

ABSTRACT

Effective management of education is a prerequisite to a well-founded education system. In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has devolved the management of education in Basic Education Institutions (BEIs) to respective Boards of Management (BoMs). Further, the MoE has provided operational guidelines for BoMs through an Act of Parliament in order to achieve school and hence national educational aspirations. The achievement of these aspirations has been affected by recurring dismal performance by students in national examination. This is a pointer to a gap in management by board members since BoMs have a responsibility in management of national curriculum at the school level and if not addressed, has the potential of undermining the quality of learning outcomes in the country. What is not clear however, is the extent to which factors relating to board members' level of education, years of experience in management, level of training and age could be linked to effectiveness in management of secondary schools in Nyandarua North Sub- County, Kenya. This is the knowledge gap that this study sought to fill. The study was anchored on Contingency Theory of Leadership. Using an *ex-post facto* research design, the study targeted 30 principals and 90 Heads of Departments (HoDs) in public secondary schools. 28 public secondary schools were selected to participate in the study using proportionate and simple random sampling. All principals and three HoDs from the selected schools took part in the study. Two sets of questionnaires were used in data collection; one for principals and the other one for HoDs. For validity and reliability, the instruments were systematically assessed using data from a pilot study that was carried out in three secondary schools in Nyandarua Central Sub- County. The researcher sought expert advice from lecturers in the Department of Curriculum and Education Management at Laikipia University to ascertain validity of the instruments. The test-retest technique was used to assess reliability of the HoDs questionnaire where a Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient of .793 was generated. Data was analyzed both descriptively and inferentially with hypotheses tested at an alpha level of .05 using Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient. Analysis was done with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme version 24.0. The key findings revealed that board members' level of formal education ($r = .814$, $p = .000$), experience in management ($r = .738$, $p = .000$) and level of training ($r = .831$, $p = .000$) had statistically significant positive correlation while the relationship between board members' age and their effectiveness in management ($r = -.124$, $p = .528$) was not statistically significant. These findings have important implications and lessons in regard to enhancing effectiveness of board members in management of secondary schools. Particularly, MoE, Non-Governmental Organisations and other stakeholders in education need to adopt recommendations suggested in this study as a viable basis upon which the effectiveness of BoM members can be enhanced.