

# EFFECT OF SCHOOL MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYATIKE SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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## Abstract

This study analyzed the strategies school managers apply to improve academic performance of students in their schools in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, which has suffered poor school management resulting into low academic performance as stated by county education officer during education symposium in the year 2017. Validity and reliability of the study was tested. Cronchba's Alpha Coefficient of 0.80 was confirmed the reliability of the instruments. The study was guided by the McGregor's theory X and theory Y based on various interrelated variables such as communication, supervision, decision making and performance in schools. Population for the study comprises of 150 BOM, 120 heads of department, 120 members of parents teacher association and 33 school principals. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Simple random sampling techniques was utilized to draw fifty members of the Board of Management (BOM), forty Heads of Department (HOD), forty members of Parents Teachers Association (PTA) and ten school principals yielding to a sample size of 140 subjects to participate in the study. A mixed method was used to collect data from respondents using questionnaire and qualitative data from heads of departments and members of PTA using interviews. Descriptive statistics which include percentages, coding, decoding of information was used in data analysis and data presentation was in tables and charts. Piloting of the research instruments was conducted. The findings of the study were used by Ministry of Education and other stake holders to improve academic performance and management of students in secondary schools. The findings of this study revealed that decision making have a great contribution in affecting the organizational objectives. So, it is vital for the school management and other stakeholders to make wise decisions in order to meet the objectives of an organization. Also this finding has found out that communication if well-made can lead to the promotion of the desired achievement of academic performance in Kenya. Also teachers and students do not work together as stakeholders which reduce the effort of academic performance to rise. The findings of this study have revealed that it is an imperative duty for the school management to promote participatory decision making system in encouraging good student performance. Consequent of these circumstances, education was not help to orient learners towards positive intellectual transformation out of which socio-economic challenges was contained. It has been evidenced that school management does not create room for all (students, teachers and community at large) to take active part in decision making on matters concerning the school prosperity.

*Keywords: performance, academic performance, examination, public school*

## Background to the Study

Fayol (1983) defines management as to forecast and plan, to organize, to coordinate and control. Ravee (1962) management is the utilization of physical and human resource through cooperative efforts. Okumbe (2007) define management as a process of designing, developing and affecting organizational objectives and resources so as to achieve the predetermined organizational goals.

There is a widespread belief that leadership and management are critical for an organization to flourish. In a school, the tendency is to view leadership and management as the major determining factors of the quality of education and thus students' academic performance (Geoffrey Wango, 2009). School Management has become the most prominent feature of public school management systems in most countries around the world. Public education worldwide has experienced periodic trends where the school management emphasis shifts along a continuum of centralization and decentralization. In this context, many researchers affirm that one of the most significant reforms in the current restructuring of school systems has been the devolution of decision-making authority to school level through a move towards School management.

As a movement, school management is considered as an effective system for empowering local schools in decision-making by which school stakeholders are given greater power and authority to manage a school. Accordingly, in terms of self-decision making, for instance, the administrators are not the only individuals who are in charge, but educational specialists, principals, teachers, parents, students, and others who are interested in educational matters are also empowered (Nyongesa, 2007).

There is a growing body of literature from researchers which have made an attempt to examine the relationship between management and students' academic performance (Orodho, 2014). Educational management in secondary schools involves the application of management principles in designing, developing and affecting resources towards achievement of educational goals (Okumbe,2001). According to the UNESCO(2009) this is judged by the extent to which schools generally meet the society expectations within which they are established since Kenya got her independence ,the government has demonstrated commitment to the provision of trained teachers and establishment of quality assurance department (republic of Kenya 2012a.2012b).

According to Ohba (2009), shortage of teachers, lack of basic facilities, community interference ,poor teaching methodologies and administrative related factors such as poor management of school resources have been noted as some of these factors. Education is viewed as a critical investment, not only to the individual but also to the society. Kenya places education at the center stage of the country's human and economic development strategies (republic of Kenya, 2006).A report by the World Bank (2005) states that education is a fundamental factor in socio-economic and political developmental factors as it inculcates skills and knowledge in students, preparing them to take up roles in national development.

Competition in secondary school education has steadily intensified with the situation being worsened by the huge increase in primary enrollment following the introduction of free primary education in 2003. In response to the challenge of increased enrollment in secondary school; the movement has put a lot of emphasis on education. This is evidenced in more than ten reviews by special commissioners and working parties such as Koech commission of (1999). Moreover, the government has committed itself to developing sector policies and implementation strategies to ensure the provision of relevant and quality education, training and research to Kenyans. This is because education is one of the critical sectors that contribute to the transmission of skills and knowledge to Kenyans (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

With the reality of Free Primary Education, enrolment has increased and secondary school must expand to take up this increased enrolment. Ministry of education (2005) noted that secondary education is immediate priority as Kenya's education stakeholders consider how to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of new primary schools. Strategies are put in place by the government to provide equal opportunity for all Kenyans. The demands for education by Kenyans is a reflection of their expectation of the returns that can accrue from education. Besides continued numerical expansion of education opportunities, the ministry of education is keen on enhancing access and improving quality of education at all levels and training (republic of Kenya, 2006). Thus in Kenya, the government is committed to developing her human resources by providing quality education to all citizens in Kenya in order to meet her manpower demands, eradicate illiteracy and improve standards of living. Education sector plays a critical role in production of skills and competencies. In order to participate effectively in the development of her economy, the issues of access, quality, internal and external efficiencies in the education system remains (Republic of Kenya .2010). UNESCO(2011) reports that "the increased demand for secondary education has led to greater cost-sharing resulting in the establishment of more day schools having more cost effective way of providing and expanding secondary education". This is due to the tight limits of public resources and competition for the same resources by other sectors of the economy. The education sector through various strategic plans must provide strategies for optimal utilization of the resources allocated to the sector.

Writing on leadership, Andrews (2008) noted that effective principals are responsible for establishing a school wide vision of commitment to high standards and success of all students. For years, public school principals were seen as school managers and as recently as two decades ago, high standards were thought to be the province of the college bound success. He further noted that in a school that begins with a principal spelling out high standards and rigorous learning goals, high expectation for all including clear public standards is one key to overall academic performance of all students. The school manager therefore occupies a strategic position in the school organization structure for developing a school climate which is conducive for learning. Since the success of teaching and learning takes place in the school, the quality of education is determined by the principal's managerial practices which play a major role in determining the school's performance academically.

The Kenya government is putting more efforts to increase access to secondary education by continuing to fund them. According to the sub county education officer in Nyatike, more public schools have been established since 2014 to 2016. It was in this reference to this background that researcher wishes to assess school management and its effect on academic performance among students in public secondary schools in Nyatike Sub County, a gap this study seeks to fill. The study was conducted in the year 2019 when the schools in the sub-county performed poorly generally in Kenya Certificate Secondary Education examinations and the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and Innovation raised issues. According to Kenya National Examination Council the national average mean score was 6.0 out of a possible standard mean score of 12.00.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study was conducted among public secondary schools in Nyatike Sub-county of Migori County. Public Secondary schools in the County have continued to register low performance in KCSE examinations. Appendix 3 shows the sampled mean grades posted by the ten schools in the Sub-County for the last three years before the study started. Nyatike Sub-County has suffered poor school management resulting into low academic performance. County education officer during education symposium in the year 2017 stated that low academic performance was occasioned by interrelated variables such as poor communication, poor supervision, and poor decision making. The ministry of education, being the custodian of the education sector curriculum taps and uses the skills of school manager as key implementers of the curriculum and supervisors of the whole school programme. Ministry of education (1994) however, states that research findings done in the field of educational administration across the world indicate that school heads are the most powerful single determinant of the quality and effectiveness of schools (Kitavi,1997).

Igunnu et.al. (2005), examples of faulty projects management and execution are everywhere, uncompleted government buildings due to lack of funds, new schools without desks or teachers. Success in projects implementation depends mainly on good management and organization and close alignment between projects particular requirements and facilities provided at the local level. He adds that even though there are many causes of low academic performance, it is clear from the report of the county education officer that variables such as poor communication, poor supervision, and poor decision making are the problem causing academic decline in the Sub-County.

### **Literature Review**

Management is a process that involves planning organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Okumbe (2007) defines management as the process of designing, developing and affecting organizational objectives and resources so as to achieve the predetermined organizational goals. Edmond (1979) in his study of exceptional urban elementary schools pointed out that the school management practices are crucial to the school success because they influence the behavior of all stakeholders and initiate programme ,set policies, obtain materials and physical resources and provide motivation.

School managers are responsible for introducing useful changes aimed at improving the quality of school instructional programmes. Studies on exemplary schools have described effective managers as task oriented and action oriented. Well organized, skilled in work and delegation in getting things done (Edmond, 1979.) Andrews study as reported by Brandit (1987) found that high performing schools were characterized by high expectations, frequent monitoring of student's progress, a positive learning and clear goals and objectives.

Effective management from the top hierarchy i.e. the principal exert pressure on teachers and students for high academic achievement. According to Rutter(1979),the principal's management practices greatly contributes to the differences in performance in schools.Boyan(1985) consistently reported that successful schools academically have the following characteristics : conducive school environment ,one free of disciplinary problems and vandalism, a school wide emphasis on basic skills on instructions for all students to achieve, a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing student's performance and a school principal who is a strong pragmatic leaders who sets high standards ,observes classroom frequently, maintain students discipline and creates incentives for learning.

Evidence from school improvement literature according to studies in the united states by Brooker (1979),Edmond (1982), Mortimore (2002),all concur that effective leaders exercise a direct but powerful influence on the school's capacity to implement reforms and improve student's level of achievement. They further pointed that principals in high achieving schools engage more in behavior associated with cultural linkage than principal's in other schools. Moreover, student's achievement appears to be influenced by environmental and organization characteristics. Studies conducted by Chege (2002) found that the quality of leadership in a school matters in determining the motivation of teachers and the quality of teaching .Moreover, the more the distributed the leadership is throughout the school community, in particular to the teachers, the better the performance of that school in terms of students' academic performance.

The roles and responsibilities of school managers are vital to the functions of individual schools. Therefore, there is need to have policies that actually result in school environment in terms of academic performance. Kilanga (2013) noted that the school principal need to be well prepared in leading organizational changes which address the academic performance gaps of students .Few have been done in Kenya on principals' management practices and their contribution to performance in public secondary school. Majority of them confined their studies to the administrative functions of the school principal.

The school management is a crucial factor in the success of a school. The school principal should be in a position to set the right supervision in order ti improve learning in their schools through working with parents ,encouraging students ,motivating teachers in order to improve the quality of learning in our school. Good school manager give priority to the needs of learners. Lorna (2003) notes that the school principal has the role of guiding and

leading teachers as they perform their duties in order to realize good academic performance. Duignan (1986) concurs with Eshiwani (1983) that school management is a crucial factor in the success of a school. The qualities expected of a principal includes setting an atmosphere of order, creating a climate of high expectations for staff and collaborative leadership and building commitment among students and staff to the school objectives and goals .

Kimsop (2002) in his study aimed at finding out the role of school principal as instructional supervisors in Kabarnet. The research findings indicated that most principals do not perform their instructional supervisory duties such as classroom observation, checking students and teaching notes of the teachers frequently hence poor performance. Musungu and Nasongo (2008) in a study of the principal instructional role in academic performance found out that the principal supervised the teachers work by checking on the lessons notes, schemes of work, records of work covered. They further noted that the principal in higher performance schools checked the records frequently compared to those in average and low performing schools.

Teachers' presence in the classroom represents the starting point. Many teachers face transportation and housing obstacles that hinder them from getting to school on time and staying until school hours are over (Ohba, 2009). When teachers are present, learning occurs when teachers engage students in instructional activities, rather than attending to administrative or other non-instructional processes (Waweru & Orodho, 2014). Many international studies have shown the opportunity to learn and the time on task to be critical for educational quality. The quality of a school and the quality of teaching of the individual teacher is higher in schools that are able and willing to make efficient use of the available time of its teachers and pupils (Verwimp, 1999). According to Ngando (2011) in his study on time management behavior among school personnel in Kinango District, Coast Province, majority of teachers and students do not report to school on the first day of opening, most teachers write their schemes of work when schools opened, went to class without lesson plans, assemblies took longer and consumed classroom time. Good teachers are skilled not only in instructional methods, but also in evaluation, supervision and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individual student needs. Observations in Guinea and India found that teachers trained poorly in evaluation techniques and the reality is far from the continuous procedures recommended by official programmes (Carron & Chau, 1996). Many teachers and education systems continue to rely on almost exclusively on traditional paper-and-pencil tests of factual knowledge that tend to promote rote memorization rather than higher order thinking skills (Condy, 1998).

Monitoring and evaluation of learning should be a continuous process to ensure schools meet their targets. Each district should have mechanisms for monitoring on a continuous basis the performance of both teachers and students for remedial action early when needed (Kimbui, 2012). Research around the world has shown that low expectations for student achievement permeate educational systems. Rather than setting high standards and

believing students can meet them, teachers and administrators in many developing countries expect up to half the students will drop or fail. Schools committed to student learning communicate expectations clearly, give frequent and challenging assignments, monitor performance regularly, and give students the chance to participate in and take responsibility for diverse school activities (Graig, 1998).

According to Mobegi, Ondigi and Oburu (2010), school principals should take up their roles as quality assurance officers in their schools and ensure that there is adequate departmental supervision. They should introduce staff appraisal through locally designed forms to enhance standards and engage in evaluative class observation to ensure that a variety of teaching methods apart from class discussion is utilized.

Republic of Kenya (1999) asserts that quality of teachers in terms of qualification and dedication determines largely the quality of education and performance. A study by Musau (2004) on factors influencing students' performance in Machakos revealed that teachers academic and professional qualification contribute to poor performance in the division. Ochanda (1978) cited in Awuonda (2011) agrees that the quality of teaching staff is often said to be the main determinant of achievement of students in examination in Kenya. According to Uwezo Assessment Report (2011) teacher's shortage is acute and is highly affecting learning and general academic performance. On average, every Kenyan school has a shortage of teachers.

Motanya (2011) poor learning environment in the third world countries has been singled out as one of the major factors leading to poor academic performance. This is due to increased enrolment without expansion of these facilities. Eshiwani (1993) agree that school environment such as classroom, chairs and books have a direct impact on good performance among students in developing countries.

The government of Kenya in the Koech report (1999) noted that congestion within classroom affects the teaching and learning environment. The quality and adequacy of learning facilities and equipment have a direct bearing on quality education. However, the report further notes that schools with abundant resources may not always utilize them efficiently to the utmost benefit of raising the students level of performance while those with limited resources would utilize whatever they had efficiently to raise the students level of academic performance.

## **Methodology**

In this study, the descriptive survey design was used. According to Mugenda and Mugeda (2003), descriptive survey design seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena. Kathuri and Pals (1993) also asserts that the purpose of survey research design is to explore as well as describe. The research used sample random sampling to arrive at ten schools which translated to 30% sample representation. The samples were stratified into two categories of performing and non-performing schools. Performing schools were those that had achieved a KCSE means score of 6.00 and above as per Nyatike Sub County education office's records of 2019. Simple random sampling techniques utilized to draw fifty members of the Board of Management (BOM), forty Heads of Department (HOD),

forty members of Parents teacher association and ten school principals yielding to a sample size of 140 subjects to participate in the study. In selecting head of departments, the researcher was considering teachers who had stayed in those positions for more than three years. Descriptive statistics was used in data analysis.

**Findings**

**1.1 Gender of the Respondents**

The results show that 57.5% were male and 42.5% were female. The number of male is higher compared to female, this due to the fact that most of women were not ready to talk about school management

**Table 1: Respondent by Gender Distribution**

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	80	57.5
Female	60	42.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research data 2019

**1.2 Age of the respondents**

The majority of the respondents as presented in table 2, were aged 20-30 Years forming 17(12.0%) where by 31-40 Years 20(14.0%), age 41-50 Years 56(40.0%), 51-60 years were 45(32.0) and 60+ Years were 2(2.30%).

**Table 2: Age of the respondents**

Age Bracket	Frequency	Percentage
20-30 Years	17	12.0
31-40 Years	20	14.0
41-50 Years	56	40.0
51-60 years	45	32.0
60+ Years	2	2.30
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Data Analysis 2019

**1.3: Level of education**

Education is always valued as a means of freeing oneself from ignorance; it is the only principle mechanism of developing human skills and knowledge. The study revealed that 53(37.5%) had form four certificate of secondary education, 28(20.0%) of respondent had postgraduate degree, 14(25.0%) graduate degree, 14(10.0%) had diploma and 4(7.5%) non formal education.

**2.1 Assessment of academic staff, community and students**

Human relations in a school setup asserts that workplace or college behaviors are determined mainly by the organizational setting in which it occurs. It lays emphasis on leadership styles, interpersonal and organizational communications, student or employee satisfaction, group norms and cohesion. Peoples’ participation in communication that affects

their working lives is essential for effective management. Such participation can be through negotiating committees, representation in school boards, suggestion schemes, autonomous problem-solving groups and joint consultation (Bennett, 1997).

If members of the community are involved in poor, their individual, group and institutional needs and those of broader ranges of constituencies are likely to be met by outcomes. In consultative communication, more people are involved in defining the problem, weighing alternative courses of action, determining the implications of proposed solutions and in structuring the response to be implemented (Wayne, 2008). Public schools, despite the vital role they play in providing education, expertise, training, human knowledge development and in the formation of future leaders, have not been adequately targeted in the ongoing democratic transition.

This research is a result of the information collected from a total of forty (140) respondents of whom 70(50.0%) stated that the students involvement in hold meetings and other for a to facilitate communication which in turn foster good academic performance. This shows that poor communication among stakeholders can negatively impact on student performance. However, it was observed that 55(39.3%) of teacher respondents sometimes communicate with students and management against 55(39.3%) of management respondents who rarely do the same. This account for a big number of public secondary schools which don't do better in their academic performance due to inability of teaches and management to interact with students and iron out emerging issues.

**Table 3: Assessment of poor communication on academic performance**

<b>Level Of Communication</b>	<b>Management</b>	<b>Teachers</b>	<b>All</b>
<b>Nearly always</b>	53(37.5%)	14(16.6%)	70(50%)
<b>Often</b>	28(20.0%)	53(37.5%)	35(25%)
<b>Sometimes</b>	14(16.6%)	55(39.3%)	35(25%)
<b>Rarely</b>	55(39.3%)	28(20.0%)	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>140(100)</b>	<b>140(100%)</b>	<b>140(100%)</b>

**Source: Data Analysis 2019**

**2.2 Challenges facing decision making by School Management**

Government decisions have a great contribution in affecting the organizational objectives. So, it is vital for the government to make wise decisions in order to meet the objectives of an organization. This finding has found out that Economic Decisions if well-made can lead to the promotion of the desired achievement of academic performance in Kenya. This is true following the fact that without financial support, school management may not meet its objectives. The result shows that 35(87.5%) of the respondents interviewed supported the observation that financial decisions especially budget in education affects academic performance directly.

All basic education based interventions are gradually being realigned to correspond with the Local Government Reform Program which places emphasis on improved service delivery, autonomy in decision making, transparency, accountability and good governance. The new local government system is based on political devolution, decentralization of functions and finances within the framework of a unitary state. Local Governments was holistic i.e. multi sectorial government units with a legal status (Kimacia, 2007); but the findings of this study

show that government does not consider that issues important in participatory decision making.

Consultation assumes that people operate in organized groups to make decisions that guide the course of their institutions. Understanding the social systems in which processes occur is crucial as consultative procedures attempt to modify the culture within community to exercise the self-discipline and objectivity required to participate in consultation (Crum and Sherman, 2008). Even though decisions by management boards are always through consensus mechanisms, various student constituencies of the community have not been evolved. The number of participating students is too low to adequately represent the numbers in the student body. Consultative decision-making evokes a sense of partnership, community participation and working together for the common good (Kythreotis, Pashiardis and Kyriakides, 2010).

This finding indicates that decision making in school management is mostly achieved through staff meetings method. This was revealed by 67 (47.5%) respondents who were interviewed about the subject matter. Some of the challenges identified to have affected decision making are lack of enough cooperation from stakeholders, Lack of awareness among students and teachers, management changes and poor communication.

**2.3 Level at which School Management affects Academic Performance**

Good school management is touted as the epitome of good academic performance. An orderly school environment, that is efficient and well managed, provides the preconditions for enhanced student learning (Nyagosia, 2011). Effective leadership is generally recognized as the most important characteristic of school administrators (Hoy & Hoy, 2009; Lezotte, 2010).

According to Reche et al (2012) the major duties and responsibilities of school management include; holding staff meetings to facilitate coordination of various activities in the school, checking teachers schemes of work and lesson plans and internal supervision of curriculum implementation through physical observation of teachers while lessons are in progress. In order to achieve this, it was important to gather teachers and principals views on the frequency of performing the various administrative practices in school. The measurement scale adopted was a five point scale in which a score of 5 represented always, 4 = sometimes, 3 = neutral, 2 = rarely and 1 = never.

Analysis with respect to each response is as in table 4 under;

**Table 4: School Management affects Academic Performance**

<b>Administrative Practice</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
School management involves teachers in decision making concerning academic achievement?	4.38	.990
How often does school management recognizes staff members and motivates them to perform better academically?	4.46	.884
How often do HODs have the ability to influence decision before them concerning their departments?	4.54	.854
How often does school performance in KCSE influenced by decisions made by HODs and school principal?	3.90	1.209
How often do teachers in the department find it hard to own the challenges facing academic achievements?	4.54	.822

**Source: Data Analysis 2019**

Table 4 shows the viewpoint of management with regard to the frequency in which various administrative practices were carried out by the teachers as school administrators. It can be noticed from Table 4 that majority of the respondents were of the view that HODs have the ability to influence decision before them concerning their departments (mean=4.54). School management recognizes staff members and motivates them to perform better academically (mean = 4.46) and School management involves teachers in decision making concerning academic achievement (mean=4.38). Similarly, teachers in the department find it hard to own the challenges facing academic achievements (mean = 4.54).

This corroborates well with the view of the school management who also averred that most of the time, principals performed their administrative duties. These findings contradict those by Reche et al (2012). Reche et al (2012) in a study on factors contributing to poor performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) in public day primary schools conducted in Mwimbi division, Maara district established that, principals are holding few staff meetings, all head teachers indicated that they randomly check the teachers' schemes of work only once a term, most head teachers check lesson plans once a month, and that majority of the head teachers do not at all physically observe classes conducted by the teachers in a given term.

### **Conclusion**

The wellbeing of any society depends primarily on good and proper orientation of its education system. The findings of this study have revealed that it is an imperative duty for the school management to promote participatory decision making system in encouraging good student performance.

Also according to the findings, teachers and students do not work together as stakeholders. This is because management has failed to organize good coordination among them and as a result the school fails to achieve its goal properly.

It has been evidenced that school management does not create room for all (students, teachers and community at large) to take active part in decision making on matters concerning the school prosperity. This implies that management does not involve teachers, students and community in matters concerning academic progress. For this matter, students are not made authors of their academic destiny by being involved in decision making process. Consequent of these circumstances, education will not help to orient learners towards positive intellectual transformation out of which socio-economic challenges will be contained.

Furthermore, failure by the government to revise the pedagogy system such that it pre-determines positive output in the education system will impede the way forward to meet societal challenges. The system which is founded on a revised pedagogical system will enable students, teachers and community at large to benefit from good education management.

### **Recommendations**

#### ***Policy Makers***

Policy makers should insure that schemes are designed with strongly communication with members and the administration in order to increase the areas of equal participation in

decision making. Also for any changes must include the education stakeholders who will strengthen the implementation of specified strategies for the aim of improving education performance.

### ***School Administration***

School administration should organize meetings in order to interact with students and staff during decision making as the way of participatory meeting. Also school management should consider restraining students from unnecessary violence or from making unrealistic demands by encouraging proper representative decision making approach towards

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