and encourage them to try new practice that will produce good results.

The respondents disagreed on the issue of principals solving challenges affecting the learning process. The best way for principals to mitigate challenges is by having strong leadership values and knowing that the school relies on their final decision. Principals should have strong personnel and management skills that will enable them to solve these problems.

In a secondary school setting, the teaching staff spend most of their time with the learners. They are able to understand their behavior, perception and attitude. If the rules that govern the teaching process hinder them from getting the best out of their students, they should challenge the regulations with a proposition to amend the existing ones or create new ones that will led to excellence.

Principals should ensure that their students are well-guided by their teachers and facilitate what is needed to the teachers. Though there may be issues with increase in enrollments thereby creating a deficiency in enrollment, principals must maintain a balance in the distribution of resources.

5. Conclusion

On the influence principal leadership values on the management of transition rates from primary to secondary schools, it is important for principals to closely monitor the learning activities from both the teachers and learners’ point of view. If any challenge is encountered, principal should find ways to guide their teaching staff and encourage them to try new practice that will produce good results. The respondents disagreed on the issue of principals solving challenges affecting the learning process. The best way for principals to mitigate challenges is by having strong leadership values and knowing that the school relies their final decision. Principals should have strong personnel and management skills that will enable them to solve these problems. In a secondary school setting, the teaching staff spend most of their time with the learners. They are able to understand their behavior, perception and attitude. If the rules that govern the teaching process hinder them from getting the best out of their students, they should challenge the regulations with a proposition to amend the existing ones or create new ones that will led to excellence. Principals should ensure that their students are well-guided by their teachers

and facilitate what is needed to the teachers. Though there may be issues with increase in enrollments thereby creating a deficiency in enrollment, principals must maintain a balance in the distribution of resources.

6. Recommendations for practice

- 1) The best way for principals to mitigate challenges is by having strong leadership values and knowing that the school relies on their final decision.
- 2) Principals should have strong personnel and management skills that will enable them to solve these problems. In a secondary school setting, the teaching staff spend most of their time with the learners. They are able to understand their behavior, perception and attitude. If the rules that govern the teaching process hinder them from getting the best out of their students, they should challenge the regulations with a proposition to amend the existing ones or create new ones that will led to excellence.
- 3) Principals should ensure that their students are well-guided by their teachers and facilitate what is needed to the teachers. Though there may be issues with increase in enrollments thereby creating a deficiency in enrollment, principals must maintain a balance in the distribution of resources.
- 4) The government should allocate adequate funds that will support the scalability of learning institutions by offering teachers a sustainable remuneration package, ensure that there are enough learning materials and optimum infrastructure to support learning.
- 5) Parents may also be involved in improving the transition rates by creating development committees that can assist in expansion where possible.

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare that they do not have a conflict of interests.

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