



ISSN: 0975-833X

RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE EFFECT OF ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE OF BARINGO CENTRAL SUB COUNTY

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received 23rd March, 2014
Received in revised form
14th April, 2014
Accepted 19th May, 2014
Published online 25th June, 2014

Key words:

Organizational leadership,
Academic performance,
Styles of leadership,
Leadership ethics,
Leadership skills.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of organizational leadership on performance in academics in secondary schools of Baringo Central Sub County of Baringo County, Kenya. The hypotheses were: the effect of leadership styles on performance in secondary schools is statistically significant at least at 5% level; the effect of leadership skills on performance in schools is statistically significant at least at 5% level; the effect of leadership ethics on performance is statistically significant at least at 5% level. The study made use of a survey study research design. The study sampled 26 of the 28 schools, 26 of the 28 school leaders and 91 of teachers to form a total sample size of 117 respondents. Questionnaires were used as the main data collection tools. Stratified random sampling was used select twenty six schools from the targeted 28 schools to ensure schools to participate in the study, convenience sampling was used so as to have the school heads as respondents for this study based on who was readily available and finally simple random sampling was done to select teachers from the identified schools. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Multiple linear regressions were used to establish the predictive power of the study model. The study findings indicated that there was no significant relationship between leadership styles and the academic performance (Accept, $p = 0.507$), there was no significant relationship between leadership skills and the academic performance (Accept, $p = 0.448$) and that there was a significant relationship between ethical leadership practices and the school's performance. (Reject, $p = 0.006$). The findings of this study provided policy recommendations that were useful in managing and improving academic performance in secondary schools in the study area.

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INTRODUCTION

Leaders in organizations mediate and reconcile the often-conflicting expectations of constituents, lack direct hierarchical and reward power and have resource dependence and shifting expectations. Organizational leaders derive power from the fact that they are in control of critical resources and are able to dispense them to internal stakeholders in their organizations. This means that they are able to direct internal stakeholders to act in accordance with organizational goals. The extent a leader is successful may depend on their ability to build trust between the parties and create opportunities for each party to fulfill both their individual and collective goals. This requires that such leaders are resourceful and tactful, relying on their personal qualities to assure effective performance in their leadership roles. Leadership processes define, establish, identify, or translate this direction for their followers and facilitate or enable the organizational processes with the aim of achieving the organizational purpose. Organizational purpose and direction can be defined in terms of mission, vision, strategy, goals, plans, and tasks. Leadership is tied to the continual development and attainment of organizational goal.

Lack of vision in the management of schools often leads to imbalance in the allocation and use of resources. Ayot and Briggs (1992) point out that; poor results in education are related to the resources allocated to it. They are also of the view that input-output studies should be done using learning achieved as seen from student's examination performance. The impact of school management is an essential element in such studies.

Many authors hold that the perspective of leadership is a functional one, meaning that leadership is at the service of collective effectiveness (Fleishman *et al.*, 1991; Hackman and Walton, 1986; Lord, 1977). Describing a similar approach to team leadership, Hackman and Walton (1986) argued that the leader's main job is to do, or get done, whatever is not being adequately handled for group needs (McGrath, 1962). If a leader managers, by whatever means, to ensure that all functions critical to both task accomplishment and group maintenance are adequately taken care of, then the leader has done his or her job well. These assertions can be made whether leaders are leading groups, multiple groups combined into a department or a division, the organization as a whole, or group of multiple schools. This defining element of organizational

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leadership also means that the success of the collective as a whole is a (if not the) major criterion for leader effectiveness. People are significant barriers in the attempt to drive strategic change. According to Moran and Brightman (2001), change leaders must create an environment where people involved in the change process can open themselves up to new ideas and concepts, adopt new assumptions, and overcome their hostility and resistance to change. Black and Gregersen (2002) showed that lasting success in leading strategic change lies in the ability of leaders to alter the mental maps of the people within their organization. They argued that instead of an "organization in" approach, an "individual out" approach that seeks to realize the goal of strategically changing the organization by first changing its individuals must be adopted. This approach to change requires strong and emotionally intelligent leaders who relate to the fears, anxieties and insecurity that people feel in change environments.

Effective change leaders share the following common characteristics: act as framers of the change environment for both the organization and the affected individuals; create and foster the climate necessary to nurture the change environment, to learn from mistakes, and to fashion new solutions that drive transformation; are the examples of change, providing a highly visible and credible role model for the organization; are determined and dedicated, inspiring and encouraging a passion for the success of the change initiative; and are interactive networks who persuade, influence, explain, critique and occasionally cajole in their commitment to sustain strategic change. Schools are usually ranked in terms of performance in national examinations. All organizations are currently undergoing some type of change. Many of these change programs arise from organized management strategies such as culture change, business process reengineering, empowerment and total quality management. Other change initiatives are driven by the need for organizations to reposition themselves in the face of changing competitive conditions. Strategic change often involves radical transitions within an organization and encompasses strategy, structure, systems, processes and culture (Drucker, 2004). The track record of success in bringing about strategic change within most organizations has been poor in most organizations since many fail to grasp that they are performing an implementation which actually means turning plans into reality rather than formulation (John and Scholes, 2003).

The various attempts to improve on performance in schools have resulted in various effects in the desired ends. Schools have designed unique approaches and strategies to achieve the desired high performance in academics. However, despite the efforts by schools to employ new approaches and strategies the efforts have not always led to the expected results in KCSE performance. The education system in Kenya is largely examination oriented. The quality of education tends to be evaluated in terms of the number of students passing national examinations (Eshiwani, 1993). Educators and the general public have time and again expressed concern over factors that influence students' performance in examinations. The most outstanding factor has to do with the organizational management of schools. For instance (Rutter *et al.*, 1979) and (Wekesa, 1993) note that to improve students' performance

leaders are required first to improve the management of schools. This study was done to find out the effect of leadership on academic performance in secondary schools and establishing the effects of leadership style, leadership skills and leadership ethics on the schools' performance in academics.

Literature Review

The development of a transformational leadership theory owes much to the fact that many organizations have the past twenty five years had to face rapidly changing environments that required leaders to articulate new visions, foster new cultures, and breed new mindsets involving changes in basic values, beliefs and attitudes of subordinates. Shared leadership models, promoted in several studies of leadership within the sectors, provide a contrast with the assumption in much of the literature that leadership is linked to a role, and open up the possibility that several people within a centre/service may be involved in leadership. Louise Hard (2004) has proposed the concept of formal and informal leaders. All past leadership theories have a focus on certain behaviour patterns and the implications of these patterns for leader performance. Researchers have yet to define the relationship between servant leadership and empowerment; empowerment is implied in the definition of the concept, as one of the primary objectives of servant leadership to develop the potential of followers. The precepts of servant leader idea is based on empathy, healing, listening and building community have enhanced meaning in today's business environment where more aggressive leadership or management styles focus on profit rather than people have ultimately led to system failures such as the current global financial crisis. In the past studies there still exists research gap on the effect of organizational leadership on strategic change management. In the past studies there exists research gap on the effect of organizational leadership on academic performance in secondary schools

Effect of Leadership Styles

If leadership is such a key element in the success of organizations, then it is essential that effective leadership can be defined, taught, practiced and evaluated. Three major styles of leadership have been identified in contemporary leadership theory. These are the transformative leader, the transactional leader and the servant leader. Transformational leaders are motivators with the ability to share a vision of future possibilities that inspires fellow employees to place the needs of the group above their own individual interests. Transformational leadership is inspirational, providing scope for intellectual and creative development, which values the role of the individual in achieving a shared vision. Transactional leadership is more closely allied to traditional management techniques with the leader establishing organizational goals and entering into a contractual arrangement with subordinates based on reward and punishment. The servant leader, on the other hand, leads through service. The idea of the servant leader is not new, having been introduced by Robert Greenleaf in 1977. However, its precepts based on empathy, healing, listening and building community have enhanced meaning in today's business environment where more aggressive

leadership or management styles are focusing on profit rather than people which have ultimately led to system failures such as the current global financial crisis. In today's troubled world there is a move toward the rediscovery of the type of values embodied by the servant leader. Discussion, debate and exploration of case studies can help today's business students learn about these styles of leadership, enabling them to begin creating their own individual visions of the leaders they hope to be during their current or future careers.

H₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership styles and performance in academics in secondary schools at least at 5% significance level.

Effect of Leadership Skills

Leadership is an important concept in the study of groups. Leaders play an active part in development and maintenance of role structure and goal direction and they influence the existence and efficiency of the group (Stogdill, 1974). Leaders must not only exercise influence, but they must also decide when, where, and how influence was exercised to bring the attainment of social goals (House and Howell, 1991). Over the years, many theories have been proposed describing the behaviors that make effective leadership possible theories of behavioral styles (Lindell and Rosenqvist, 1992), transformational or charismatic leadership (Bass and Avolio, 1994) and leader-member exchange (Graen and Uhl-Bien, 1995). These theories all have a focus on certain behavior patterns and the implications of these patterns for leader performance. Knowledge refers to the output of learning process, just as plans are the outputs of the planning process. Gibbons. (1994) contended that the terms of science and knowledge are frequently adopted interchangeably to form scientific knowledge. Networks have been extensively applied in engineering and science for managing complex systems (Price, 1965). In engineering and sciences, network commonly refers to a system or a web of inter-linked sub-systems or components, each optimally designed to perform a designated task effectively. Each sub-system is highly specialized and generally draws on high levels of accumulated knowledge and expertise within its expected domain of operations. Theoretically, the system as a whole may not be truly optimal, but it can be effective and flexible enough to perform the task at hand, well beyond the capabilities of its individual components. The two components of a network are the nodes and linkages whereby nodes point out the system resources for knowledge generation with their connections via linkages.

Knowledge is complex and invisible, making it very hard to obtain. An effective approach is visualization and representation of knowledge. Chandy and Williams (1994) argued that each localized knowledge network is a part or a sub-system of a broader and more general system. Since the development and diffusion of knowledge of one discipline can be formulated and changed by the nature and objective of relevant journals, one discipline's journals can be regarded as an "invisible hand" influencing the focus of development and diffusion of the knowledge network of a given field. The concept of invisible hand reflects our admiration for the elegant and smooth functioning of the market system as a coordinator

of autonomous individual choices in an interdependent world. An invisible knowledge network of any given field includes both the knowledge content of its nodes and the inter-linkages of those nodes within its domain and to other fields. The knowledge network of leadership can be considered as a branch of its interacting foundational domains, which are well-established sub-systems of leadership. A knowledge network in the leadership field is composed of sufficiently large number of published articles, active researchers (the intellectual architects) and citations appearing in various media relating to electronic commerce and other fields (Ngai and Wat, 2002). This knowledge network can depict the developmental and diffusion patterns and processes in the knowledge system of leadership. During the accumulation of cross-field knowledge, key nodes are the most important bridges to connect different or even separate domains. Key nodes gain the main status during the cross-fertilizing process, which facilitates the knowledge communication and transmission among relevant parts of the whole network.

Several studies have used the bibliometric techniques to study management research. For example, Pilkington and Teichert (2006) investigated the intellectual pillars of the management of technology literature and explored whether these are distinct from those commonly associated with its rival fields; Acedo and Casillas (2005) explored the research paradigms of international management research by applying factorial analysis techniques in an author co-citation study; Ramos-Rodriguez and Ruiz-Navarro (2004) examined the intellectual structure change of strategic management research by conducting a bibliometric study of the Strategic Management Journal; Ponzi (2002) explored the intellectual structure and interdisciplinary breadth of knowledge management in its early stage of development, using principle component analysis on an author co-citation frequency matrix.

H₂: There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership skills and performance in academics in secondary schools at least at 5% significance level.

Effect of Leadership Ethics

Ethical concerns are an important area in business practices and research endeavors in the field of organizational chain management. In particular, ethical concerns become evident in situations of asymmetric relationships across organizations (for example, in terms of power and dependence). There is a need to establish ethical structures, processes and performance measures in organizations. In previous research restricted parts of this idea across organizations have been addressed from an ethical perspective but not the whole process (Moberg, 2003). Nevertheless, there have been a few recent research endeavors dedicated to the ethical concerns in organizational chain management as a whole. For example, Svensson (2008) introduced and described a conceptual framework of organizational chain management ethics based upon the automotive industry. Svensson (2009) focuses on the transparency of organizational chain management ethics based upon case illustrations across organizations in the fashion and telecom industries. The dilemma is that these ethical frameworks in the field of organizational chain management

are still on a general level, where specific details are not provided on how to manage, monitor and evaluate ethical concerns across organizations.

H₃: There is no statistically significant relationship between leadership ethics and performance in academics in secondary schools at least at 5% significance level.

Methodologies

This study employed survey research design to assess how the leadership styles, skills and ethics affect the performance of secondary schools in the Baringo Central Sub County. The target populations for this study were secondary schools leaders that are either the Principals or Deputy Principals and the teachers in the targeted schools. There are 28 secondary schools in the BCSC. The study targeted 28 schools with target populations consisting of 28 leaders who were either the principal or the deputy principal per school, and 120 teachers from the 28 schools who were the teachers who were the teachers in administrative positions or had other roles in the school in all the 28 schools. Stratified random sampling was used select six schools from the targeted 28 schools to ensure schools of various categories including the county, national, private and sub county schools were selected to participate in the study, convenience sampling was used so as to have the school heads that is, either the principal or the deputy principal as respondents for this study based on who was readily available and finally simple random sampling of teachers with roles in the school was done to select teachers from the identified school.

Data Analysis

The data collected using the questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. The questionnaire was coded to enable the responses to be grouped into various categories. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics included measures such as percentages, means and SPSS software aided in the computation and in generation of descriptive statistics. Inferential statistics involved multiple regression analysis and Pearson’s product moment correlations. Multiple linear regressions were used to establish the predictive power of the study model, specified by the following model:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby

- Y = Performance of secondary schools
- X₁ = Leadership Styles
- X₂ = Leadership Skills
- X₃ = Leadership Ethics
- ε = Error term/Erroneous variables
- β=Regression co-efficient where β₀ is the intercept.

Results and Findings

The study adopted the regression model to examine how each of the identified leadership measures that is, leadership styles,

leadership skills, and leadership ethics contributed to the academic performance of a school. The results were illustrated in Table 1, 2 and 3 below.

Table 1. Contribution of leadership on academic performance as per regression model

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.378 ^a	.143	.113	.56559

a. Predictors: (Constant), leadership ethics, leadership styles, leadership skills

The model summary indicated that about 14.3% of the data could be accounted for in the regression model (R Square= 0.143) while the regression model indicated that the regression model was significant to mean that the model had not been computed by chance. This made the results of the regression model credible and reliable to illustrate the regression model

Table 2. Contribution of leadership on academic performance as per the regression model

ANOVA ^b						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4.493	3	1.498	4.682	.005 ^a
	Residual	26.870	84	.320		
	Total	31.363	87			

a. Predictors: (Constant), leadership ethics, leadership styles, leadership skills
b. Dependent Variable: academic performance

Table 3. Contribution of leadership on academic performance as per the regression model

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	2.318		
	Leadership styles	.029	.120	.027	.245	.807
	Leadership skills	.079	.104	.087	.762	.448
	Leadership ethics	.328	.116	.323	2.834	.006

a. Dependent Variable: academic performance

The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between the leadership styles (p = 0.807) and the academic performance. The findings also indicated no significant relationship (p = 0.448) between the leadership skills and the schools performance. The results however indicated that there was significant relationship (0.006) between the leadership ethics and academic performance. In assessing the regression model for the academic performance as per the indicators in the study, the study evaluated the standardized coefficients of the study and illustrated the results as indicated in the table multiple linear model below.

Academic Performance = 2.318 + 0.507 (leadership styles) + 0.448 (leadership skills) + 0.006(leadership ethics) + 0.509 (standard error)

These results indicated that the leadership ethics was very important on the overall academic performance of a school. This was interpreted to mean that despite the leadership style and skills applied by a leader of a school, general ethics in leadership is the most vital factor as ethics assists in creating a total influence over the students' performance.

DISCUSSION

The study sought to test the following hypothesis of the study by using the regression model;

H₀₁ : There exists no significant relationship between leadership styles and the academic performance

The study identified that there was no significant relationship between leadership styles and the academic performance. (Accept, $p = 0.507$).

These findings are in agreement with findings according to Oden, (2011) agrees that every leader has yet the performance of the school largely depends on the cooperation of the teachers and the students as well as the determination of the teachers to teach as well as the determination of the students to learn hence leadership styles does not apply so much in academic performance.

H₀₂ :There exists no significant relationship between leadership skills and the academic performance

The study identified that there was no significant relationship between leadership skills and the academic performance. (Accept, $p = 0.448$). These findings concur with Dennto (2010) who notes that skills are an important part of the leadership programs. but however it is not easy to identify an individual's skill yet at the end of the day the school raises its performance hence the leadership skills does not in one way or the other affect the academic performance of the school

H₀₃ :There exists is significant relationship between leadership ethics and the academic performance

The study identified that there was a significant relationship between ethical practices and the school's performance. (Reject, $p = 0.006$). Benson (2009) agrees with the findings that leadership ethics is a personal journey toward integrity and a public commitment to a common good. This begins with claiming one's core values, finding a personal voice, developing a vision, and consciously aligning one's attitudes and beliefs with one's actions and behaviors. In the process, ethical leaders create spaces where people can listen to others and have their ideas and insights valued and heard. The leadership that results encourages people to work together to envision and construct a common good.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Leaders in the school have relevant years of experience in leadership position this could be as a result of them being chosen for leadership positions due to their experience in leadership position in the school. It could also be because of

them being subjected to different leadership styles training in school due to the their leadership position in school as a result the leaders in the school have relevant years of experience in leadership position

Head teachers have got their leadership skills through in service training programs. this could be because the recent Teachers Service Commission and KEMI requirements is that every school leader is supposed to undergo different leadership training programs in order to be equipped with additional leadership skills essential for leading a school. The requirement has ensured that every head teacher has undergone through the training programs thus the reason why the statement has been supported by the majority. The findings could also be because some leaders were chosen to be leaders through their level of education or the favors from their employers despite them having no leadership skills. However after undergoing the leadership training programs, they have acquired the skills necessary for good leadership hence the statement has been supported by the majority. Leaders are required to be ethical in practice of duty. This could be in line with the fact that ethics and leadership goes hand in hand as a leader cannot be a leader with lack of ethics as a leader will lack influence to the subjects due to unethical practices. Consequently ethics ensures that leaders always employ right leadership procedures to the subjects as they are guided by leadership ethics. This ensures that there is always a positive performance and achievement in the leadership as well as appreciation from the subjects of a better leadership exercised by the leader thus the reason why leaders are required to be ethical in practice of duty. Head teachers consider ethics in leadership as part of school culture, this could be because, as a result of ethics, the school is able to perform and be managed well hence ethics is considered part of school culture. Consequently, ethical practices have been considered essential in daily routine of a social structure hence it is supposed to be exercised by the leaders before the subjects follow suit. Considering that it is in the school set up, it is therefore a culture to incorporate the ethics in leadership to ensure that the students follow suit in ethical practices exercised by the school leaders thus the reasons why majority of the respondents have supported the statement that they consider ethics in leadership as part of school culture

The national examinations results target is part of an academic indicator employed by the school, this could be because achieving the target in the national examinations depicts a picture of a school that is determined to perform and has put up necessary measures to ensure they perform hence it is an academic indicator. Achievement of national examination target could also be due to coordinated cooperation between the teachers and the students under a good leadership. Thus national examinations results target is part of an academic indicator employed by the school. The findings from the study have implications for policy. Therefore the following are recommendations emanating from the findings of the study; a school leadership policy document should be developed by the ministry of education that will define the required ethics that the should leaders should portray in the administration of their duties, A rotation policy of school heads and leaders should be based not only on the academic performance of the schools but also on the ethics of these leaders as they are identified to be

most important factors to consider in determining the performance of the schools, and school should develop their own policy documents detailing how various leaders in the school are expected to perform their duties in an ethical manner. This is important as it will ensure that all those with responsibilities in the school can influence academic performance by being ethical. Since research is the search of new knowledge, what has been dealt with is not exhaustive due to dynamic change in school leadership in relation to the present day ever changing unstable generation. The following suggestions for further research are made; More comprehensive studies should be undertaken to include a larger population in order to ascertain or not whether the effects of organizational leadership transcends to other counties and sub counties, and the impact of decentralization of schools management on schools academic performance

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