Impact of the Management of the School Community Relationship on Students' Academic Performance

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Abstract- Schools exist in the heart of each community and school-community links are beneficial. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of school -community relationship on students' academic performance. The study adopted a mixed methods approach and a descriptive survey design. Using purposive and simple random sampling techniques, a sample size of 44 principals, 369 class teachers and 369 class prefects was selected to participate in this study, giving a sample size of 782 respondents Data was collected by administering a likert scale questionnaire and an interview schedule. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviation. Qualitative data was analyzed by describing emerging content from the respondents in relation to the study objectives. The study established that, communication skills influence teaching and learning. From the results it is concluded that academic performance could be improved if school relationship was enhanced. The following recommendation was made: Education stake holders should actively participate in the running of schools by providing material and administrative support.

Index Terms- School, community, relationship, Academic performance

I. Introduction

A school's community refers to the various individuals, groups, businesses and institutions that are interested in the welfare and vitality of a school and form the neighbourhoods served by the school. It encompasses the school administrators, teachers and staff members who work in a school; the students who attend the school and their parents and families; and local residents and organizations that have a stake in the school's success, such as school board members, city officials, and elected representatives; businesses, organizations, and cultural institutions; and related organizations and groups such as parent-teacher associations, booster clubs, charitable foundations, and voluntary school improvement committees. The School community concept is closely related to the concept of voice and shared leadership which generally seek to broaden the involvement of more individuals and diverse view in the governance and programming in the school (http://edglossary.org/school-community/).

Sergiovanni (1994) asserts that community building is important in schools because it is the tie that binds students and teachers together in a special way to something more significant than themselves. It lifts both teachers and students to higher levels of self-understanding, commitment, and performance beyond the reaches of the shortcomings and difficulties they face in their everyday lives. "Community can help teachers and students be transformed from a collective of "I" to a collection 'we', thus providing them with a unique and enduring sense of identity, belonging, and place" (p. 15). Community building must become the heart of any school improvement effort. Whatever else is involved in improving teaching, developing sensible curriculum, creating new forms of governance, providing more authentic assessment, empowering teachers and parents, and increasing professionalism must rest on a foundation of community building.Successful community building depends in large measure on each individual school defining for its own life and creating for itself its own practice of schooling. This inside-out strategy requires a considerable amount of searching and reflection as teachers struggle with such issues as who they are, what they hope to become for the students they serve, and how they will decide, organize, teach, learn, and live together (Sergiovanni, 1994).

Schools exist in the heart of each community and school-community links are beneficial. The principal can play a leading role in fostering these links. A school is a social institution responsible for promoting social interests and it is the responsibility of communities to look after the school in terms of buildings and furniture, providing direction, in recruiting volunteers to help at school functions, in mentorship functions and a sense of stability. Parents' involvement in the education of their children is associated with student motivation. The principal and the faculty of the school should find methods and techniques to establish rapport with parents and guardians of the students. Spencer, Nolan, Ford and Rochester (1989) highlight that schools were formed by a society, within society and for society so that through its children, society will retain its identity and viability. According to Spencer et al. (1989), school enhances interaction between a society's communities and its teaching-learning institutions. Hence, effective education is a function of community and school interaction. According to Onyango (2001), the principal should possess a thorough knowledge of the community by being the centre of the community activities and seek to foster a good working relationship with the Board of Management (BoM) and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) which are important links between the school and community. The principal should also co-operate with other agencies in the community that render important services to the school.

Henderson and Berla (2004) and Ubogu (2004) argue that the most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in the school is the extent to which the student's family creates the home environment that encourages learning, expresses high

realistic expectations and is involved in their children's education at home and in the community. A three year study by Steinberg (2006) involving 12000 students in nine high schools in the US reveals that community involvement draws parents into the school physically and are most effective in improving academic achievement through attending school programs, extra curricula activities and 'back to school' nights. Steinberg(2006) concludes that when parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that school is an integral part of the whole family's life. Ubogu (2004) further indicates that parents' interaction with teachers enables them to know what their children are encountering in school and what could be done to deal with any problems that could be experienced. He also says that the students should be put on alert and study in school as they would know their parents would inquire about their performance. Parents may not be able to provide much guidance and help their children's performance to improve when they are ignorant of what happens in school.
It is therefore only through an ongoing dialogue between the school and its surrounding community culture that the school can construct its open, twofold role as both recipient and provider of education.

Gershberg and Winkler (2004) say that instructional problems can be addressed through parental and community involvement in school activities. They further observe that greater parental and community control of schools lead to higher teacher and student attendance and higher performance. Studies in Argentina, Brazil, Elsalvador, Nicaraqua, Honduras, Mexico Nigeria, Peru and a number of Indian states link reduced absenteeism to parental community or school leader involvement and supervision (Gershberg and Winkler 2004). Community based factors are therefore factors within the community that principals should maintain to enhance a learner's academic performance.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a concurrent mixed methods approach and its research design was descriptive survey. Orodho (2003) and Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) describe descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. A survey, according to Kodhari (2003), is a method of securing information concerning an existing phenomenon from all or a selected number of respondents of the concerned universe. From the sample results the researcher generalizes or makes claims about the population (Cresswell, 2003). The study was descriptive because it looked at school community relationshipthat already existed. Class teachers and class prefects of Form I-IV each responded to a questionnaire and the principals were interviewed to get their views on the role of curriculum practices on teaching and learning. However, Kodhari (2003) says the main weakness of descriptive survey is that it may give low response rates especially in mailed questionnaire
The target population was 175 principals, 1433 class teachers and 2865 class prefects of the 175 sub-county secondary schools. The sample size selected for this research from the study population was 782. Using purposive and simple random sampling, a sample

of 44 principals, 369 class prefects and 369 class teachers was chosen to participate in the study as respondents.

This study used questionnaires and interview schedules to elicit responses from the study subjects. The questionnaire titled class teachers and class prefects was used to gather data for this study. Interviews were scheduled for the principal to get qualitative data. Gay (1992) maintains that questionnaires give respondents freedom to express their views and their opinions and also make suggestions. According to Nzubuga (2000), qualitative data gives the researcher much information and helps them identify significant factors to measure.

The researcher conducted a pilot study in the neighbouring county using 2 schools to establish reliability of research instruments through the test re-test method. To validate the research instruments the researcher used the technique of content validity which showed whether the test items represented the content that the test intended to measure (Borg and Gall, 1989). Content validity ensured that the instruments covered all the areas to be examined. Two supervisors from the department of curriculum, instruction and Educational Media, and colleagues, Moi University scrutinized the instruments and made necessary adjustments so that the instruments were adequate and able to elicit adequate data. Validity was also further ascertained through the results of the pilot study.

Descriptive statistics was used to analyse data. Results from quantitative data were presented by use of percentages meanrates and standard deviations, while qualitative data were recorded, grouped in themes and findings reported. Data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v. 20) for easy interpretation.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The objective of this study was to explore the impact of maintenance of school-community relationship on teaching and learning. To achieve this objective, respondents were asked to respond to several statements concerning the maintenance of school community relationship on teaching and learning. The results are indicated in table 1.

The findings in table 1 shows that 48.3% of the class teachers rejected the statement that **most of the professional development teachers have received comes from sources outside the school system**, 4.6% of the class teachers were undecided and 47.2% of the class teachers supported the statement. The results show that majority of the teachers in the studied schools do not get professional development support from sources outside the school. These findings could be indicating that communities surrounding these schools do not actively participate in the training of teachers. This concurs with data collected from the qualitative study when majority of the principals said they had not received any support from the community to go for some training. Regarding the statement **that my school system is supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources,** 33.1% of the class teachers and 38.8% of the class prefects rejected it, 5.7% of the class teachers and 15.2% of the class prefects were undecided, while 61.2% of the class teachers and 46.1% of the class prefects supported the statement. The findings indicate that majority of the schools' administration allows and supports teachers and students

working and interacting freely with the community. All the principals interviewed in the qualitative study said that their teachers and students, and the school-community relationship is good because they actively participated in community activities such as funeral, wedding harambee and environmental cleaning and parents frequently visited the schools. Handerson and Berla (2004) argue that when parents are involved in their children's education at home they do better in school. A three year study by Steinberg (2006) involving 12,000 students in nine high schools in the US reveals that community involvement draws parents into the schools physically and are most effective in improving academic achievement through attending school programs, extra curricular activities, conferences and 'back to school' nights. Steinberg concludes that when parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the view in the child's mind that school and home are connected and that the school is an integral part of the whole family's life. Reche et al. (2012) and Ubogu (2004) say that good performance is realized when parents work in consultation with the teachers in order to understand their children better. They continue to say that parents' interaction with teachers enables them to know what could be done to deal with the problems. It would also put pupils on alert and study in school as they would know that their parents would inquire about their performance.

We have received resources to support our learning from sources outside our school. This statement was rejected by 40.6% of the class teachers and 32.8% of the class prefects. 5.1% of the class teachers and 12.5% of the class prefects were undecided. 54.3% of the class teachers and 54.7% of the class prefects accepted the statement. The findings indicate that majority of the teachers and students get teaching and learning resources from the community. Ubogu (2004) says that schools where parents are involved in school development do better in examinations as pupils are encouraged both by the teachers and the parents. Hence effective education is a function of community and school interaction.

The statement that **I am influenced by organizations outside my school** was rejected by 40.1% of the class teachers and 32.8% of the class prefects. 5.7% of the class teachers and 14.9% of the class prefects were undecided. 54.2% of the class teachers and 52.3% of the class prefects agreed with the statement. These results indicate that majority of the teachers and students in the sampled schools are influenced by activities from the community. Schools exist in the heart of each community and school-community links are beneficial. The community can assist the learning climate of a school in many ways, for example in providing direction, in recruiting volunteers to help at school functions, in mentoring functions and sense of stability(Sergiovanni, 1994). The school must therefore learn from those it wishes to teach so that the community's valued collective perspective regarding the purpose of schooling is clear. Spencer, Nolan, Ford and Rochester (1989) highlight that schools are formed by the society, within the society and for the society so that through it children in society will retain its identity and its viability. A school according to them is the interaction between society's' communities and its teaching staff.

Mean and Standard deviation scores for maintenance of school-community relationship

The results in table 2below indicate that the perception of the class teachers and class prefects on the maintenance of school-community relationship are in the Disagree and undecided range (mean between 2.11 and 3.26). The total mean and standard deviation for the class teachers and class prefects is (mean = 2.86, SD=1.403) and (mean=3.15, SD=1.359) respectively, giving an average mean rate of 3.01.The class teachers ranked the maintenance of school-community relationship as; My school system is supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources (mean=3.30,SD=1.273), we have received resources to support our teaching from sources outside our school (mean=3.14,SD=1.310), most professional development I receive comes from sources outside of my school system (mean=2.90,SD=1.265) and I am influenced by originations outside my school (mean=2.11, SD=1.762).The influence variables with the highest mean: My school system is supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources with a mean of 3.30 and we have received resources to support our teaching from sources outside our school with a mean of 3.14 have the effect of making the school an open system where by it receives inputs from the community and discharges its outputs into the community.

Table 1Analysis of the views of respondents on maintenance of school-community relationship on teaching and learning

N = 369   N = 369

Statement	Responde nt	SD		D		UD		A		SA		TOTAL		MEAN
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	RATE
Most professional development I have received comes from sources outside of my school system	C.TRS	73	19.8	105	28.5	17	4.6	138	37.4	36	9.8	369	100	2.90
My school system is supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources	C.TRS	46	12.5	76	20.6	21	5.7	175	47.4	51	13.8	369	100	3.30
	C.PRE	74	20.1	69	18.7	56	15.2	117	31.7	53	14.4	369	100	3.01
We've received resources to support our teaching and learning from sources outside our school	C.TRS	47	12.7	103	27.9	19	5.1	150	40.7	50	13.6	369	100	3.14
	C.PRE	61	16.5	60	16.3	46	12.5	126	34.1	76	20.6	369	100	3.26
I am influenced by organizations outside my school	C.TRS	64	17.3	84	22.8	21	5.7	130	35.2	70	19.0	369	100	2.11
	C.PRE	56	15.2	65	17.6	55	14.9	137	37.1	56	15.2	369	100	3.19

The response categories were: 1=strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3=Undecided, 4 = Agree and 5=strongly Agree.

Table 2 Mean and Standard deviation scores for maintenance of school-community relationship

School- community relationship	Class Teachers			Class Prefects		
	Rank	Mean	StdDev	Rank	Mean	StdDev
Most professional development I receive comes from sources outside my school system	3	2.90	1.265	-	-	-
My school system is supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources	1	3.30	1.273	3	3.01	1.377
We have received resources to support our teaching and learning from sources outside our school	2	3.14	1.310	1	3.26	1.386

Iam influenced by organizations outside my school

| | | | | 4 | 2.11 | 1.762 | 2 | 3.19 | 1.313 |

| **Total** | | **2.86** | **1.403** | | **3.15** | **1.359** | | | |

Sergiovanni (1994) says that it is only through an ongoing dialogue between the school and its surrounding community culture that the school can construct its open, two fold roles as both recipient and provider of education.

Schools scored the lowest mean on I am influenced by organizations outside my school with a mean of 2.11. Despite coming from the community as teachers and going back to the community as their home after school, teachers when at school teach using prescribed program in form of syllabus, meaning their educational activities are least affected by community activities. They do not entirely bring community life or culture into the school, but only incorporate relevant cultural elements so that after school the learner can fit into community life and be a useful member of society. Sarason (1982) argues "all educational scenes should not be sharply delineated within the walls of the school building but extent to their dynamic social surroundings" (p.18).

The class prefects ranked the maintenance of school-community relationship as; we have received resources to support our learning from sources outside our school (mean=3.26, SD=1.386), I am influenced by organizations outside of my school (mean=3.19, SD=1.313) and my school system is supportive of students working with outside sources (mean=3.01, SD=1.377). The influence variable with the highest mean was the receiving of resources to support learning in the school with a mean of 3.26 and variable with the lowest mean was the school system is supportive of students working with outside sources with a mean of 3.01. It could be concluded from this results that students receive learning resources from the community. Ubogu (2004)says that schools where parents are actively involved in school development do well in examinations as pupils are encouraged by both parents and teachers.

As regards the school system not being supportive of students working with outside sources fully, school could be being selective with the kind of aspects students should get in touch with to avoid incidences of students being influenced to be involved in bad behaviors such as drug abuse, theft, sexual abuse and destruction of school property.

According to the principals interviewed in the qualitative study, maintenance of school-community relationship has the impact as discussed below:

Question 18:   What professional development have you received from the community?

Majority of the principals interviewed said that they had not received any professional development from the community. It is only a few of the principals who had been sponsored by the Catholic Church to go to Strathmore College for the Art of leadership training. All schools in the sample support teachers and students working with the outside sources through attending community funeral, harambee, wedding, keeping the environment clean, attending church services, community using school furniture, halls, water, buses, education days and annual general meetings. All the principals also said that they receive resources from the community such as food, building materials, labour and firewood. And generally according to the interviewed principals, school community relationships are good. It is a few of the principals who said that their relationship with the

community is not good because local leaders have been fighting for their transfer because they are natives of the area.

The results therefore indicated generally that school-community relationship is cordial and supports teaching and learning. All the sample schools exist as an open system as they interact freely and receive resources from the community. Steinberg (2006) says that community involvement in the running of schools draw parents into the school physically and is most effective in improving academic achievement.

The fifth objective was to explore the impact of schools' maintenance of good school-community relationship on teaching and learning. Based on this, the findings were that the perception of the class teachers and class prefects on the schools'maintenance of school-community relationship on teaching and learning had a mean of 2.86 and 3.15 respectively giving an average of 3.01, meaning that the sample of class teachers and class prefects perceived the schools'maintenance of school-community relationship to be average. According to the class teachers and class prefects, the strategies schools were using most to maintain school-community relationship were: schoolspromoted school-community relationship through creating a system that was supportive of teachers and students working with outside sources and receiving resources to supporting teaching and learning from the community and teachers and students interacting freely with the community.

As regards maintenance of school-community relationship, the mean perception was average; the correlation coefficient for class teachers was insignificant and significant for class prefects. The Chi-square results showed significant relationship between school-community relationship and teaching and learning. However the average perception and the low r values is indicating that most schools have not established school-community relationship thus affecting performance of schools in KCSE.

IV.   RECOMENDATION

1.   The local community to enhance teaching and learning by improving on their attendance of school functions, serving on school committees and providing teaching and learning resources.

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