

Effect of the School Organizational Politics on Performance among Secondary Schools in Buuri Sub-County, Meru County

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of organizational politics on the performance among secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County. The study was anchored on the agency theory and adopted a descriptive survey research design. Results indicated a negative and significant association between organizational politics and performance of learning institutions. From the findings, the study concluded that organization politics has a negative and significant effect on the performance of secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County. The study recommends the need for the secondary schools to restructure their politics. In particular, they should avoid conflict between schools board members, school leadership, parents and other education stakeholders, school community should not be divided along political line, appointment of school authority should be politicized and school sponsors should not introduce politics in schools.

Keywords: *Organizational Politics, Performance, Secondary Schools*

1.0 Introduction

Today the education system in the United States has become decentralized and is based on the federal constitution of the United States of America (Shafritz, 2015). The federal government, therefore, reserves power over education to the individual states and other relevant local authorities within each of the states. The state role in the education system is therefore pronounced and more defined according to the United States constitution. The state controls many aspects of education ranging from administrative, fiscal, and political functions. Among others at the primary level of governance, the state government ensures that it financially supports the public education it provides for its citizens. This financial support includes the operating costs, licenses of public education along and with the governance of higher learning education. It also provides oversight and guidance to local school boards. Other governance duties of the state include the setting of policies and principles that are used in the setting of standards and assessment of school performance (Simonson, 2014).

In Tanzania, public discussions frequently focus on educational standards. The public's unhappiness becomes more prominent following the release of o-level National Examination

results of 2012, 2013 and 2014 in which more than a half of students in government schools who sat for the national examination failed while students in private schools performed well. Student outcomes in government schools do not match the government and parents' investment. The stakeholders are concerned about why the system is turning out graduates with poor results. It is argued that the place of effective governance on school performance has remarkable contributions on secondary schools students' academic achievements (Sabas & Mhonya, 2015).

The Kenyan education sector is regarded to be the biggest and quickly developing segment representing 15.97% of the National Budget (Odude, 2013). In this way those taking part in education decision making process in Kenya are worried about the proficient assignment of instruction assets. The effectiveness of an instructive framework can be characterized mostly by the net advantages in life term profit, work profitability and individual fulfillment accumulated to people with more training than those collected to people with less. Instructive Institutions go for giving their graduates these preferences by ingraining in them credits thought about important to acquire such points of interest. These qualities are both subjective scholarly accomplishment and manual abilities, for example, compelling confidence, reliability, inventiveness and inspiration.

Rubin et al. (2010) acknowledge that academic performance can be defined in various ways. They observe that there is an operational and a conceptual definition of academic performance. According to them, equating academic performance to the cumulative grade point average amounts to operational definition of academic performance while a conceptual definition entails measuring the students' ability to share knowledge in the classroom. In Kenya, the measure of academic performance is usually the test scores and grades achieved in the two Kenyan national examinations in primary school and secondary school levels.

1.1 Research Problem

Education institutions have a mandate to equip learners with both the curricular and the co-curricular knowledge and skills (Odude, 2013). To this end, Kenya Education Act 2013 outlines the school management structure, specifically spelling out the composition of the BOM as the organ responsible for the management of secondary education in Kenya. Indeed, the Principal runs the school on behalf of the BOM. Further, towards achieving a level playground for all the learners, Ministry of Education has adopted governance practices for all the secondary schools aimed at promoting excellent performance, transparency and accountability of the school managers to all the stakeholders.

Despite, this management structure suggested by the Ministry of Education for all the schools, there has been great variability in the performance of schools in Kenya. This is particularly so considering the performance of students in the national O-levels examination, KCSE. For instance, none of the 15 secondary schools in Buuri Sub County of Meru County was featured in the top 50 lists of best secondary schools in Kenya for the last five years (Ellis, 2014).

Previous studies have examined the concept of governance practices and performance of schools. Kalungu (2015) explored the impact of Board of Managements' budgetary administration on open auxiliary schools in Westlands District, Nairobi County, Kenya. Onger (2015) study examined the effectiveness of boards of management in facilitating quality education in secondary schools in Kajiado County, Kenya. Omar (2016) assessed the effect of leadership style on School performance of secondary schools in Wadajir District, Mogadishu- Somalia. However, to the best knowledge of the researcher, no study had

focused on performance of secondary schools in Buuri sub-county. Therefore, the current study sought to fill the existing contextual and conceptual gaps by establishing the effects of organizational politics on the performance among secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the agency theory. It was advanced by Jensen and Meckling (1976) and proposes that the interest of administration and investors regularly struggle since supervisors attempt to meet their interest to the detriment of investors. Thus, investors who are proprietors need to screen and direct the administrators. The creators characterize agency hypothesis as "the connection between the principals, for example, investors and specialists, for example, the organization administrators and managers". In this hypothesis, investors who are the proprietors or principals of the organization, contracts the operators to perform work. Principals appoint the running of business to the executives or administrators, who are the operators to the investor (Clarke, 2004). As indicated by Daily et al. (2003) two components can impact the noticeable quality of organization hypothesis. To begin with, it is a basic hypothesis that decreases the enterprise to two members of managers and investors. Second, agency hypothesis proposes that representatives or supervisors in associations can act naturally intrigued.

In view of the hypothesis, investors anticipate that the specialists will act and settle on choices to the advantage of the principals. However, the agent may not really settle on choices to the greatest advantage of the principals (Padilla, 2000). The possibility of issues emerging from the division of possession and control in agency hypothesis has been affirmed by (Schoorman & Donaldson, 1997). In agency hypothesis, the agent might be surrendered to self-intrigue, astute conduct and missing the mark regarding compatibility between the goals of the principal and the specialist's interests.

Despite the obstacles, the hypothesis was presented essentially as a detachment of proprietorship and control (Bhimani, 2008). Holmstrom and Milgrom (1994) contended that as opposed to giving fluctuating impetus installments, the specialists will just concentrate on ventures that have an exceptional yield and have a settled wage with no motivating force part. In spite of the fact that this will give a reasonable evaluation, yet it doesn't kill or even limit corporate wrongdoing. Here, the positivist approach is utilized where the operators are controlled by main influenced rules, with the point of optimizing investors' returns. Thus, a more individualistic view is connected in this hypothesis (Clarke, 2004).

The Agency Theory has been criticized on the basis that it presents a narrow model of human motivation and that it makes unnecessary negative moral assessment regarding people. In particular, the assumption about self-interested and opportunistic behavior is considered problematic or false. The critics argue that, focusing on self-interest behavior makes it possible that for the wider range of human motives to be ignored.

The theory is relevant to this research since it explains the relationship between organization management and stakeholders. In this study, the school management acts as the agent and serves the interest of stakeholders including students, parents and government. As such, the school management is expected to put the interest of the stakeholders first. Poor performance by the schools could be as result of the management failing to perform their duties as expected. The agency theory, therefore, links organization politics to performance of learning institutions.

2.1 Empirical Review

A study by Pandey (2015) found that budgetary process of secondary schools has been characterized by politics within the schools administration as facilitated by monthly, quarterly or other short interval reports from each school head and this is politically influenced. These reports should indicate how closely actual performance matches budgetary projections and it should evaluate deviations and their causes as a basis for developing corrective action programmes. This process is therefore depended on the prompt recording of financial transactions and the maintenance of up-to-date accounts. The treasurer in collaboration with the department heads is required to report and explain to the appropriate standing committee any variances.

Bozzo (2016) noted in his study that the process which public secondary schools acquire funds to implement and complete their projects is political through lobbying from government and other stakeholders in order to mobilize resources. This constructs nearby responsibility for real resource use, since the individuals who have partaken can be required to request to realize what really happened to the cash. Schools additionally require as a condition from government for part of the exchange to deliver edited compositions of records for inspecting. Schools budgetary control is the process by which schools performance is evaluated and adjusted to help ensure the realization of pre-determined targets.

According to Jennings and Niemi (2015) most of secondary schools are politically influenced and this influences their completion. Expenditure items are normally divided according to the various activities undertaken within each school. Secondary schools have been accused of incurring expenditures in ways that bear little relationship to their ability to raise the standard of schools and fail to result in improved or expanded service delivery which is influenced by organization politics.

Maina (2015) study sought to investigate the policies employed by principals in secondary schools to enhance their improvement of academic performance goals in Embu West District. The study used a descriptive survey design. The findings revealed that majority of the schools always employ strategies on instructional leadership. It was also revealed that majority of schools employed strategies for clarification of vision and mission. Further, results revealed that majority of schools always employed strategies for expectations for success; they also employed strategies for monitoring students' progress and also employed strategies aimed at ensuring opportunity to learn/time on task always. It was revealed that there was no difference in the strategies used by the head teachers in well performing and poorly performing schools. In view of the discoveries of the examination, it was inferred that all schools utilized methodologies that were gone for upgrading scholarly change. It was additionally reasoned that there were no distinction on techniques utilized as a part of well performing in light of the discoveries of the investigation, it was surmised that all schools used methodology that were away to upgrade insightful change. It was in like manner assumed that there were no refinement on methods used as a piece of well performing schools and poor performing schools. However, Maina' study presented a contextual gap since it did not focus on secondary schools in Buuri sub-county.

Ugwu, Ndugbu, Okoroji and Kalu (2014) investigated the impact of organizational politics on employees' performance in the private sectors in Nigeria. The data were mainly primary, collected during faceto-face interviews with managers and subordinates of the two firms. Study adopts data categorization approach for the analysis of empirical findings to see the connection between theory and practice. Research found that bad political behavior affects

negatively employees' performance and lowers organizational productivity; while good political behavior affects positively employees' performance and increases organizational productivity. Reflecting on the problems identified in this study, the authors recommend that every political maneuvering should be managed within reasonable bounds. Again, the authors hereby recommends seven approaches as follows; screen out exceedingly any political individuals during recruitment exercise; create an open-book management system to keep track of employee's behavior; periodic financial and accounting statements for all employees should not be politicized; establish formal conflict resolution and grievance processes; openly identify and reward staff who get real results without political games; disciplinary committee should be set up and defaulters should be apprehended to serve as a deterrent for others to follow; organization should adopt sensitive analysis approach to track and monitor any strange behavior of workers in the work environment. Reflecting on the outcome of this research, firstly, one of the problems encountered in carrying out this research was due to difficulty getting enough people to answer interview questions due to tight schedules of the participant; this has implications on the sample size and is considered as one of the study limitations.

Mutambara, Botha and Bisschoff (2014) assessed the effects of organisational politics. The research takes a slightly different angle of organisational politics, one that includes traditional conceptualisations of politics as typically having a negative connotation to the organisation and the other view of politics as a positive event within the contemporary organisation. Statistical analysis was done to identify common factors on the effects of organisational politics. The research adopted exploratory factor analysis. The research revealed that, organisational motivators, organisational demotivators, and labor turnover were common factors of organisational politics. The research recommends that managers and employees must be proactive in dealing with organisational politics. The reactivity must be encored in democratic decision making in which all parties demonstrate the will to work with and through organisational politics notwithstanding consolidation of the positive side of politics

Angogo (2016) examined the influence of organizational politics on career development among administrative staff in public universities in Kenya. A case study research design was adopted for the study. Results indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that patronage (ethnicity, tribalism, favoritism and biasness) was practiced at UOE. Similarly, most respondents agreed that information control and decision making did not favor them. The study further revealed that patronage, decision making and information control recorded a negative significant association with career development. The study has recommended among other things, that institutions of higher learning should adopt flexible structure and systems to reduce the effect of organization politics on career development of their employees.

Aidoo and Odoi (2018) investigated the effects of tribal diversity in the relationship between organisational politics and performance in the hospitality industry in Ghana. The study revealed that employees perceive organisational politics to be prevailing within their organisations. The relationship between tribal diversity and organisational politics was established to be significant. The study also found a significant relationship between tribal diversity and organisational performance. The relationship between organisational performance and organisational politics was found to be a negatively significant relationship. The study revealed that organisational politics and organisational performance without the mediating variable (tribal diversity) was significant, but introducing tribal diversity did not

change the relationship nor the extent of the relationship. Hence, tribal diversity did not mediate the relationship between organisational politics and organisational performance.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. It targeted a population of fifteen public secondary schools in Buuri Sub County, Meru County. All the fifteen public secondary schools formed the study population. This is because the number of schools was small. A total of 60 respondents were surveyed from all the schools. The researcher used questionnaires to collect primary data. The study adopted the drop and pick method in collecting the data. Descriptive statistics such as mean and percentages were computed to capture the characteristics of the variables under study while correlation analysis was used to assess the relationship of the independent and dependent variable.

4.0 Results and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The study determined the effects of the school organization politics on performance among secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County.

Table 1: Organizational Politics

Statements	strongly disagree	disagree	neutral	agree	strongly agree	Mean	Std. Dev
Appointment of School authority is highly politicized	5.80%	11.50%	26.90%	21.20%	34.60%	3.67	1.23
School community is divided along political line	5.80%	13.50%	15.40%	32.70%	32.70%	3.73	1.22
School has good mechanism of conflict resolution brought about by infighting and politics	3.80%	23.10%	5.80%	26.90%	40.40%	3.77	1.31
There is political support to certain schools which influences the performance in secondary schools	7.70%	9.60%	9.60%	30.80%	42.30%	3.90	1.27
The school sponsors have some influence which negatively affects the performance.	1.90%	13.50%	7.70%	34.60%	42.30%	4.02	1.11
There is students and teachers conflicts and this affects the school performance	11.50%	23.10%	11.50%	30.80%	23.10%	3.31	1.37
All the employees are not treated equally and this affects the school performance	26.90%	25.00%	3.80%	11.50%	32.70%	2.98	1.67
Average						3.66	1.30

Results presented in Table 1 indicated that 55.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that appointment of School authority is highly politicized, 65.4% agreed that school

community is divided along political line while 67.3% agreed that school has good mechanism of conflict resolution brought about by infighting and politics.

Further, 73.1% agreed that there is political support to certain schools which influences the performance in secondary schools, 76.9% agreed that the school sponsors have some influence which negatively affects the performance, 53.9% agreed that there is students and teachers conflicts and this affects the school performance. However, 51.9% of the respondents disagreed that all the employees are not treated equally and this affects the school performance.

The overall mean of the responses was 3.66 which showed that most of the participants were in agreement with the statements on organization politics. However, the answers were varied as shown by a standard deviation of 1.30.

The study findings agree with the work of Jennings and Niemi (2015) who noted that most secondary schools are politically influenced and this influences their completion. Further, Pandey (2015) found that budgetary process of secondary schools has been characterized by politics within the schools administration as facilitated by monthly, quarterly or other short interval reports from each school head and this is politically influenced.

Further, the respondents were asked to rate organizational politics in terms of satisfaction in their school.

Table 2: Organizational Politics Rating

Rating	Frequency	Percent %
highly satisfied	4	7.7
slightly satisfied	3	5.8
neutral	9	17.3
slightly dissatisfied	19	36.5
highly dissatisfied	17	32.7
Total	52	100

Results in Table 2 indicated that 36.5% of the respondents were slightly dissatisfied, 32.7% were highly dissatisfied, 17.3% were neutral, 7.7% were highly satisfied while 5.8% were slightly satisfied. The findings implied that most of the respondents were not satisfied with organizational politics within the schools.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis was used to establish the relationship between organizational politics and performance of learning institutions.

Table 3: Correlation Matrix

		Performance of secondary schools	Organizational politics
Performance of secondary schools	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Organizational politics	Pearson Correlation	-.655**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 3 indicated a negative and significant association between organizational politics and performance of learning institutions ($r=-0.655$, $p=0.000$). This finding implied that organizational politics and performance of learning institutions change in opposite direction. Jennings and Niemi (2015) noted that most secondary schools are politically influenced and this influences their completion.

5.0 Conclusion

From the findings, the study concluded that organization politics has a negative and significant effect on the performance of secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County. In particular, the findings provided several aspects of organizational politics that are significant in deterring the performance of secondary schools. These are: conflict between schools board members, school leadership, parents and other education stakeholders, negative influence of school sponsors on school performance, division of school community along political line and highly politicized appointment of school authority.

6.0 Recommendations

The findings of this study established that organizational politics are distractive and could negatively influence the performance of secondary schools in Buuri sub-county; Meru County. Therefore, the study recommends the need for the secondary schools to restructure their politics. In particular, they should avoid conflict between schools board members, school leadership, parents and other education stakeholders, school community should not be divided along political line, appointment of school authority should be politicized and school sponsors should not introduce politics in schools.

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