

Full Length Research Paper

Challenges faced by newly appointed principals in the management of public secondary schools in Bondo district, Kenya: an analytical study

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Every year, the Teachers Service Commission appoints new principals to manage schools in Bondo District whenever vacancies arise due to natural attrition, demotion and resignation. The newly appointed principals are expected to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. This is because new employees are enthusiastic and very keen in performance of their duties, furthermore they are appointed to improve the quality of work because they are better trained, have more current education and may have fresh new ideas in management of schools. Nevertheless, being new in their work stations, the newly appointed principals are likely to face challenges in their areas of operation such as finance, personnel, student and curriculum management. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out challenges faced by newly appointed principals in the management of public secondary schools in Bondo District, Kenya. A conceptual framework showing dependent, independent and intervening variables of the challenges was used to guide the study. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The study population comprised 22 experienced principals, 6 newly appointed principals, 28 deputy-principals, 249 teachers, 28 Board of Governors chairpersons, 28 Parents Teachers Association chairpersons and 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Data was collected using closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires; and in-depth interviews. Face validity of the instruments was established by experts in educational administration. Findings of the study revealed that newly appointed principals in public secondary schools face challenges in the management of students, teachers, finances, support-staff and those that arise from parental involvement in school activities. These challenges included, indiscipline, failure to pay school levies, threats, dropout, staff incompetencies and budgeting among others. Based on the findings, the study recommended that Teachers Service Commission and the Ministry of Education should put in place strategies to help reduce the challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals such as induction programme for Newly Appointed Principals, in-service courses focusing on Newly Appointed Principals, and pre-service training courses focusing on management issues. The findings of the study are important to stakeholders in education especially educational administrators and policy makers such as Teachers Service Commission and Ministry of Education as it provides them with a needed description of challenges for newly appointed principals which they should consider in developing strategies to help newly appointed principals become effective and efficient managers.

Keywords: Challenges, newly appointed principals, management, public secondary schools, Bondo district, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Education is widely recognized as key to national development. (Republic of Kenya, 1988). Kenya's vision 2030 clearly focuses on education as a means of

development and eradication of poverty. The Kenya vision 2030 is the new country's development blueprint covering the period 2008 to 2030. It ends at making Kenya a

newly industrializing, middle income countries, providing high quality life for all citizens by the year 2030. Division has been developed through an all-inclusive stakeholder consultative process involving Kenya from all parts of the country. The vision is based on three pillars the economic pillar, the social pillar and the political pillar. The visions programme plan comes after the successful implementation of the Economic Recovery Strategies for Wealth and Employment Creation which has seen the country's economy back on the path to rapid growth since 2002 when Gross Domestic Product grew at 0.6% rising to 6.1% in 2006. The economic pillar aims at providing prosperity to all Kenyans through an economic development programme aimed at achieving an average Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 10% per annum in the next 25 years. The social pillar seeks to build a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment. The political pillar aims at realizing a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law and protects the rights and freedom of every individual in the Kenyan society. (Republic of Kenya, 2007). Additionally, the World Bank has long acknowledged the vital relationship between education and economic development and the central importance for both in developing countries (Leu and Bryner, 2005). The Ministry of Education, being the custodian of the education sector curriculum, taps and uses the skills of school principals as key implementers of the curriculum and supervisors of the whole school program (Ministry of Education, 1994). However, research findings done in the field of educational administration across the world, indicate that entering the principalship is an emotional laden situation and that school principals are the most powerful single determinants of the quality and effectiveness of schools (Garry, 2004; Goldring et al., 2006; Leu and Bryner, 2005; Kitavi and Westhuizen, 1997). Some of the functions of a school principal are; instructional leadership; shaping an organization that demands and supports excellent instruction and dedicated learning by students and staff and to connect the outside world and its resources to the school and its work. (Hale and Hunter, 2003; Wango, 2009). Despite the enormous roles and functions of a school principal, research done in some developed countries like USA, UK and Australia unravels various challenges faced by beginning principals in management (Kitavi and Westhuizen, 1997). For instance, they experience job specific problems related to instructional programs, students, personnel, financial resources, community relations and transportation (Hale and Hunter, 2003). In America, one of the core challenges newly appointed principals face is improvement of students' academic achievement (Goldring et al., 2006).

In Africa, new principals face several challenges as they often work in poorly equipped buildings with inadequately trained staff. There is rarely any formal leadership training and principals are appointed on the basis of their teaching record rather than their leadership

potential. Moreover, induction and support systems for newly appointed principals are usually limited (Bush and Oduro, 2006). A study done in six Sub-Saharan African countries namely, Ghana, Guinea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Madagascar indicate that new principals face serious problems with students who cannot pay fees as parents are reluctant to do so, teacher shortage and inadequate teaching and learning resources (Leu & Bryner, 2005). In recent years, there has been an increased focus on the professional development of school principals, however, recent studies and reports show that the systems that prepare educational leaders are in trouble since several problem areas have been identified such as an absence of collaboration between school districts and colleges and universities; a lack of systematic professional development and lack of definition of good educational leadership (Hale & Hunter, 2003). In 1991, the Zimbabwe Ministry of Education and the Commonwealth Secretariat Education Program jointly organized a workshop on Teacher management in Kadoma, Zimbabwe neither focused on challenges faced by new heads nor skills they require becoming effective and efficient managers (Kitavi and Westhuizen, 1997).

In Kenya, in 1988, the government of Kenya established the Kenya Education Staff Institute to offer in-service training for the heads of educational institutions including school principals (Republic of Kenya, 1988). As a result, in the 2005 Education Sector report, the Ministry of Education Science and Technology, included, as one of its objectives; to enhance access, equity and quality in primary and secondary education through capacity building for 45,000 education managers by 2015; (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Sadly, the focus has been on practicing principals and hence not much has been achieved for the future or beginning ones. At a Kenya Secondary School Heads Association annual general meeting in July 2007, principals' lobbied for the newly appointed heads to be trained through Kenya Education Staff Institute so as to make them effective managers (Lucheli, 2007). They further demanded that the position of school principalship be professionalized and a clear policy on identification, selection appointment and training of head teachers be set (Otieno, 2010). Moreover, the vast and rapid expansion of education has further led to the appointment of heads who have little experience to fit them completely for the work that they are required to do (Ministry of Education, 1987) and this is a major cause of ineffective leadership in secondary schools (Griffin, 1996). A survey study using questionnaire was used to establish problems facing beginning school principals in Kenya, involving 142 beginning and experienced principals drawn from eight provinces revealed that they face challenges such as failure by students to pay school fees and buy books, shortage of school equipment and physical facilities, lack of staff accommodation, lack of play grounds, students traveling long distances with a major outcry on school fees and money matters (Kitavi and

Westhuizen, 1997). Likewise, headteachers are exposed to many challenges in financial management as the existing preparation measures and support for headteachers in financial management are basically weak and do not sufficiently prepare potential headteachers for responsibilities in financial management (Irungu, 2002). Some of these challenges that newly appointed principals face are therefore brought forth by the means by which principals are identified, appointed and trained which do not prepare them to become effective managers. The dominant tradition for identification and appointment of heads has been based on good classroom teaching, active participation in co-curriculum activities and teaching experience which has resulted into ineffective leadership and subsequently a number of challenges in institutional management (Kamotho, 2008; Republic of Kenya, 1988). As Mosomi (2008) notes, their ill preparedness for managerial duties prior to their appointments have made school principals vulnerable to making blunders which sponsors capitalize on to demand for their removal. In January 2010, as schools in Kenya reopened for first term, shock hit the whole country as eleven secondary school head teachers in Nyanza province, Kenya, were demoted for ineffectiveness (The Standards Media Group, 2010), something attributed with ill preparedness prior to appointments and lack of commitment to their appointments.

In Bondo District, there were 28 public secondary schools each led by a principal and of whom 6 were newly appointed principals, hence still working within their first 4 years of appointments. In the district, principals face challenges characterized by issues such as; inadequate teaching and learning resources, students' absenteeism, non-committed staff, financial constraints and teacher shortage (District Education Office – Bondo, 2009). Furthermore, the situational characteristics of a school would have direct impact on beginning heads effectiveness in administration (Hoy and Miskel, 1996) and as Bush and Oduro, (2006) argue some of the challenges for new principals are as a result of working in poorly equipped buildings with inadequately trained staff, one of the characteristics similar to majority of the schools in Bondo District. For instance various cases have been identified as difficult situations faced by a number of principals. In reality, many of the principals have undertaken Kenya Education Management Institute courses while on the job while some have not, with very little attention for newly appointed principals. It was therefore necessary to carry out a study on challenges faced by newly appointed principals in Bondo district. This study therefore intended to find out challenges faced by newly appointed principals in the management of public secondary schools in Bondo district and to come up with possible recommendations to enable them become effective and efficient managers. The objectives of the study were to: establish challenges newly appointed principals' face in management of students, find out the

challenges newly appointed principals face that arise from parental involvement, school activities, explore challenges newly appointed principals face in financial management, examine challenges newly appointed principals face in management of teachers and support staff.

Research questions

1. What challenges do Newly-Appointed Principals face in the management of students?
2. What challenges do newly-appointed principals face that arise from parental involvement in school activities?
3. What challenges do Newly-Appointed Principals face in financial management?
4. What challenges do Newly-Appointed Principals face in the management of teachers?
5. What challenges do Newly-Appointed Principals face in the management of support-staff?

Conceptual framework

The study was based on the concept that new appointments have inbuilt challenges that incoming employees are bound to face. The conceptual framework postulated that there are many challenges that newly appointed principals face in the management of public secondary schools (Figure 1)

These include students' management based challenges; challenges that arise from parental involvement in school activities; financial management based challenges; teacher management based challenges; support-staff management based challenges. In this conceptual framework the independent variables were students, parental involvement in school activities, finance, teachers and support-staff. The intervening variables included failure to pay school levies, shortage of staff, negative attitude and absenteeism. The dependant variable was the challenges newly appointed principals in their endeavour to provide quality education.

METHODOLOGY

The study population comprised 22 experienced principals, 6 newly appointed principals, 28 deputy-principals, 249 teachers, 28 Board of Governors chairpersons, 28 Parents Teachers Association chairpersons and 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Saturated technique was used to select 19 experienced principals, 6 newly appointed principals, 25 deputy-principals, 25 Board of Governors chairpersons, 25 Parents Teachers Association chairpersons and 1 District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer while simple random sampling was used to select 125 teachers. Data was collected using

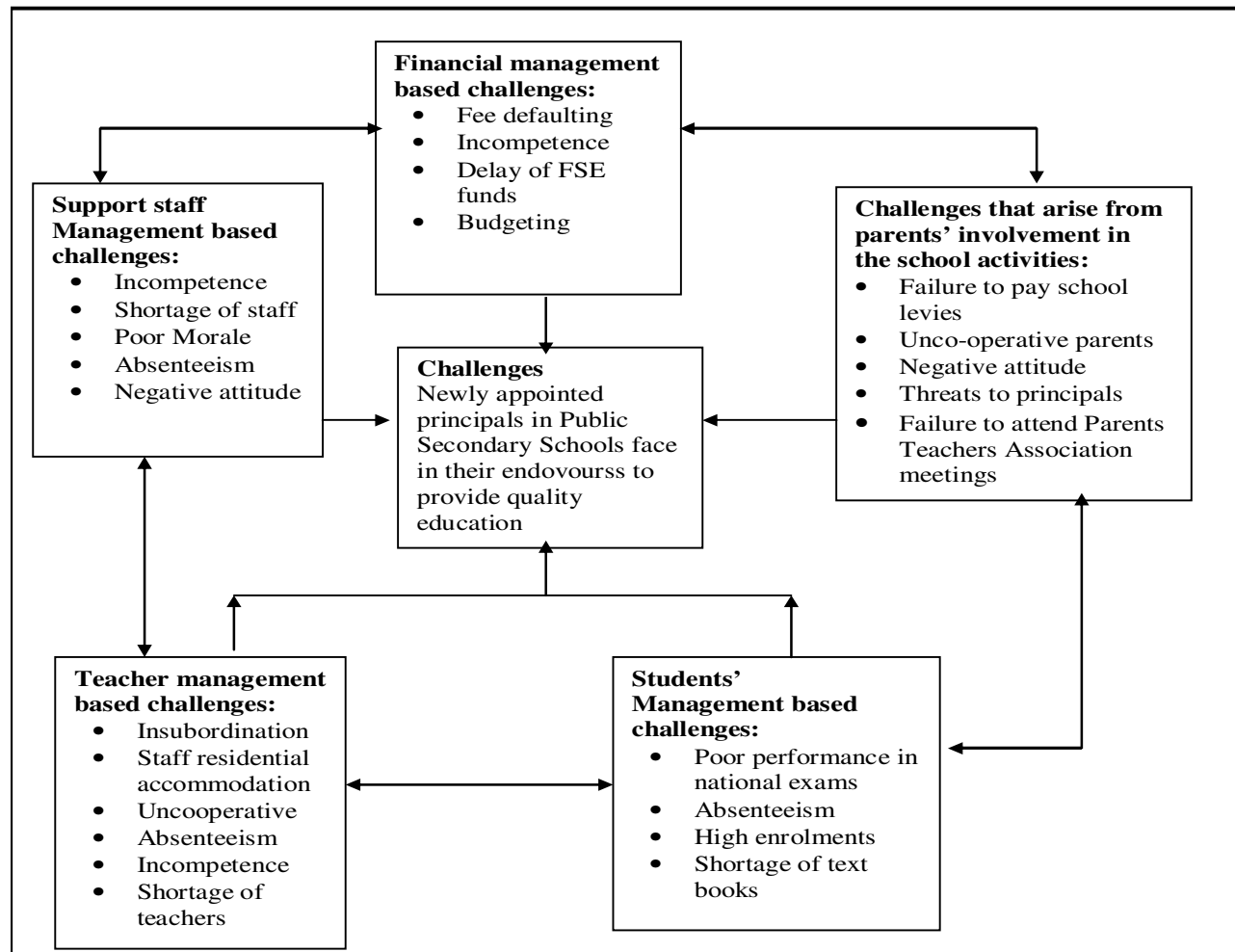


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework showing challenges newly-appointed principals' face in the Management of Public Secondary Schools

closed-ended and open-ended questionnaires and in-depth interviews. Face validity of the questionnaire and interview schedules was established by experts in Educational Administrations. The input of the expert was used in revising the final drafts of the instruments. A pilot study was conducted in 3 schools to determine the reliability of the data collection instruments. Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient was used to establish the reliability at a p-value 0.05. The Pearson r for the principal's questionnaire was 0.80, 0.75 for deputy principals, 0.81 for teachers, 0.81 for Parents Teachers Association chairpersons and 0.85 for Board of Governors chairpersons. Qualitative data from interview schedules and open-ended parts of the questionnaires were analysed in an on-going process through sub-themes and themes as they emerged. Quantitative data from closed ended parts of questionnaires was analysed using descriptive statistics in form of means, frequencies and percentages.

RESULTS

Research question 1

What challenges do newly-appointed principals face in the management of students?

The responses to this research question by respondents were as represented in Table 1. Poor performance in national examinations was rated high by Principals at 4.7, deputy principals 4.5, teachers 4.3, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.0 and Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.7. Absenteeism was rated high by principals at 4.7, deputy principals 4.2, teachers 4.1, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.5 and Board of Governors chairpersons. Absenteeism was prompted by the fact that most schools are secondary schools and therefore students walked long distances daily and because they got exhausted, they decided to absent

Table 1. Challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of students as rated by principals (n=25); Deputy Principals (n=25); Teachers (n=125); PTA Chairpersons (n=20) and BOG Chairpersons (n=19)

Challenges	Mean Rating				
	P	DP	T	PTA	BOG
Poor performance in national examinations	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.0	4.7
Absenteeism	4.7	4.2	4.1	4.5	4.2
Failure to pay levies	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.9	4.7
Less motivated students	4.6	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.1
Shortage of textbooks	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.1
Student unrest	4.6	4.7	4.4	4.0	4.3
Vandalism	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.2	4.1
High drop outs	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.0
High enrolments	4.2	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9
Fighting	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.6	3.0
Theft	4.0	4.4	4.1	3.4	3.7

KEY: P-Principals, DP-Deputy Principals, T-teachers, PTA -Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOG -Board of Governors Chairpersons

Classification of challenges: 4.1 -5.0 Biggest challenge, 3.1-4.0 Big Challenge, 3.0 Neutral, 2.1, 2.1-2.9 less challenge and 1.0-1.9 Least challenge

themselves from school. Coupled with poor payment of levies, students became absent from school for quite a longer period. Failure to pay levies was rated high by Principals rated it at 4.6, Deputy Principals 4.6, teachers 4.6, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.9 while Board of Governors chairpersons 4.7. This therefore was a challenge faced by newly appointed principals. Less motivated students was rated high by both Principals and deputy Principals rating it at 4.6, teachers 4.2, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.4 and Board of Governor chairpersons 4.1. Notably, less motivated students lack a learning culture and these results into students' poor performance in national examinations. Shortage of textbooks has also been rated high showing it was a challenge for newly appointed principals. Principals and Parents Teachers Association chairpersons each rated it at 4.6, Deputy Principals and teachers each rated it at 4.4 while Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. Vandalism was a challenge faced by newly appointed principals as shown by the high mean rates. Principals 4.4, deputy principals 4.4, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.2 while Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. Theft was rated by principals at 4.0, deputy principals 4.4., teachers 4.1, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 3.4 and Board of Governor chairpersons 3.7.

During interviews newly appointed principals cited many challenges that they encountered in the process of managing students. The challenges were similar to those stated by experienced principals, deputy principals, teachers, Parents teachers association chairpersons and Board of Governors chairpersons, that is absenteeism, vandalism, unrests and high enrolments among other challenges. Most of the Newly Appointed Principals

emphasized that poor performance in Kenya National Examination Council examinations, vandalism, unrests and high enrolments were the main challenges in fact one of the Newly Appointed Principals was quite categorical, he stated that:

"Newly Appointed Principals face a myriad of challenges in dealing with students. When a Newly Appointed Principals is posted to a school, students always try to test his management skills, particularly in school which are famous of indiscipline. Thus bullying becomes commonplace. Students also try to vandalise school property and make achievable requests with interventions of causing unrest. For instance change in menu uniform; and school rules and regulations. In some schools, some students threaten Newly Appointed Principals with dire consequences if they do not meet their demands" (John Wangia – pseudonym). Another Newly Appointed Principal added that: "some Newly Appointed Principals are unaware of the varied cultures from which students come, leave alone the school culture where they are deployed to work after appointments for Newly Appointed Principals to function well, they need proper induction by the District Education Officers on the ethos of such schools and the challenges they should expect, besides normal issues." This would assist the Newly Appointed Principals to manage students completely without fear. Moreover, they cannot suffer from reality shock. Furthermore, student's management in schools is a teamwork function that requires involvement of all teachers. Shortage of teachers is real challenge as the Newly Appointed Principals does what he/she would have

Table 2. Challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals that arise from Parental Involvement in school activities as rated by principals (n=25); Deputy Principals (n=25); Teachers (n=125); Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons (n=20) and BOG Chairpersons (n=19)

Challenge	Mean Rating				
	P	DP	T	PTA	BOG
Failure to pay school levies	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.6	4.1
Failure to attend Parents Teachers Association meetings	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.3	4.9
Uncooperative parents	4.4	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.4
Threats to principals	4.3	4.6	4.1	4.1	4.1
Negative attitude	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.0

KEY: P-Principals, DP-Deputy Principals, T-teachers, PTA -Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOG-Board of Governor Chairpersons

Classification of challenges: 4.1 -5.0 Biggest challenge, 3.1-4.0 Big Challenge, 3.0 Neutral, 2.1, 2.1-2.9 less challenge and 1.0-1.9 Least challenge

delegated to teachers so that he/she addresses exceptional challenges like cases of hysteria and so on” (Mark Opondo – pseudonym).

Research question 2

What challenges do newly appointed principals that arise from parental involvement in school activities in public secondary schools in Bondo district

Failure to pay school levies was a challenge that newly appointed principals faced. All the 25 (100%) principals rated it at 4.8, deputy principals and Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.6, teachers 4.4 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. Failure to attend Parents Teachers Association meetings was also a challenge to newly appointed principals (Table 2) All the principals rated it at 4.6, deputy principals 4.2, teachers 4.4, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.3 and Board of Governor chairpersons 4.9. Uncooperative parents was rated high and hence was shown as a challenge for newly appointed principals. The principals rated it at 4.4, deputy principals at 4.8, teachers 4.2, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.3 and Board of Governor chairpersons 4.4. Parents were uncooperative, a sign that came out clearly when they failed to attend Parents Teachers Association meetings and also failure to pay levies. Threats to Principals were rated high by all the respondents. Principals 4.3, deputy principals 4.6 while teachers, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons and Board of Governors chairpersons each rated it 4.1. Negative attitude was also rated high by all the respondents. The principals, Deputy Principals each rated it at 4.2 while Board of Governor Chairpersons 4.0. Negative attitude by some parents was because they were illiterate and ignorant about the importance of education.

In-depth interview with Newly Appointed Principals revealed that parental involvement in management of

schools present challenges that Newly Appointed Principals have to contend with. For instance school fees payment is poor with respect to parental obligations in terms of school levies. In this regard school levies payments have been complicated with Free Secondary School Education tuition subsidy by the government of Kenya. Thus one of the Newly Appointed Principals stated that:

“Parents are unwilling to pay school levies and the accumulated arrears run to the tune of five million Kenya shillings and above in most schools. The implication of this is that most school functions and activities cannot be implemented to the satisfaction of the stakeholders in education. So school fee defaulting is the biggest challenge.” Besides, some parents threaten and attack school administrators, to the extent that some are physically assaulted. In fact most Newly Appointed Principal try to avoid any matter that would bring them on collision course with parents.” (Jeremiah Wanga – pseudonym).

Research question 3

What Challenges do Newly-Appointed Principals face in Financial Management?

The Principals, Deputy Principals, Teachers, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, Board of Governors chairpersons and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer were asked to rate challenges faced in financial management. Their responses were as shown in Table 3.

Delay of Free Secondary Education Funds was rated high by all the respondents. Principals rated it at 4.8, deputy principals 4.9, teachers 4.7, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.5 and Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.7. The delay in disbursement Free

Table 3. Challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals in School Financial Management as rated by Principals (n=25); Deputy Principals (n=25); Teachers (n=125); PTA Chairpersons (n=20) and BOG Chairpersons (n=19)

Challenges	Mean rating				
	P	DP	T	PTA	BOG
Delay of Free Secondary Education funds	4.8	4.9	4.7	4.5	4.7
Fee defaulting	4.7	4.8	4.8	4.4	4.6
Budgeting	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.3	4.5
Incompetence in accounting	4.6	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.3

KEY: P-Principals, DP-Deputy Principals, T-teachers, PTA -Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOG -Board of Governor Chairpersons

Classification of challenges: 4.1 -5.0 Biggest challenge, 3.1-4.0 Big Challenge, 3.0 Neutral, 2.1, 2.1-2.9 less challenge and 1.0-1.9 Least challenge

Table 4. Challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Teachers as rated by principals (n=25); Deputy Principals (n=25); Teachers (n=125); PTA Chairpersons (n=20) and BOG Chairpersons (n=19)

Challenges	Mean rating				
	P	DP	T	PTA	BOG
Shortage of teachers	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.4
Poor morale among teachers	4.5	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.1
Staff residential accommodation	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.0	4.1
Incompetence	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1
Insubordination	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.3
Absenteeism	4.2	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.3

KEY: P-Principals, DP-Deputy Principals, T-teachers, PTA -Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOG -Board of Governors Chairpersons

Classification of challenges: 4.1 -5.0 Biggest challenge, 3.1-4.0 Big Challenge, 3.0 Neutral, 2.1, 2.1-2.9 less challenge and 1.0-1.9 Least challenge

Secondary Education of funds was a challenge in school management and the stipulated duties to be performed with the funds stagnate. Fee defaulting was a challenge for newly appointed principals. From Table 3 the mean ratings were as follows; principals 4.7, deputy-principals 4.8, teachers 4.8, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.4 and Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.6. Fee defaulting was a result of the high poverty index in the district, an issue experienced by all the third world countries, Kenya included. Budgeting was rated high by all the respondents as follows; principals 4.6, deputy-principals 4.6, teachers 4.6, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.3 and Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.5. Incompetence in financial management was pointed out as challenges for newly appointed principals. Incompetence was rated high by principals 4.6, deputy-principals 4.2, teachers 4.1, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons 4.1 and Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.3.

During interviews with Newly Appointed Principals, it emerged that delay in disbursement of Free Secondary Education was a big challenge as schools depend entirely on these funds. Another challenge that was considered

very serious is incompetence in accounting on the part of Accounts Clerks and Newly Appointed Principals themselves.

Research Question 4

What are the challenges do newly-Appointed principals faces in the management of teachers?

The Principals, Deputy Principals, teachers, Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, Board of Governors chairpersons and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer were asked to rate challenges faced in management of teachers. Their responses were as shown in Table 4.

Shortage of teachers was rated as follows by the respondents; Principals 4.8, deputy principals 4.7, teachers 4.5, while Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.4. The high mean rates. Poor morale among teachers was a challenge faced by newly appointed principals. Principals rated it at 4.5, Deputy Principals 4.2, Teachers 4.3, Parents Teachers

Table 5. Challenges faced by Newly Appointed Principals in the Management of Support-staff as rated by principals (n=25); Deputy Principals (n=25); Teachers (n=125); PTA Chairpersons (n=20) and BOG Chairpersons (n=19)

Challenges	Mean rating				
	P	DP	T	PTA	BOG
Poor morale among support staff	4.9	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.4
Absenteeism	4.4	4.6	4.1	4.3	4.0
Shortage of staff	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.1
Staff negative attitude	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	4.3
Incompetence	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.3

KEY: P-Principals, DP-Deputy Principals, T-teachers, PTA-Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, BOG -Board of Governors Chairpersons

Classification of challenges: 4.1 -5.0 Biggest challenge, 3.1-4.0 Big Challenge, 3.0 Neutral, 2.1, 2.1-2.9 less challenge and 1.0-1.9 Least challenge

Association chairpersons 4.0, and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. 4.6.2. Staff Residential Accommodation was rated staff residential accommodation as a challenge faced by the newly appointed principals rated who rated it at 4.6; 4.4 by deputy principals; 4.3 by teachers; 4.0 by Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons and 4.1 by Board of Governors Chairpersons Incompetence was rated high. Principals rated it at 4.5; Deputy Principals and teachers each rated it at 4.3; Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.0 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. Insubordination was rated 4.2 by principals, 4.3 by deputy principals, 4.1 by teachers, 4.1 by Parents Teachers Association chairperson and 4.3 by Board of Governors chairpersons. Insubordination resulted from teacher resistance to change in school administration. Absenteeism was rated this high. Principals 4.2, Deputy Principals 4.4, teachers 4.1, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.1 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.3. Absenteeism amongst teachers directly translates in student's poor performance in yearly national examinations.

Shortage of teachers, low morale, insubordination, incompetence and absenteeism were cited by Newly Appointed Principals during interviews as main challenges faced. These challenges were more serious where Newly Appointed Principals came from other schools as they were viewed as foreigners. In fact one of the Newly Appointed Principals stated categorically that:

"It is better to be appointed as a principal in a school where you are serving currently as a deputy principal. This is because one is familiar with the school ethos and knows the soft spots of teachers, support staff and students. In which case one does not suffer from reality shock and finds it relatively easy to mobilize staff and students to perform desired activities, programs and projects. Moreover, one serves as a role model and remains highly motivated. However, if one comes from a different school the teachers try as much as possible to undermine him as they believe that one of their own

should have been promoted. These teachers, therefore tend to withhold their support and resort to deviant behaviour such as absenteeism, feigning illness, being unco-operative and inciting students against the Newly Appointed Principal." (Morris Nyawanda- pseudonym).

Research question 5

What challenges do newly-appointed principals face in the management of support-staff?

The Principals, Deputy Principals, teachers, Parents Teachers Association Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons, Board of Governors chairpersons and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer were asked to rate challenges faced in management of support staff. Their responses were as shown in Table 5.

Poor Morale among Support Staff was rated this high. Principals rated it at 4.9, Deputy Principals 4.3, teachers 4.2, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.2 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.4. This was due to low remuneration that they get. Absenteeism was rated high by Principals at 4.4, Deputy Principals at 4.6, teachers at 4.1, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons at 4.3 and Board of Governor chairpersons at 4.0. This was due to being involved in a lot of activities in the community such as funerals since they are community members. Shortage of staff was rated high. Principals at 4.4, Deputy Principals 4.4, teachers 4.2, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.3 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.1. This was a problem for newly appointed principals since the few employed were overworked and were not effective at work at all. Staff Negative Attitude was rated high by Principals at 4.2, Deputy Principals 4.3, teachers 4.2, Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.0 and Board of Governors chairpersons 4.3. It is very difficult to lead a staff with negative attitude and this affects their performance at work and the learning process. Newly appointed principals faced the challenge of incompetence

amongst support-staff. The respondents rated this high. Principals rated it at 4.2; Deputy Principals and teachers each rated it at 4.1; Parents Teachers Association chairpersons 4.0 and Board of Governor chairpersons 4.3. This study finding concurs with the findings of Irungu (2002), who established that headteachers work with incompetent bursars/clerks who have low professional qualifications. During interviews, Newly Appointed Principals pointed out that incompetence, shortage of support staff and negative attitudes were main challenges faced. They explained that this was mainly due to suspicion and incitement from the local community.

DISCUSSION

Poor performance in national examinations was rated as one of the biggest challenge for Newly Appointed principals because national examinations is a measuring tool for effectiveness of principal ship and therefore poor performance by students is a great threat. This concurs with the findings of Leu and Byren (2005), who found in their study done in six sub Saharan African countries that new principals face serious problems of poor performance in examinations. During an interview with the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and principals, they all reported that performance is the main issue being emphasized for school administrators today and a principal that cannot produce good results in national examinations is to face demotion. In fact the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "Poor performance in national examinations has led to demotion of head teachers in many schools since the year 2000". Absenteeism was prompted by the fact that secondary schools are day schools and therefore students walk long distances daily and because they got exhausted, they decide to absent themselves from school. Coupled with poor payment of levies, students absent from school for quite a longer period. This concurs with the findings of Bush and Oduro (2006), who established that newly appointed principals face the challenge of students' continuous absenteeism resulting from poverty levels in Africa. During interviews with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, it was noted that absenteeism was a serious challenge. Infact one of the principals stated that "When students are sent home for fees they take longer periods than expected" while twelve principals stated "For day schools, parents send their children to other errands, hence promoting absenteeism, and the long distance daily walk, make learners exhausted and hence not to come to school daily". When students fail to pay school levies, then it becomes very difficult for the principals to manage the schools. Bondo district poverty level is very high and this is a contributory factor to poor payment of levies. More so failure to pay levies revealed the poor socio economic background of the students. This finding concurs with the

findings of Bush and Oduro (2006), who established that newly appointed principals in Africa are faced with the challenge of fee problem. During an interview with the principals they reported that there were huge fee arrears at the end of each year due to poor fee payment by the students. In fact, all the principals stated that poor payment of school levies makes school management to be very difficult and it disorganizes all school plans." The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "All schools have huge fee arrears making it difficult for principals to run schools". Notably, less motivated students lacks learning culture and these results into students' poor performance in national examinations. This finding concurs with the finding of Kitavi and Westhuizen (1997) who found out that beginning principals are faced with the problem of less motivated students.

All the principals stated that "Less motivated students perform poorly in examinations and they are undisciplined students". Infact the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "Less motivated students are trouble causers at school and in the long run drop out of school". During an interview with the principals they were all in agreement that less motivated students lacked learning culture and these resulted into high drop outs and poor performance in national examinations. In schools, students are expected to buy certain textbooks although the government provides some. When students fail to buy the necessary books, effective learning cannot take place, shortage of text books was also due to high losses made by students, which they fail to replace. This concurs with the findings by Kitavi and Westhuizen (1997), who discovered that beginning principals in Kenya face challenges such as failure by students' failure to buy books. During an interview with the principals they reported that the government provides text books however, parents are expected to buy particular text books for example literature and Fasihi books with some in the languages department and therefore failure by parents to buy the books created book shortage which eventually led to difficulty in teaching and learning sessions. Ten of the principals stated that shortage of text books arise when students borrow books form the library and don't replace making learning to be very difficult"

During the interview with principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, they all reported that student's unrest was a real challenge for a newly appointed principals as it is a sign of resistance for the new leadership. Infact the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was quoted saying that "students unrests is a serious challenge as it shows resistance to the new management and at a time when one has been appointed for the very first time to be a principal". When students destroy school property then it interfered with teaching, and learning process and it was a sign that the culture of self responsibility was not owned by students and these were in the category of undisciplined students. During an interview with the principals they all reported

that destruction of school property resulted into inadequate teaching and learning resources, which in turn results into student's poor performance. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "destruction of school property showed indiscipline among students and lack of seriousness in academic work". High drop outs was found to be a challenge for the Newly Appointed principals as the mean rates given by all the respondents was high.

High drop out was due to failure to pay levies, teenage pregnancies and long period of absenteeism on the side of students. During interviews with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer it was noted that high drop out rate is against the governments policy of access, retention and completion and therefore the principals are to expected to give appropriate reasons for high drop outs. Actually the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that, "Principals are expected to work within the policy of access, retention and completion failure of where they are answerable and therefore high dropout in school enrolment is a challenge for new principals. High enrolment led to overstretched teaching and learning resources such as overcrowded classrooms and this was a challenge to newly appointed principals who had to get means for sorting out this. Although the Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association chairpersons viewed this as a positive move towards schools growth as shown in their mean rates, it remained a challenge to the Newly Appointed Principals. This finding is in line with Kitavi and Westhuizen, 1997, who found out that beginning principals in Kenya are faced with the challenge of students learning in overcrowded classrooms.

During interviews with principals it was noted that high enrolments reflects schools growth but at the expense of the resources available to school making it difficult to manage. Infact the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer said that "High enrolments in school is a positive move and it is the duty of newly appointed principals to improve school resources and this is a real problem facing them".

Fighting disrupted learning in school and showed students were undisciplined. A case that is a real challenge to the teachers, deputy principals and principals. However, to the Board of Governors and Parents Teachers Association Chairpersons they viewed it as a lesser challenge since they were only aware of the extreme cases of fighting which would be forwarded to them once in a while. During interviews with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer it was noted that fighting amongst students disrupts learning process in schools and is a challenge to the newly appointed principals. Five of the principals' were quoted saying that "It takes a lot of time solving cases of fighting amongst students and when suspended, students take a lot of time at home at the expense of doing studies." Theft led to a big shortage in schools as students stole school

property and fellow student's property, an issue that is very hard to stop at a given moment. During an interview with the principals it was noted that theft was a contributory factor to text book shortage in schools, infact all the principals said that "Stealing of property is much when form ones report and that text books stolen are sold in other schools" The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "theft is very difficult to bring to an end and it requires the principal to put in extra effort when handling theft issues." Parents failed to pay levies due to the high levels of poverty index in the district showing they were poor parents and this in turn affected management of the schools by the Newly Appointed principals These study findings are also in line with those of Leu and Bryen (2005), who established that new principals are faced with the challenge of parents who are reluctant to pay fees. During an interview with the principals it was noted that when parents failed to pay levies students were sent home frequently and these affected learning in schools. Fifteen principals were quoted saying that "Poor payment of levies contributed to poor performance in school which in turn is a threat to principals' management". Infact all the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "Every year all schools realize huge fees arrears, not paid by parents. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer further stated that "Running of schools depends on funds and when parents fail to pay levies, this interferes with effective learning and management" It was difficult for the newly appointed principals to implement the policies discussed in the meetings successfully since such parents were always on the opposition side. These study findings are in agreement with Kitavi and Westhuizen (1997), who found out that beginning principals in Kenya are faced with problems such as parent's illiteracy, inaccessible parents and parents ignorant of other parental duties.

During an interview with the principals it was noted that parents who did not take education as a priority were the ones who missed the meetings and it was very difficult to follow up their children academic progress and these also interfered with the implementation of school policies. Ten of the principals were quoted saying that "School policies are affected by the Parents Teachers Association meetings, and when parents fail to attend them learning at school is seriously interfered with" In fact, the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that "failure by parents to attend meetings make it very difficult for principals to manage schools since a school has three pillars for management that is the parent, the teacher and the student". During an interview with the principals they were in agreement that parents were uncooperative and especially when it came to payment of levies, ten principals were quoted saying that "Most of the indiscipline cases at school originate at home and parents always support their children and accuse the teachers when called to school to discuss such issues". The District

Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that “Lack of cooperation from parents makes the newly appointed principals to have difficulty in management.” During an interview with principals they reported that some parents threatened them with positive changes within a short time even at a time when new principals were still settling down. Negative attitude was also rated high by all the respondents. The principals and Deputy Principals rated it at 4.2 while Board of Governors Chairpersons 4.0. Negative attitude by some parents was because they were illiterate and ignorant about the importance of education. During interviews some principals pointed out that some parents, developed negative attitude when they realized that the Newly Appointed Principals were not “sons of the soil” that is coming from their community in which the school is located.

The delay in disbursement of Free Secondary Education funds was a challenge in school management as most transactions settlement time would not be met. During an interview with the principals all of them said that “Delay of Free Secondary Education funds hinders effective running of schools and it puts us in a very awkward position as managers” They all suggested that “Clear policies for disbursement be put in place and delay of disbursement be avoided at all cost”. Infact the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer said that “the delay of Free Secondary Education funds has been so frequent that it is unpredictable when funds are to be expected when in schools a situation that messes up the newly appointed principals and all principals and it is high time the government stopped delay of funds”. Fee defaulting was a result of the high poverty index in the district, an issue experienced by all the third world countries, Kenya included. This finding concur with that of Bush and Oduro (2006), who found out that new principals face serious problems created by non-payment of school fees. This finding also concur with Leu and Byren (2005), who did a study in six sub-Saharan countries namely, Ghana, Guinea, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda and Madagascar and found out that parents are reluctant to pay fees and again it is the heads who must ensure that the fees is paid. During interviews schedule with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer they all complained of huge fee arrears caused by poor fee payment and that was a great challenge to the newly appointed principals. Six of the principals said this was as a result of the poor economic backgrounds of the students and the high number of orphans in schools who lacked proper sources of finances.

Poor budgeting made it difficult for newly appointed principals to effectively run the schools as some were overspending on some vote heads and under spending on some leading them into other problems such as misappropriation and mismanagement of school funds, a mistake punishable by interdiction and demotion as per the Teachers’ Service Commission code of regulations.

This is in agreement with the findings of Irungu (2002), who established that preparation measures and support systems for headteachers in public secondary schools is basically weak and do not sufficiently prepare them for responsibilities in financial management. During interviews with principals it was noted that poor budgeting was a challenge and this was because almost all principals took up their new roles before being trained in financial management. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer stated that “Poor budgeting automatically leads to misappropriation and mismanagement of school funds, a mistake punishable by interdiction and demotion of principals by the employer (Teachers service Commission)” Principals were quoted saying that “Incompetent clerks and bursars with low professional qualifications contributed to poor budgeting which impacted negatively on school management”. Both the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer suggested that teachers be trained on financial management at pre-service level and that newly appointed principals be in serviced prior to taking up their new roles. During interviews with principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, they were in agreement that incompetence is a challenge as there was no set rule that one would be promoted into principalship only after being in-serviced in financial management. All the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer noted that Kenya Education Management Institute Courses were in place for educational managers but with very minimal consideration for newly appointed principals. In the open ended items of the questionnaires the respondents were asked to state other challenges newly appointed principals face in financial management. The following challenges were stated; misappropriation of funds; mismanagement of funds, working with competent clerks.

The respondents were further asked to suggest strategies for dealing with the challenges. The following strategies were suggested by the respondents in response to this question on strategies as measures to be put in place by stakeholders to help assist the newly appointed principals. These include; Newly Appointed Principals to be inducted on sound financial management; Newly Appointed Principals to attend in service courses on financial management before being promoted to principal ship; they should follow guidelines of Free Secondary Education funds expenditure; to prepare quarterly trial balances and restrict expenditure; perfect fee collection; Involve school Board of Governors on financial matters; delegation of financial responsibilities be effectively done to deputy principals by practicing principals; pre service training courses for teachers to focus on school financial management; guidance by the Audit Office Induction and guidance by the audit offices, through the District Education Officer’s office and Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association to act appropriately and assign a competent head to newly appointed heads and Kenya

Education Management Institute courses to focus on newly appointed principals and deputy principals. Teachers play a core role in implementation of the curriculum and therefore teacher shortage contributes to student's poor performance in exams and poor performances in exams and this is a threat to newly appointed principals who at the same time are forced to employ untrained teachers to do the work besides having very minimal finances for doing the same. This is similar to the study findings by Leu and Bryen (2005), who found out that in six Sub Saharan Countries new principals face serious problems as they are faced with teacher shortage. During an interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer they all reported that all schools are faced with teacher shortage and hence Newly Appointed Principals are greatly affected. They further said teacher shortage compromises students' performance in national examination. Infact five principals stated that, "Teacher shortage seriously affects curriculum implementation and forces the newly appointed principals to employ untrained teachers" Poor morale resulted from poor motivation of teachers in areas such as lack of accommodation and low remuneration by Teachers Service Commission and at school level by the school administration. This concurs with the findings of Kitavi and Westhuizen (1997), who found out that beginning principals in Kenya are faced with problem of working with poorly motivated teachers working in overcrowded classrooms.

During interviews with the principals it was noted that teacher morale was highly boosted with good motivation done at school level by school administration in form of practices such as monetary, accommodation, token of appreciation. Infact five principals reported that "The Teachers Service Commission need to pay teachers good salaries as the Low remuneration contributes to poor Morale." The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was quoted saying that "teachers morale are affected with lack of motivation factors in appreciation for the good work they do". Lack of adequate staff accommodation affects teachers negatively both in motivation and morale. The study findings are in agreement with Kitavi and Westhuizen (1997), who found out that beginning principals in Kenya are faced with lack of staff accommodation. During an interview of the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and the principals it came out clearly that almost all schools do have staff residential accommodation and therefore they are forced to walk long distances to their stations. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was quoted saying that "lack of staff residential accommodation reduces the teachers student contact hours of learning and also learners teachers' morale" Incompetence results from employment of untrained teachers by the newly appointed principals due to teacher shortage in school. This finding concurs with Bush and Oduro (2006), who found out that in Africa new principals

work with untrained staff. During an interview with the principals they all reported that due to teacher shortage they are forced to employ untrained staff as Board of Governor employees, however, some of them are incompetent and need guidance and supervision more often. They reported that this was a challenge as it compromises students' performance. Insubordination resulted from teacher resistance to change in school administration. During an interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, it was noted that teachers often fail to perform duties assigned to them by the newly appointed principals, assign of insubordination. Two principals were reported saying that "a lot of insubordination is realized from the deputy headteachers who also believe that they are fit for such post".

Absenteeism amongst teachers was most likely due to poor remunerations. During an interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer they all agreed that most schools do not have staff residential accommodation and that teachers have poor morale due to relatively low payment by the Teachers Service Commission the employer. They also agreed that absenteeism amongst teachers was caused by the poor morale to do their work which eventually makes them leave the job for greener pastures. In open ended sections of the questionnaires the respondents were asked to state any other challenges. The challenges stated included teacher-student relationship as another challenge. The respondents were further asked to suggest strategies in dealing with challenges faced by Newly Appointed principals. The strategies suggested included: Encourage team work amongst teachers and involve them in decision making; Newly Appointed principals to consult with other principals where necessary; induction programme for newly appointed principals on teacher management and to liaise with the Board of Governors to seek ways of recruiting more teachers in the departments that are understaffed.

During an interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer it was noted that support-staff had poor morale and are demotivated at work. Infact two of the principals were quoted saying that "they tend to have low morale so that newly appointed principals can listen to their complaints some of which are poor pay and much work." This was due to being involved in a lot of activities in the community such as funerals since they are community members. This finding concurs with that of Bush and Oduro (2006) who established that new principals are faced with the problem of absenteeism amongst support staff. During interviews with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer it was noted that absenteeism amongst support-staff affects learning and teaching and results in poor performance. During an interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer, it was noted that most schools did not have enough funds

and this made them to employ very few staff and this promoted ineffective work among support staff. It is very difficult to lead a staff with negative attitude and this affects their performance at work and the learning process. During interview with the principals and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer it was noted that they mostly resist people who are not from their own community or sons of the soil. Six of the principals were quoted saying, "staff negative attitude is a sign of resistance".

This study finding concurs with the findings of Irungu (2002), who established that headteachers work with incompetent bursars/clerks who have low professional qualifications. The respondents in the open ended questionnaires items were asked to state any other challenges faced by newly appointed principals. The challenge mentioned included was lateness.

CONCLUSION

The main challenges faced by newly appointed principals were on money matters and disciplinary cases such as theft, fighting, vandalism, absenteeism and students unrests. Newly Appointed principals faced challenges created by parents who were reluctant to pay school levies, buy text books for their children and parents who did not attend meetings and besides, made threats to principals and were not ready to cooperate. Newly Appointed Principals faced challenges in financial management such as delay of Free Secondary Education Funds, fee defaulting, budgeting and incompetence. It implies that they had been inadequately prepared for school financial management prior to taking up their new roles and therefore they lacked financial managerial skills. The newly appointed principals tried to cope with the difficulties by reading financial books and consulting District Education Officers office and auditors, it is in order that proper set strategies be put in place to guard newly appointed principals from such challenges, since with the challenges they are likely to make errors which shall call for their demotion or interdiction when actually the problem may be out of their control. Newly Appointed principals faced the following challenges in teacher management in public secondary schools; shortage of teachers; poor morale among teachers; shortage of staff residential accommodation, incompetent staff, insubordination and absenteeism among teachers. Newly appointed principals managed teachers who were of various ages, some young and some older than them. They also managed teachers some of whom had high professional qualifications than them while some had served for longer periods as teachers than them. Newly appointed principals were inadequately prepared for teacher management both at pre-service level and in-service level of training before taking up their new jobs. The newly appointed principals tried to cope with the

challenges by involving teachers in team work, and decision making and working closely with the deputy head teachers but they did not achieve much since the teacher is an important person in learning. It implies that the Newly Appointed principals faced a lot of difficulty in teacher management as they adopted trial and error methods. However, some of the challenges they faced were as a result of the employer not playing its roles effectively. Furthermore, Newly Appointed principals faced the following challenges in management of support-staff in public secondary schools; poor morale among support-staff; absenteeism; shortage of staff; staff negative attitude and incompetence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The in-service courses for newly appointed principals should focus on management issues to help them tackle effectively challenges in the management of different aspect of schools. Kenya Education Management Institute should focus on newly appointed principals and prospective principals and train them on educational administrative work.

There is need to induct newly appointed principals by the District Education Officers in order to help them get acquainted to the new stations and be aware of the advantages and challenges they are likely to tackle and the techniques of tackling them.

Kenya secondary School Heads Association should assign an experienced principal to assist the newly appointed principals as this will give room for consultation whenever there is difficulty.

The Ministry of education through its agency, Kenya Education Management Institute needs to publish a manual, specifically for the newly appointed principals to help them understand what principalship means and methods of tackling challenges in management of education.

District Education Officer's should sensitize parents on their roles in schools as this would help the newly appointed principals to interact with them with minimal challenges on parental involvement in school activities.

Professionalization of the position of principalship should be enhanced so that the newly appointed principals take up their new duties as professionals who have undergone through a clear policy of identification, selection, appointment and training by Teachers Service Commission and Ministry of Education as this would acquaint them with better methods of management and to tackle challenges in management of education.

The Teachers Service Commission should employ enough teachers so that the newly appointed principals are not faced with the challenge of teacher shortage, a factor that is very crucial for curriculum implementation.

Disbursement of Free Secondary Education funds should be done according to planned schedule in a

manner known to all principals so that newly appointed principals may be able to deal with financial issues easily.

Teacher training institutions that is, colleges and universities established for training teachers should revamp their programmes so that they train teachers on education management issues to help them overcome challenges they are likely to face when they become principals of secondary schools.

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