

An Assessment of Head Teachers' Effectiveness in Managing Public Primary School Finances in Bomet Sub-County, Kenya

¹Richard Maite Sigilai and ²Judith Chemutai Bett

Department of Humanities,

¹Cheptuech High School, P.O. Box 72-20152, Olenguruone, Kenya.

²C/o Utafiti Foundation, P.O. Box 884-30100, Eldoret, Kenya.

Abstract

This paper sought to assess head teachers' effectiveness in the management of school financial resources in Bomet sub-county. Head teachers' effectiveness in managing financial resources is determined by the way they perform their roles as required by the Ministry of Education. Descriptive survey research design was used. A sample of 120 head teachers was selected from a population of 174 head teachers of public primary schools in Bomet sub-county. A proportionate and simple random sampling technique was used. Questionnaire for head teachers were used to collect data. The data was analysed using the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) version 11.5. Frequencies and percentages were computed to determine effectiveness of head teachers in managing school finances. Most of the head teachers were found to be ineffective in the management of school finances because they were already overworked with administrative duties and class work. It is recommended that the Government consider employing accounts clerk to assist head teachers in proper management of school of school finances. The study is great value to all stakeholders in education in enhancing head teachers' effectiveness in managing school finances. This is because the stakeholders can utilise the research findings to intensify school-based in-service trainings at the divisional levels to benefit head teachers on the various ways of ensuring effective management of school finances. Further, it is hoped that the findings will be used by the Government in the formulation of education policies which would focus on effective management of financial resources in public primary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: assessment, head teachers, management, school finances, public primary schools, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Proper financial management is important to the general development of the school. The responsibility for collecting and accounting for school funds in the school lies with the School Management Committee (SMC). However, the SMC through the head teacher must seek the approval of the District Education Board (DEB) in order to collect and use the funds. The head teacher as the secretary to this committee is the Principal Accounting Officer for the school. Head teachers need to acquaint themselves with the principles governing sound management funds. Some of these include benefit of the pupils; finances must be approved by the School Management Committee; funds received must be receipted and the official receipt issued immediately, and any expenditure must be made on a payment voucher (MoE & HR, 1999). As the financial controller as well as the accounting officer of the school, the head teacher is responsible for all the revenue and expenditure made on behalf of the school (Investor in People, 2004). Management of the resources of a learning institution shall be the responsibility of the head of that institution. In discharging this responsibility, the head teacher may delegate to teaching or support staff as appropriate in writing. The SMC, the PTA or other stakeholder group may lend their support to the head teacher of the institution in respect of resources management but that support does not constitute a change to the

primary responsibility of the head teacher (MOEST, 2003). Head teachers are expected to have knowledge of finance, accounting, construction and maintenance of physical facilities (Sisungu, 2002). According to Olembo (1992), head teachers are overall in charge of all matters pertaining to budgeting and accounting of school funds, record-keeping and maintenance of facilities and supplies in the school. Head teachers have to make budgeting, correspondence, accounting verification, checking up-to-date entries in the registers and documents of the school (Mohanty, 2002).

A budget is an educational programme which is expressed in financial terms. A budget for an educational organization has an educational plan with an estimate of the amount of money to be received (receipts) and the amount of money to be spent (expenditure) in order to achieve the educational objectives. A budget plan is made for a given period of time, usually one year. A well-formulated school budget should consist of an education plan, an expenditure plan and a revenue plan (Okumbe, 1998). The budget guides and controls the school's income and expenditure plans while fulfilling the educational objectives of the school. It provides a means for those providing the funds to measure whether the head teacher, who is the custodian, is worthy of their trust and confidence. It provides an instrument for

controlling expenditure and evaluating performance. It can also serve as an instrument for delegating authority. The head teacher should involve the staff, the school committee members and PTA in the preparation, approval and administration of the budget. The budget must be discussed and approved by the school committee, Parents/ Teachers Association (PA/PTA) and the District Education Officer (DEO). The preparation, presentation and approval of the budget by the school committee, in conjunction with the PTA, should be completed before the end of December of every year (MOE & HR, 1999). It is the responsibility of the head teacher to present and interpret the budget to the concerned stakeholders, especially the parents. The budget should be adopted by the beginning of the fiscal year for which it is to serve, but only after the (SMC) which has the legal power to adopt it, has had ample time to analyze and review it (Okumbe, 1998). The administration of the budget is the responsibility of the head teacher on behalf of the SMC and the head teacher must seek the cooperation of the parents, teachers and all other stakeholders in the preparation of the budget. When the SMC and the PA are satisfied with the final budget estimate, the head teacher is authorized to forward the budget to the Ministry of Education, which in turn should approve the budget estimate before the beginning of the year (Okumbe, 1998).

Financial accounting is concerned with the maintenance of records in which financial transactions of an educational organization are summarized. An adequate financial system ensures effective operation in an educational organization. Financial accounting is thus the process of recording, classifying and summarizing financial transactions of an educational organization and interpreting the results of these transactions. Book-keeping is the art of recording business transactions capable of being measured in monetary terms. The primary value of book-keeping is that they are readily available when required. Some of the various books of accounts in use in educational organizations include: cash book, ledger, journal, receipt book, commitment register, stores ledgers, inventory, and payment vouchers (Okumbe, 1998). The cashbook is a book detailing money received and paid out of the school on a daily basis. A cashbook is a book of accounts in which all financial transactions with respect to receipts payments and banking are recorded. It is the responsibility of the head teacher of every school to ensure that the cash book is written daily so that, through reconciliations, the cash in hand can be checked by the head teacher against the balances reflected in the cash book (Okumbe, 1998). It is the responsibility of the head teacher to ensure that the transactions must balance at the end of the day (MOE & HR, 1999). Official receipt books are printed either by the institution or the District Education Board

(DEB). Where the DEB prints the receipts, the institution should submit its requirements on a yearly basis to facilitate bulk printing. The receipt books must be serially numbered and provided with duplicate counterfoils. Where the institution prints its own receipt books, the serialized receipt books, accompanied by the requisition, deliveries and printer certificates, should be taken to District Education Office for registration and rubber stamping (MOEST, 2003). Head teachers are required to ensure that a Trial Balance is extracted every month, and properly filed for record purposes. Four copies of the Trial Balance must be submitted monthly, not later than 15th of the ensuing month, together with bank reconciliation statements, a list of imprest holders, Return to Drawer (RD) cheque drawers, and cash-on-hand certificates, as at the date of Trial Balance. These copies should be distributed as follows: a copy each to District School Auditor, Provincial School Auditor, Teachers Service Commission, and a copy retained by the institution (MOEST, 2006).

Head teachers are required to submit their school books of accounts and financial statements, and other necessary documents to their District Schools Audit by the 31st of January of the ensuing year to enable the Audit Unit of the Ministry of Education to carry out the Audit. Other educational institutions with different financial years are required to submit their accounts within three months of the close of the financial year. The heads of the institutions, as accounting and supervising officers, are fully responsible for all transactions, and the preparation of financial statements at the institution, as well any irregular accounting, which in some cases is not deliberately or otherwise brought to the notice of the auditors. The audit file to be submitted should hold the Trial Balance and finances statements for audit purpose (MOEST, 2006).

The Ministry of Education (MOEST, 2003) has directed head teachers to purchase approved instructional materials, involve parents and communities, through PTA and SMC in making decisions on school expenditure and provide each pupil with the minimum specified supplies of stationery every year. The School Management Instructional Materials Selection Committee (SIMSC) is made up of parents and teachers. The head teacher is the chairperson and the deputy head teacher is the committee's secretary. The chairperson of the SMC is also a SIMSC member. The members of the SIMSC are of great help to the head teacher since an effective SIMSC has an important part to play in the management of teaching and learning materials and in keeping all parents and the community informed of key issues and the committee's decisions (MOEST, 2004). The local communities are expected to create a learning friendly environment for children by promoting and

supporting Free Primary Education and abolishing child labour and to participate in school management through selected school management committees and Parents Association. Further, they are expected to participate in decision-making and implementing policies on physical facilities and procurement of teaching and learning materials (MOEST, 2003).

The main sources of the school funds are parents, government and community groups. These are the main beneficiaries of education and they provide funds for schools as a cost-sharing measure. The success of the school will, to a large extent, depend on the head teacher's active involvement of all stakeholders in the cost-sharing activities. This should start within the school through income generating activities. Parents should be made aware of their responsibility in providing the necessary resources that would enable their children to learn effectively. The fact that parents are the major contributors to cost sharing and yet they have limited resources should encourage teachers to take care of the available resources to avoid loss and wastage. Every primary school is required to establish a PTA whose major function is to raise funds for school programmes. The key players in fund-raising include head teachers; chairpersons of school committees, PTA, the Provincial Administration, political leaders, education officials, sponsors, counsellors, business persons, the community, media, staff and pupils among others (MOE & HR, 1999). The head teacher as the chief executive of the school does not act alone or on his own authority, but rather carries out his assignments within the context of laws, regulations, administrative instructions and directives originating from the government. Effective management of public primary schools depends on the efforts of a number of agencies such as, the Provincial Office, the District Office, Divisional Office, the local community and the school staff, as these stakeholders play an important part in the daily operations of the school. The head teacher is the pivotal link in this network and plays the most crucial role in ensuring prudent management of financial, human and material resources (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

Importance of Effective Management of School Finances

The core role of the head teachers is to provide professional leadership and management for a school in order to secure foundation from which to achieve high standards in all areas of the school's work. To gain this success, a head teacher must establish high quality education by effectively managing all forms of teaching and learning, resources and processes, and should provide leadership and direction for the school and ensures it is managed and organized to meet its aims and targets (Investor in People, 2004). At the very least, head

teachers should be able to manage and deploy school resources efficiently, guide curriculum implementation and change, and create professional ethos within the schools by involving teachers and other stakeholders in decision-making (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1997).

Head teachers are overall in charge of the school. They supervise the whole school programme and bear the ultimate responsibility for the school performance, proficiency and effectiveness, including the competency of all school programmes (Wango, 2009). According to Lehal (2000), the most important element in managerial effectiveness is the man himself, his leadership qualities and his commitment to effectiveness in the management of organizations. According to Rono (*The Standard Media*, November 16, 2005), when Free Primary Education (FPE) was introduced in the year 2003, some head teachers in Bomet county stepped down for lack of financial management skills. They feared that failing to manage the funds as required would jeopardise their jobs. This is because they required teaching and handling all the school accounts with no basic accounting training. The Ministry of Education (MoEST, 2004) states that increased roles that came with FPE have placed head teachers in a position of considerable responsibilities in which they were not fully prepared for.

The introduction of revised curriculum and the launching of FPE have had an effect in the overall management of education in general; and specifically in the management of public primary schools. Head teachers are expected to take care of purchase, determine all expenditures and oversee the distribution of materials to various classes, in addition to managing the school and teaching. Head teachers are overstretched and in one way or another, school management is bound to deteriorate and performance will go down. (UNESCO, 2005), The Ministry of Education (MoEST 2003) states that management of school funds is one of the major task of the head teacher; and that the success of any school programme depends very much on the way financial inputs are managed, which in turn affects the overall performance in each school.

According to the Ministry of Education (MoE, 2007), pupil enrolment increased by 21.46% between the year 2003 and 2007 in Bomet sub-county as a result of the introduction of FPE. Despite the fact that the Government allocated substantial amounts of financial resources to the tune of Ksh522,501,785 for the purchase of teaching and learning materials, the sub-county's Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) mean score between the year 2003 and 2007 was 246.94 marks out of a possible 500 marks. This was actually below average. The greatest challenge facing head teachers is to effectively manage

financial resources as required by the Government so that academic performance of learners can improve. Therefore, the study sought to determine the head teachers' effectiveness in managing school finances in public primary schools in Bomet sub-county.

The findings of the study are likely to generate information on the head teachers' effectiveness in managing school finances in public primary schools. The education officers can utilize this information to intensify school-based in-service trainings at the divisional levels to benefit the head teachers on the various ways of ensuring effective management of school finances. Further, the education officers, among other stakeholders, may see the need of recommending to the Government to employ accounts clerks in every school to help head teachers in the proper financial accounting procedures. This paper will hopefully contribute to the existing pool of knowledge on the management of financial resources in public primary schools. It is also hoped that the findings will be used by the Government in the formulation of education policies which would focus on effective management of financial resources in public primary schools in Kenya.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Due to the fact that the research study targeted head teachers of public primary schools in Bomet sub-county, generalisation of the findings to other counties will only be done with a lot of caution.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The target population comprised all head teachers in public primary schools in Bomet County. A sample of 120 head teachers was selected from public

primary schools in Bomet sub -County. Proportionate sampling was used to select a sample of head teachers in public primary schools in each Education division in the sub-County. Simple random sampling was then used to select the specific number of head teachers from each education division to be included in the sample using random number tables. The head teacher of the school corresponding to the number picked was included in the sample. The head teachers were targeted because of the key roles they play in the management of public primary schools.

The research instruments used included head teachers' questionnaire and interview schedules for Education Officers. The data collected from head teachers was approximately coded, scored and keyed into the computer. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 computer program was used to analyse the data. Quantitative analysis on computation of frequencies and percentages was done to determine the head teachers' effectiveness in managing school finances as required by the ministry of Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Head Teachers' Effectiveness in Managing School Finances in Public Primary Schools

Head teachers' effectiveness in managing school finances was based on whether they performed their assigned roles in overseeing school finances as required by the Ministry of Education. Table 1 shows head teachers' responses on their effectiveness in performing their assigned roles in managing finances in public primary schools.

Table 1: Head Teachers' Assigned Roles in Managing Finances in Public' Primary Schools (N=103)

Variables Responses	Head teachers' Assigned Roles in Managing School Finances			
	Freq.	%	yes	freq no
1. Does your school maintain a cash book?	101	98.1	2	1.9
2. Are the cash book entries checked and reviewed?	100	97.1	3	2.9
3. Are the receipt books recorded in the counterfoil receipt book register?	80	77.1	23	22.3
4. Are the expenditure support documents numbered and filed?	96	93.2	7	6.8
5. Does the school maintain a filling system for payment vouchers?	100	97.1	3	2.9
6. Does the school submit on a monthly basis a trial balance and expenditure analysis to the District Education Office?	54	52.4	49	47.6
7. Does the school prepare monthly bank reconciliation?	56	54.4	47	45.6
8. Does the SMC approve the annual financial budget?	96	93.2	7	6.8
9. Does the school submit the books of accounts and financial statements and other documents to the District audit unit by 31 st January of the ensuing year?	87	84.5	16	15.5
10. Does the school have School Instructional Materials Selection Committee (SIMSC)?	103	100	00	00

Source: Field data, 2010

Table 1 shows that forty-nine head teachers (47.68) did not submit, on a monthly basis, a trial balance and expenditure analysis to the District Education Office as is required. Forty seven head teachers (45.6%) did not prepare prepared monthly bank reconciliation statements. Therefore, it is clear that a number of head teachers were not effective in

submitting financial statements to the Ministry of Education in time as required. A Trial Balance is a list of balances of all accounts in the ledgers and cash and bank balances. It should be drawn up monthly, and normally before the preparation of Income and Expenditure Account. The ledger account should also be ruled off each month. Therefore, head teachers were found to have

breached the Ministry of Education's (MOEST, 2006) requirement that they extract a trial balance every month, and should properly file it for record purposes. Head teachers reported that they were already too overworked in other duties like teaching and office work to be able to review the cashbooks as required. Furthermore, lack of accounts clerks in public primary schools who could assist them in the management of school finances made matters worse.

Further, Table 1 shows that ninety-six head teachers (93.2%) acknowledged that annual financial budget in their schools are always approved by SMC. This indicates that head teachers were effective in involving the school committees, who are the representatives of the local communities, in determining the budget estimates of their schools. This is in line with the requirements of the government that head teachers present and interpret the budget to the affected stakeholders, especially parents. Okumbe (1998) concurs with this when he states that the administration of the budget is the responsibility of the head teacher on behalf of the SMC; and the head teacher must seek the cooperation of the parents, teachers and all other stakeholders in the preparation of the budget.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A number of head teachers did not submit on a monthly basis a Trial Balance and expenditure analysis to the District Education office, and did not prepare monthly bank reconciliation statements as required by the Government. Therefore most head teachers were not effectively managing school finance. They indicated that they were already over worked with administrative duties and class work. There is need for the government to adequately train head teachers on their roles in managing schools finances in order to realize enhance performance in schools. The Government should consider employing Account clerks to assist head teachers in the proper management of finances in public primary school.

REFERENCES

- Commonwealth Secretariat (1997). Seven modules in educational management-Better schools resources/for the head teachers. Nairobi: JKF.
- Investor in People (2004). A Publication on Professional Issues, Department for Education and Skills, England, Website.
- Lehal, R. (2000). Organisational Climate, Job Satisfaction and Managerial Effectiveness. New Delhi, India: Deep and Deep Publications.
- Ministry of Education and Human Resources (1999). School Management Guide. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2003). A Handbook of Financial Management Instructions for educational institutions (1st rev. ed.).
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2003). Free Primary Education: Every child in school. A Handbook for Teachers and head teachers.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2003). Primary Schools Management Handbook Republic of Kenya.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2004). Development of Education in Kenya. Ministry of Education, August 2004.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2004). Primary Schools Instructional Materials Management Handbook, July, 2004 edition.
- Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2006). A Handbook of Financial Management. Instructions for Secondary Schools, Colleges and Polytechnics. Republic of Kenya.
- Ministry of Education (2007). Education Statistics of Bomet Sub-county. District Education Office, Department of Statistics, Bomet sub-county.
- Mohanty, J. (2002). Primary and Elementary Education. New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications, pvt, Ltd. Rejouri Garden.
- Okumbe, J. A. (1998). Educational Management. Theory and PT. Kenya.
- Olembo, J. O. (1992). Management in Education. Nairobi: Educational Research Publications.
- Rono, W. (2005). School and careers. Weekly publications by the standard Media Group, Newspaper; Wednesday 16 November, Standard Education, p. 1. NBI, Kenya
- Sisungu, Z. W. M. (2002). Head Teachers' and Teachers' Perceptions on the Influence of Management Skills Practice on School Climate in Secondary Schools in Western Province of Kenya. Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Egerton University.
- UNESCO (2005). Challenges of Implementing Free Primary Education in Kenya. Experiences from Districts. Nairobi Office.
- Wango, G. (2009). School Administration and Management. Quality Assurance and Standards in Schools. Nairobi: Jomo Kenyatta Foundation.