

*Original Research Article*

# Challenges Facing Board of Managers in Management of Public Secondary Schools; Kamwangi District, Kenya

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Abstract

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The quality of management at the institutional level continues to be a major concern of the Ministry of Education in Kenya. This is because the quality of the school largely depends on its leadership. It is on bases of the above assumption that this study set out to Challenges facing Board of Managers (BOMs) in the management of public secondary school; Kamwangi District, Kenya. To accomplish this task survey method was used in conducting the study. A total of 13 schools out of 26 were selected comprising of 9 mixed secondary schools, 2 Boys schools, and 2 Girls secondary schools. Stratified random sampling technique and purposive sampling were employed to identify study sample. A questionnaire and interview guides were used for data collection. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to data analysis. The study revealed the inadequate staff personnel; inadequate school finances; misappropriations of funds, insufficient physical facilities; poor performance in national examinations; lack of support from the local community; and interference in the running of school by the local communities. In conclusion, urgent measures should be put in place so as to minimize the hindrances.

**Key Words:** Board of managers, Challenges, Management of public secondary schools, Quality schools.

## INTRODUCTION

This paper presents findings of a research study carried out in Kamwangi District, Kenya to find out the challenges facing BOMs of public secondary schools.

### Background to the Study

A school as a social system is a small society that is situated within the larger one, the community. The school is an organization and has its managers who are in charge of all its functions. To achieve its objectives, proper management practices must be observed. The participation of BOMs in schools has been widely acknowledged in both developing and developed

countries (Kamba, 2010). The history of secondary school management in Kenya can be traced back to the colonial times and in early years of independence when education was highly decentralized as the colonial government controlled education (Sifuna, 1990). In those days, school systems were small and management was relatively easy. The school management was almost left entirely in the hands of missionaries who provided teachers, finances, spiritual and moral guidance. The local community was involved in the provision of labour for building educational facilities (Olembo, 1992).

At independence following the recommendations by the Kenya Education Commission (1964), the government of Kenya took over the management of

public secondary schools from the former managers. Management of education was centralized to ensure equitable distribution of opportunities throughout the country. The government advocated for expansion of public secondary schools (Ominde Report, 1964) in order to produce enough man power for national development. As a result, there was increased enrollment in secondary schools. Quantitative expansion took place as well as diversified educational structure leading to management problems. Management of education was entrusted to the Minister of Education with the duty and responsibility of managing and promoting education in the country.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is headed by the cabinet minister (Education Act, 2012) who is responsible for promotion of education in line with the national plan for socio-economic development and securing effective co-operation of all public bodies concerned with education. This includes liaising with Teachers Service Commission (TSC), Quality Assurance Standard Officers (QUASO) and BOMs on teacher management and supervision of secondary schools and tertiary institutions (TSC 2015). According to Education Act (2012) management of education was devolved to the Counties under the County director of Education (ministry of education) and the County director of Education (TSC, 2012).

The Education Act (2012) indicates clearly the composition of the membership of the BoMs and their functions. The nomination panel is constituted three months before the expiry of the life of the existing board. The BoMs panel comprises of six elected parents of the students in school or the local community in case of County schools, one person nominated by the County Education Board (CEB), three representatives of the sponsor, a representative of persons with special needs, and one person to represent special interest groups in the community. The following are members of ad hoc nominated BOMs: (i) the county assembly representative responsible for the area where the institution is located; (ii) the chief of the area; (iii) sponsor, if any, of the institution, (iv) a representative of the parents association (v) The principal of the school shall be the secretary (vi) A representative of the County Director of Education (vii) Member of the National Assembly and (viii) a representative of the County Education Board.

The Education ACT (2012) states that the BoMs are the agents of the Ministry of Education and TSC. The TSC delegates the function of recruitment of teachers to BoMs in their school. They are required to keep pace with the trends and demands of education and training and to ensure that the education system in Kenya is responsive to the needs of Kenyans by ensuring quality education. They are responsible of protection of all the movable and non-movable properties of the school. The BoMs entrusts the day today running of the school to the head teacher (secretary to the board) with full responsibility for internal organization, management and discipline of the students

and supervision of the teaching and non-teaching staff. There are about 40,000 secondary schools in the country (Ministry of Education, 2006).

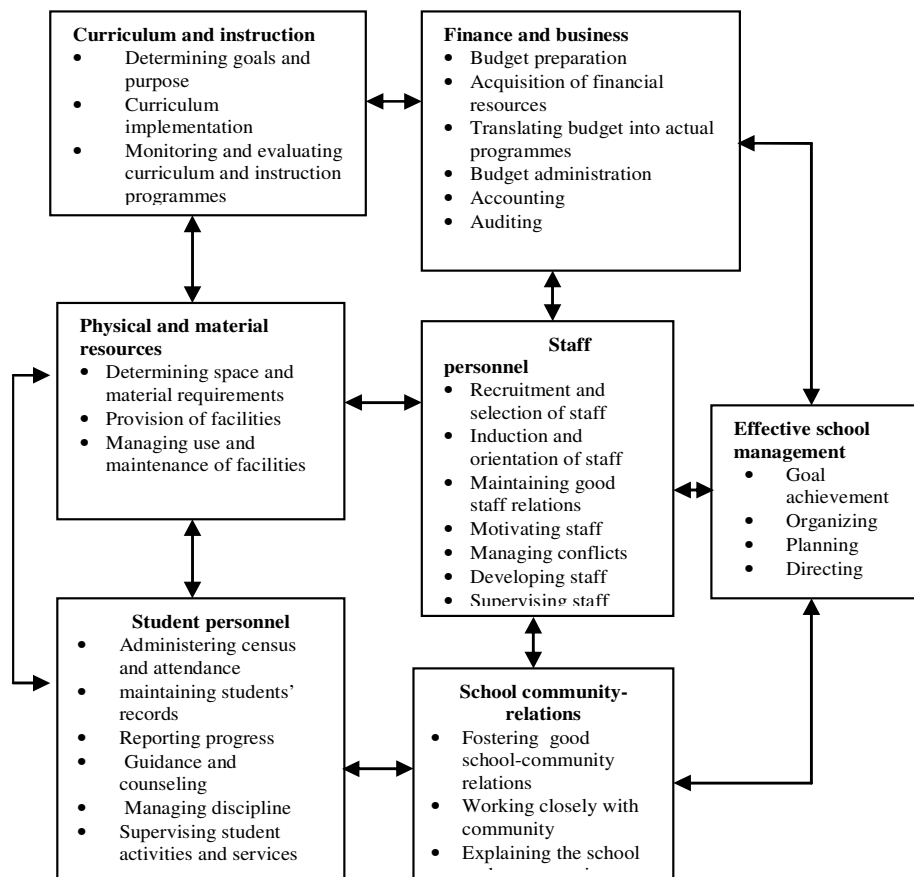
According to Okumbe (2001), the functions of school Board of management include preparation of the annual budgets, overseeing collection of funds and other revenues, authorizing and scrutinizing the disbursement of funds according to the guidelines from the ministry of education. They incur expenditure on various activities of the school in accordance with approved budget. They determine the amounts of fees, levies among other charges and award bursaries to the needy students.

However, many schools have suffered negative effects due to lack of adequate school resources hindering effective learning and teaching (Waweru, 2005). Many studies have questioned the ability of BoMs due to many cases of inefficiency in school management (Njenga, 2003; Anyang' 2003). There also reported cases of irregularities and corruption in recruitment of teachers in most parts of the Kenya to an extent of the TSC counseling the results of selection. In addition, Mumo (2004) documented lack of managerial skills, low levels of education, dishonesty and vested interest in school tenders. Therefore, there was need to evaluate the challenges facing the BoMs in management of public secondary school in Kamwangi District in Kiambu County, Kenya.

### Statement of the Problem

Every country's foundation and destiny lies with its people being given quality education. The quality of management especially at institutional level is and continues to be a major concern of the government of Kenya. The BoMs are appointed with the express task of managing schools on behalf of the cabinet minister. It was assumed rightly and sometimes wrongly that the appointed members would be equal to the task, however, this was not always the case as some schools experienced problems while others succeeded.

The effectiveness of BoMs has been questioned by many studies both in Kenya and other countries that use similar models. In Kenya for example, the official government reports such as the Kamunge (1988); Koech (1999) and task force on students discipline and unrest in secondary school, (2001) indicates that BoMs in Kenya experience many challenges. The Koech report (1999) shows dissatisfaction in management of physical facilities, curriculum & instruction and poor community relations. On the other hand, BoMs have been accused of misallocation, mismanagement and even embezzlement of school funds, Daily nation 11<sup>th</sup> May (2013). Other challenges regarding staff personnel and students' discipline have resulted to public cry, strikes, up heels and disasters such as destruction of property and loss of lives, Standard May 18<sup>th</sup> (2014). Over and above



**Figure 1.** The conceptual framework

**Source:** Researcher 2015

all, BOMs face challenges in their management. Given the importance of proper school management towards education process against challenges affecting effective and efficient school management, there is need for immediate attention and proactive approach to providing a comprehensive and long-term solution. It is, therefore, in this context that the researcher chose to investigate the challenges facing BoMs in management of public secondary schools in Kamwangi District.

### Objectives of the Study

The study focused on the following objectives:

1. To examine the challenges facing BoMs in the following six management tasks areas of the school management; staff personnel, finance and business, physical and material resources, curriculum and instruction, students activities and school-community relations.
2. To analyze the extent to which challenges hinder BoMs from carrying out their administrative roles.
3. To identify possible solutions to the challenges facing

the BoMs in order to improve their roles in school management.

### Conceptual Framework

In the conceptual frame work, the researcher postulated that the challenges facing BoMs in management of public secondary school as shown in figure 1.

### METHODOLOGY

The study targeted all the secondary school in Kamwangi District, Kiambu County in Kenya. The study used descriptive survey design to collect information and data. The descriptive survey design, despite being used for both exploratory and preliminary studies allows the researcher to gather information, summarize, and interpret the information for the purpose of clarification (Orodho 2004). A questionnaire and interview guide was used for data collection. Qualitative and quantitative techniques were employed to data analysis. Qualitative

data involved coding and organizing into categories and themes relevant to the study. Data was presented using frequencies, means and percentages. Descriptive survey was found suitable for this study because the researcher wanted to evaluate the challenged facing BoMs in management of public secondary schools in Kamwangi District, Kenya.

### Sample and Sampling Procedure

A sample size is a definite plan determined before data are actually collected for obtaining a sample from a given population (Orodho 2004). According to Mugenda (1995), a sample size is a small group obtained from the accessible population. Since the population was heterogeneous, stratified random sampling technique was used to obtain a representative sample of thirteen (13) secondary schools. Random sampling allows all the members to have an equal and unbiased chance of being selected (Gay 1992). Krath (1993) contends that researchers classify the units in the sampling frame into strata on the basis of a characteristic that if not properly represented in the sample, may bias inferences that the researcher makes. The technique is important because of validity and reliability. For this study the strata identified are:

**Table 1.** Sample size

	Target population	Sample Size
Boys boarding school	4	2
Girls boarding school	4	2
Mixed day	18	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>13</b>

The researcher worked with a sample size of 50% according to Jacob and Razariah (1972). In a descriptive research, a sample size of 10-50% is accepted. There were 26 BoMs chairpersons, The AEO was targeted because he represented the Ministry of Education in the school boards and was required to ensure that schools within his area were well-managed.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The background information of the participants of the study revealed that 9 (70%) of schools were mixed secondary schools, 2 (15%) were girls and boys secondary schools respectively. Majority (85%) of schools were district schools and only 2 (15%) were provincial schools. The study also revealed that the majority 9 (69%) of BoMs aged between 40- 49. Further findings revealed that the 12 (92%) of BoMs chairpersons were male and only one was a females. The reason given for this was that women did not volunteer for

leadership positions and were generally perceived as incompetent in managerial roles due to cultural factors.

Background information on professional qualification revealed that majority (54%) of BoMs chairperson were graduates while 6 (46%) were undergraduate. This implied that majority of the chairpersons were qualified to take management roles in public secondary schools. With regard to the years of experience, 8 (62%) of BoMs chairperson had served in the board for a period of between 1- 3 years and none had served for more than seven years. Lack of experience was a challenge in management of public secondary schools.

Findings in Table 2 reveal that BoMs chairpersons faced many challenges in school management with means ranging from 61% to 74%. Majority 11 (85%) of BoMs chairpersons faced the challenge of inadequate staff. This finding is supported by earlier researchers who identified critical teacher shortage due to a combination of factors such as retirement, death (especially from HIV/AIDS), dismissal and career change (2005 MOEST, 2005b; Njeru and Orodho, 2003; Njeru and Kioko, 2004). Others 8 (62%) BoMs chairpersons reported cases of indiscipline with staff members. Further findings shows that all 13 (100%) reported the challenge of inadequate funds. Majority 12(92%) BoMs chairperson lacked skills in budgeting, accounting and auditing procedures.

In addition the study revealed that all (100%) of the BoMs chairpersons reported inadequate physical facilities and material resources. There was high cost of repair and maintenance as reported by 7 (54%) of BoMs chairpersons. The study through the observation guide revealed that all the schools had inadequate facilities and materials such as classrooms, toilets, offices of heads of departments, dormitories, playgrounds, libraries, laboratories and school equipment. 9 (69%) BoMs chairpersons revealed text book ratio of 4:1 and 5:1 respectively. There was poor performance in the national examinations as reported 10 (77%) BoMs chairpersons. Orodho (2013) have documented the critical importance of physical and material resources in enhancing learning and academic excellence.

On the other hand Majority 11 (85%) of BoMs chairpersons reported a challenge in monitoring and evaluation. This involves evaluation of relevance of objectives, the effectiveness of instructional resources and the overall assessment of the curriculum and instruction. In addition, 10 (77%) of schools had very few trophies, certificates of merit and teaching-learning materials in the classrooms. This concurs with Orodho (2013) that in most schools learning that took place in unfavorable conditions leading to poor performance in national examinations. The study by Orodho.et.al (2014) established that lack of school facilities especially instructional resources had a direct impact on quality of learning. The study also revealed that (77%) of BoMs chairperson reported challenge of indiscipline among students. This was arising from family related issues 6

**Table 2.** Challenge facing BOMs in effective management of schools

<b>1. challenge in Staff Personnel</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Inadequate staff	11	85
Discipline	8	62
Staff motivation	5	38
<b>Grand mean</b>	<b>61</b>	
<b>2. challenge in school finances</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Inadequate funds	13	100
Budgeting and accounting procedures	12	92
High maintenance cost	4	31
<b>Mean</b>	<b>74</b>	
<b>3. challenge in physical and material resources</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Inadequate facilities	13	100
Lack of control over the use of resources	5	38
School plant	7	54
<b>Mean</b>	<b>64</b>	
<b>4 challenge in curriculum and instruction</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Monitoring and evaluation	11	85
Interpretation and articulation of curriculum policies	6	62
Instructional leadership	9	69
Poor KCSE results	10	77
<b>Mean</b>	<b>73</b>	
<b>5. challenge in students Activities</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Discipline of students	11	85
Family related issues	6	46
Poor entry behavior	10	77
<b>Mean</b>	<b>69</b>	
<b>6. challenge in School community Relations</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Integrating school interest with those of the community	7	54
Interface from community	12	92
Illicit brews/drugs supplied	5	38
<b>Mean</b>	<b>61</b>	

(46%) BOMs chairpersons and poor entry behavior 10(77%) BOMs chairpersons respectively. Moreover, there was interference from local communities 12 (92%) BOMs chairperson as well as 7 (54) integrating school interests with the community. This concurs with the De Grauwe et al. (2005) that interference with school matters by the local community led to inefficiency and mismanagement.

The findings in Table 3 reveal that challenges facing BOM chairperson affected their role to a big extent. Majority 12 (92%) stated that the challenge of student personnel affected the role of the BoMs chairpersons to a large extent. The interviews revealed disruptive behavior among students inform of drug abuse which led to suspensions, expulsion, decline in academic performance and poor character formation. The study also revealed that 9(69%) of BoMs chairpersons respectively reported that the challenge of curriculum and instruction affected the role of BoMs chairpersons to a great extent. The schools found it expensive to acquire instructional resources such as textbooks and the personnel needed in good time. Majority 12 (92%) of BoMs chairpersons indicate that the challenges of physical facilities and resources affected their roles to a

large extent. It reduced effectiveness and efficiency as some schools had very old physical facilities and out dated material resources while others had none, a factor which hindered curriculum implementation. According to Okumbe (2001) the appearance of the school plant is a source of inspiration and motivation for the members of school, the community and stakeholders.

Majority 12 (92 %) of BoMs chairpersons stated that the challenge of finance and business affected their roles to a large extent. The schools were constrained to undertake major projects as new projects could not be started, old ones could not be completed and the old ones required costly rehabilitation. The interview revealed that the board members were not able to initiate income-generating projects and other activities to generate school funds. Likewise 12 (92%) of BoMs chairpersons experienced the challenge of school-community relations to a great extent. This was in regard to the use of school facilities such as water, electricity, the school hall and the playground among others.

Table 4 reveals the strategies used to curb the challenges experienced by BOMs chairpersons. Majority 11 (85%) of BoMs chairpersons were ensuring careful

**Table 3.** The extent to which the challenges affected BOMs in School Management

<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Large extent</b>		<b>Small extent</b>	
	n	%	n	%
Extent of challenges in staff Personnel	9	69	4	31
Extent of challenges in financial management	12	92	1	8
Extent of challenges in physical facilities and material	12	92	1	8
Extent of challenges in curriculum and instruction	9	69	3	23
Extent of challenges in student personnel	13	100	-	-
Extent of challenges in school-community relations	12	92	1	8
<b>Mean</b>		<b>87</b>		<b>14</b>

**Table 4.** Strategies Used to overcome the challenges facing BoMs chairpersons in school management

<b>1. Strategies on Staff Personnel</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
Training and development	6	46
Careful selection process	11	85
Sought advice from experts	6	46
<b>Mean</b>		<b>59</b>
<b>2. Strategies on School Finances</b>		
Monitoring expenditure in the light of approved budget	5	38
Source funds from different quarters	11	85
Training financial officers	7	54
<b>Mean</b>		<b>59</b>
<b>3. Strategies on Physical Facilities &amp; Material resources</b>		
Prioritizing school projects	8	62
Repairs and maintenance	9	69
Adapting available space to need	7	54
<b>Mean</b>		<b>62</b>
<b>4 Strategies on Curriculum &amp; Instruction</b>		
Co-ordination and consultation with curriculum experts	8	62
Employment and staff development	7	54
Constant appraisal of curriculum and instruction	7	54
<b>Mean</b>		<b>57</b>
<b>5. Strategies on Students Activities</b>		
Communication system	5	58
Involving stake holders	10	77
Favorable climate	6	46
<b>Mean</b>		<b>60</b>
<b>6. Strategies on School Community Relations</b>		
Provision of services and facilities to community	5	38
Enforcing security	7	54
Effective communication	12	92
<b>Mean</b>		<b>61</b>

selection process of competent candidates for employment. Others, 6 (46%) embarking on training and development of staff personnel. On school finances, 11 (85%) of BoMs chairpersons were sourcing funds from different quarters such as CDF, bursaries, fundraising and income-generating projects in order to supplement funds from parents and government. In addition majority 8 (62%) of BoMs chairpersons reported that they were prioritizing the developments of the school projects while

9(69%) embarked on effective repairs and maintenance of the school plant. The study also revealed that 7 (54%) of BoMs chairpersons agreed with constant appraisal of curriculum and instruction. A similar proportion 8 (62%) chairpersons embarked on consultation and co-ordination with relevant curriculum experts. The findings on students activities revealed that majority 10 (77%) of BoMs chairpersons involved all the stakeholders in handling student's issues. A similar proportion 5 (58%) of BoMs

chairpersons reported embarking on effective communication with community representatives while 7 (54%) strategize on enforcing security in the school.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is clear from the findings that the BoMs chairperson faced many challenges in management of public secondary schools. This involved inadequate staff personnel, staff discipline, inadequate funds and lack of skills in budgeting, accounting and auditing procedures. Most of the schools lacked adequate physical facilities and material resources and high costs of repair and maintenance of the school plant. In curriculum and instruction the main challenge was monitoring and evaluation as well as instructional leadership. On the other hand many were students discipline related to families issues and poor entry behavior which led to poor performance in national examinations. Other challenges included frequent interferences from communities and integrating school interests with those of the community. The BoMs chairpersons and AEO unanimously agreed that the board members in Kamwangi Division faced many challenges which affected their role in school management to a great extent. Therefore urgent measure should be put in place to minimize the challenges.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Appointments of BoMs should be from among people of integrity and competence with a minimum requirement of university education. The ministry of education should establish a mandatory training course at KEMI for all BOMs chairpersons after inauguration to familiarize them on their managerial roles. The BOMs chairpersons should consider curriculum implementation as a critical role by visiting schools frequently to assess the curriculum implementation. The BOMs chairperson should ensure adequate provision of physical and material resources for effective implementation of the curriculum. They should enhance both staff and students discipline for effective curriculum implementation.

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