

Role of Principals’ Instructional Leadership Style In Facilitating Learning Materials and Co-Ordination of Personnel on Students’ Performance

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ABSTRACT : *The role of the principal’s management style can generally be described as transformational or instructional leadership styles which normally have an impact on students’ academic performance. The objective of this article was to determine the role of Principals’ instructional leadership style in facilitating the learning materials and co-ordination of personnel on students’ performance in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya. The research question was: what is the contribution of Principals’ instructional leadership style in facilitating the learning materials and co-ordination of personnel on students’ performance in Institutes of Technology in South Nyanza, Kenya? Despite the importance of Science Laboratory Technology, students’ performance in Institutes of Technology in South Nyanza, Kenya has been below expectations. For the period between 2006-2010, cumulative performance in Science Laboratory Technology course in Kenya National Examinations has been; Distinction 0 (0%), Credit 15 (2.63%); Pass 61 (10.63%); Referred 219 (38.29%); and 277 (48.45%) failed. This dismal performance has led to growing concern among stakeholders and there was a need to determine role of the principal’s management style in connection with this performance. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, interview schedules, document analysis and observation. A conceptual framework was used to guide the study on factors that determine performance in Science Laboratory Technology. The study adopted descriptive survey design. The study population consisted of 240 students undergoing the Science Laboratory Technology course, 26 lecturers, 3 Librarians and 3 Principals. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 120 students and 18 lecturers while saturated sampling technique was used to select the 3 Principals, 3 librarians and 3 laboratory assistants. The study found that the principals provide teaching materials and expects the lecturers to carry out their teaching duties. The Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology would use this study to empower principals in their endeavors to improve performance in the technical institutions.*

KEYWORDS: *Principals, role, leadership style, students, academic, performance*

I. INTRODUCTION

Principals work under the government, and are answerable to the Board of Governors (BOGs) and the Ministry of Education. They are in the first level of management as supervisors (Yambo, 2012). Their leadership styles influence facilitation, acquisition of learning materials and co-ordination of personnel on students’ performance. Globally, the United Nations recognizes this role and states that the development of effective technical and vocational education systems is at the heart of global education reform efforts (UNESCO, 2004). A primary goal of government training is often to meet the required manpower needs to boost economic growth both at grassroots and national level. Hoftain and Lunetta (2004) point out that the inputs to vocational training include the trainees’ and the instructors’ time, instructional materials, equipment and physical facilities. In Kenya, when students join Institutes of Technology, they are expected to pass their national examinations and contribute to nation building, and by extension work towards the achievement of Vision 2030 and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). Akelo-Misori (2008), suggests that, a clearly defined and articulate technical and vocational training system that responds to the needs of the society, industry and individuals is a pre-requisite for a country to become globally competitive. As a Millennium Development Goal, education that focuses on delivery of skills and technology is a priority sector for the World Bank lending program. In line with these priorities, Kenya in its industrialization strategy of Vision 2030 focuses on technological advancement. Ojera, Simatwa and Ayodo (2012), posits that institutes of technology and vocational training institutions in Kenya are expected to play a leading role in the realization of this vision, hence needs to be empowered with needed facilities and proper leadership. One objective of the training is to prepare young people so that they are in a position to cope better with their jobs upon leaving school and that they may also gain the skills required to make the most of their work talents (Wolliams, 2006). In Kenya, students enrolled in Institutes of Technology for certificate courses in Science Laboratory Technology are Form four leavers who are required to have attained a minimum grade “D plain” in secondary school, while those who enroll for diploma

should have attained 'C-' as minimum grade requirements. The subjects offered in this course are Physics Techniques, Biological Sciences, Laboratory Practical, Chemistry Techniques, and Project Proposal. Other support subjects are Mathematics and Technical Drawing. Successful students find the opportunity to offer essential services to other lab users. In schools they work as Laboratory Assistants, helping students learn without encountering the risks of chemical poisoning or explosions in the laboratory (Hofstain and Lunetta, 2004). To offer their services, the students must show their competence and qualifications by passing the college exams set by Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC).

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

While some principals are effective in executing their duties as leaders, some are ineffective. The effective ones have a characteristic as it is attributed by Hughes (1993) the glue that hold together the myriad actions and decisions of highly effective principals is the goal that they and their staff have developed for their schools, and sense of what their schools need to look like and to do in order to accomplish those goals. Improving poor performance or maintaining excellent ones is the major task of an instructional leader. The principal have to employ and manifest characteristic which will help them achieve their intended objectives. The type of leadership style he uses matters immensely. The study therefore was to establish the role of Principals' instructional leadership style in facilitating the learning materials and co-ordination of personnel on students' performance, which is meant to improve the inadequate performance in Southern Nyanza Region, Kenya.

III. ROLE OF PRINCIPALS' MANAGEMENT STYLE ON PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS

The role of the principal's management style can generally be described as transformational or instructional leadership style (Ngware, Wamukuru and Odebero, 2006). Transformational leadership style has been defined by Griffith (2004) as a leadership style of a person who has the following characteristics; charisma, inspiration and individualized consideration. Transformational leaders give intellectual stimulation to their staff which contributes to school staff job satisfaction (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000). Instructional leadership style has been described by Ngware et al (2006) as a series of behaviors that are designed to affect classroom instruction. Moreover, Quinn (2002) described instructional leadership as critical to the development and maintenance of effective schools. He posited that instructional leaders must influence others to adjoin appropriate instructional practices with best knowledge of subject matter. Such focus should always be on effective teaching. The role of the principal is to supply the teachers with resources and incentives to keep their focus on the students. Improving poor performance or maintaining excellent ones is the major task of an instructional leader. The principal have to employ and manifest characteristic which will help them achieve their intended objectives. The type of leadership style he/she uses matters immensely. Richardson (1995) rightly pointed out that the principal's role must change from a dictator to a leader of leaders. As part of decision making team, the principal would find it necessary to facilitate the implementation process. Studies done by Yambo (2012) revealed that decisions which are made collectively in a team spirit are normally implemented because all members share the responsibility. The opposite is likely to fail as he suggested that forcing teachers to use new skills that make them uncomfortable may create a challenge to the principal's leadership ability. Principals leadership styles coupled with team

In Tennessee USA, Goldring, Huff, May and Camburn (2008) studied the influence of school context and individual characteristic on principal's performance. They sought to answer three questions; how do principals allocate their time across major responsibilities? To what extent do principals emphasize different responsibilities? How do the principal's personal characteristics affect the time allocation to different responsibilities? The researchers applied cluster analysis to data collected using daily entries in a log book. The findings indicated three groups of leaders: "Eclectic" leaders- these ones have their time dedication distributed across many activities. Eclectic leaders will spread their time to cover almost all the activities in the school. "Instructional" leaders- these ones focus more on instructional leadership. Instructional leaders will spend most of their time making sure that teachers are in classrooms with the right instructional materials and teaching is going on. "Student" leaders- these kinds of leaders will empathize with the student. These "student" leaders will want to spend most of their time with the students trying to solve their problems. The conclusion was that effective principals are instructional leaders, and will delegate duties to their juniors to effectively manage the school (Goldring, et al, 2008) The principals' behaviour is equally influential. Quinn (2002) carried out a study on the impact of principals' leadership behavior on teacher instructional practice and student engagement. The purpose of the study was to identify the relationship between principal leadership behaviors and teacher instructional practice descriptors. The study included eight elementary, eight middle and eight high schools. Teachers were surveyed for the principal's instructional leadership abilities. The instruments for data collection were questionnaires, documents review and observation.

The findings were that instructional leadership dimensions were highly correlated to instructional practice. The researcher described the effective principal, as an instructional leader who must perform at high level in four areas: as a resource provider, as an instructional resource provider, as a communicator, and as a visible presence. In the role as resource provider, the principal takes action to marshal personnel and resources within the school and in the community to help him achieve school visions and goals. These resources may be seen as materials, information or opportunities with the principal acting as the broker. In the role as instructional resource provider, the principal sets expectations for continual improvement of instructional programmes and actively engages in staff development. Through this involvement the principal participates in the improvement of classroom circumstances that enhance active teaching (Yambo, 2012). In the role as communicator, the principal mounds commitment to school goals, articulates a vision towards instruction goals and the means for integrating instructional planning and goal attainment. Finally, in the role as visible presence, the principal is out and around in the school visiting classrooms attending departmental meetings, walking the hallways and holding spontaneous conversation with staff and students (Ngware et al., 2006). Quinn (2002) concluded that these aspects make the principal serve as an instructional resource person. That is, principals are responsible for informing teachers about new educational strategies, technologies and tools that apply to effective instruction. In this role the principals need to also assist teachers in critiquing the tools to determine their applicability to the classroom.

In Negev Israel, Oplatka (2004) did a meta-analysis on the principal leadership characteristics in a developing country context. They concluded that, in reality, the principal's power is limited by the rules of the Ministry of Education which gives the government a wide range of responsibility on educational matters. The Ministry of Education designs the curriculum, the syllabus, sets exams and marks while the principal's duty is limited to allocation of teachers' to the various classes in school. The above studies indicate that the researchers focused on elementary and high schools, using the methodologies of surveys, document analysis and observation methods. On the whole, the studies support assertions that the principal's style of leadership will influence the performance of students. Though some of the studies are conducted in the context of a developing country, none of the studies have focused on Kenya, and in particular, on technical training institutions. This study sought to determine the role of the principal in facilitating the performance of students taking Science Laboratory Technology course in Institutes of Technology in the South Nyanza, Kenya. The present study adopted the descriptive survey design, using questionnaires, and document analysis and interview schedule. The data collected was analyzed to determine the Principals' effectiveness in improving performance of students.

IV. METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The purpose of this research design was to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the current status of phenomenon and whenever possible to draw valid general conclusions from facts discovered. Descriptive survey is the means through which opinion, attitude and suggestions for improvement of educational practices and instructions and other data can be obtained (Gall, Gall, and Borg, (2007). In addition, they are of immense value in solving problems in school organization, supervision and administration (Koul, 2004). The descriptive survey research design was suitable for this study because the descriptive study determines and reports the way things are. The researcher adopted this descriptive research design to be able to describe the phenomenon as it is on the ground.

The Institutes of Technology in this study are found within the Southern Region of Nyanza Province, Kenya. This region lies within latitude 0 and 1° South and between longitude 34° East and 35° East of the Equator. The rainfall averages at 175ml per year. The major economic activity is Sugarcane farming and milling of sugar; sweet potato, maize farming. Institutes of technology were started by the government to cater for form four school leavers who come from the local schools and could not join university due to their low grades (Republic of Kenya, 1999). These Institutes of Technology offer vocational training and have a population of 4600 students, 300 lecturers and 120 subordinate staff. The study used simple random sampling to select 120 students, 18 lecturers. Saturated sampling technique was used to select the 3 Librarians, 3 laboratory technicians and the 3 Principals (Table 1). Saturated sampling is where the whole population is used for data collection. (Koul, 2004).

Table 1: Sampling Frame

Sampling units	Sampling Technique	Population	Sample size	% of the sample
Students	Simple random	240	120	50%
Lecturers	Simple Random	26	18	69.23%
Principals	Saturated	3	3	100%
Librarians	Saturated	3	3	100%
Lab technicians	Saturated	3	3	100%

The instruments that were used in this study were; the questionnaires, interview schedule, document review and observation schedule. Questionnaires guarantee confidentiality (Koul, 2004). Interview schedules are flexible and can verify the information in the questionnaire. In-depth interviews are one of the methods used in descriptive designs to act as follow up instrument for gathering more data.(Koul,2004). There was an interview schedule for Principals, a questionnaire for lecturers and a questionnaire for students.Face Validity refers to the extent to which the instrument appears to measure what it is supposed to measure. (Gall et al, 2007).Face validity was done by experts in research methodology from the Department of Educational Management and Foundations of Maseno University who reorganized the questions to address the outlined study objectives. Reliability is a measure of the degree to which research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Gall et al, 2007).A pilot study using test re-test method was done using 5% of population not in the study sample. The test- retest was done by exposing the respondents to the questionnaire, then after two weeks exposing them again to the same questionnaire and the responses compared to see if the questions were understood and answered in a consistent manner. Corrections were then made on the instrument so that consistent results could be attained (Borg and Gall (2003). This was done to clear any vague or ambiguous parts of the questionnaire. The data which largely came from individual respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The questionnaires, document review, interviews schedules and observation schedules yielded both quantitative and qualitative raw data.Quantitative data were analyzed and summarized using descriptive statistics in form of means, percentages and frequencies. Qualitative data were recorded then transcribed and organized into categories as they emerged from the study (Borg and Gall (2003).The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 15 was used for the analysis of the data.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Contribution of Principals' instructional leadership style in facilitating the provision of materials and Co-ordination of personnel for Science Laboratory Technology courses, on performance of students

The research question responded to was: What is the contribution of Principals' instructional leadership style in facilitating the learning materials and co-ordination of personnel on students' performance in Institutes of Technology in South Nyanza, Kenya? The results are as shown in Table 2. From this table, Principal motivates the students to work hard by his / her practices was rated highly at 4.00, the Principal also coordinates and supervises the educational programs was also rated 4.00. These show that the principal is committed to the success of the students because he/she motivates them while co-coordinating and supervising the educational programs

Table 2: Contribution of Principals' instructional leadership style in facilitating the provision of materials and Co-ordination of personnel on student performance in SLT, as rated by lecturers (n=18)

Principals leadership style based factors	SA	A	UD	D	SD	Total	MR
The Principal motivates the students to work hard by his / her practices	0	72	0	0	0	72	4.00
The principal coordinates and supervise the educational programs	0	72	0	0	0	72	4.00
The principal provides the materials and equipment needed for the learning of sciences.	0	44	0	21	0	65	3.61
The principal motivates the lecturers and creates a learning atmosphere in the college	0	40	12	12	0	64	3.56
The principal encourages student success in sciences	0	40	0	16	0	56	3.11
Principal communicates with lecturers and students about new educational strategies and technologies	0	36	0	18	0	54	3.00
The principal is present in college most of the time	0	32	0	20	0	52	2.89
Principal provides incentives to lecturers for effective teaching.	0	4	24	18	0	46	2.56

Key, Strongly Agree(SA)=5; Agree(A)=4; Undecided(UD)=3; Disagree(D)=2; Strongly Disagree(SD)=1

The principal provides the materials and equipment needed for the learning of sciences was rated 3.61 meaning the respondents agree with the statement. The principal motivates the lecturers and creates a learning atmosphere in the college was rated 3.56 and the Principal encourages student success in sciences was rated 3.11 means the respondents agree with the statement that the principals motivates the students and the teachers to

work hard. Principal communicates with lecturers and students about new educational strategies and technologies was rated 3.00. The Principal is present in college most of the time was rated 2.89 Principal provides incentives to lecturers for effective teaching was rated 2.56 the incentives may not be prompt. The results as indicated on the Table 2 show that the principal motivates the teachers and the students to work hard as shown by the mean rating of 4.00. The principal also co-ordinates and supervises the education programs which is part of instructional leadership characteristics. Principal communicates with lecturers and students about new educational strategies and technologies was rated 3.00. This means the Principal communicates and motivates lecturers. The principal should be the bridge between the inside environment of college and the outside, to inform the staff and the students about the latest developments in the field of education and also inform students of opportunities for employment after completion of their courses. It was found that the principals were instructional leaders. As can be observed in Table 2 the respondents agreed that the principal encourages success in science, and the principal also motivates the lecturers slightly as can be seen with the mean rating of 3.55 coordination and supervision of educational programs. These activities make the principal an instructional leader. The foregoing observations shows the Principal contribute positively to the students' performance. This confirms Quinn (2002) assertion that principals' instructional leadership dimensions will highly motivate the learners and the lecturers to engage in instructional practice in education.

VI. CONCLUSION

The study found that the principals provide teaching materials and expects the lecturers to carry out their teaching duties. The materials provided were insufficient as was shown by the students and lecturers mean ratings on laboratory and library facilities. The role of the principal is to supply the lecturers with resources and incentives to keep their focus on the students. In relation to the findings that the Principals' Management style influences the provision of learning materials and coordination of personnel, the required resources for learning in science laboratory technology are still insufficient hence constraining the teachers' delivery and students' learning activities. The Principals were instructional leaders because they motivated and encouraged the students and lecturers to work hard and achieve greater gains in education.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions this study recommends that; Given scarcity of resources in the learning institutions, the principals should give priority to science laboratories by allocating more funds to purchase chemicals, and reagents and laboratory equipment.

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