

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Corruption Prevention Strategies used by Principals: A Comparative Study of Public Secondary Schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya

*Ngatia Richard, Njoka Johannes & Ndegwa Lucy

School of Education and Social Sciences, Karatina University, Kenya

Corresponding Authors Email Address: richkangi@yahoo.com

Abstract

Many nations around the world assign sizable amount of their budgetary allocation to the education sector, which is sadly plagued by significant avenues for corrupt practices. Corruption in the education sector present difficulties, with considerable negative effects on achievement of a school's education objectives and development goals of the country. The purpose of this study was to assess the viability of corruption prevention strategies utilized by principals in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya. The target population comprised of 420 principals. The sample size was computed using Cochran sampling formula which yielded a sample of 321 respondents. Data was gathered through surveys and was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. It was hypothesized that there was no statistically significant difference between the principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in Kenya. Hypothesis testing revealed that the principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties were generally the same, and subsequently the null hypothesis (Ho) was accepted. Accordingly, the study inferred that corruption prevention techniques embraced by the principals in public secondary schools in the two counties were the same. The study prescribes the need to upgrade corruption prevention procedures by equipping secondary school principals with abilities and skills to address the problem. This calls for continuous professional training, workshops and courses on prevention of corruption.

Keywords: Corruption, corruption prevention strategies, principals, secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Corruption and other types of unethical conduct are a tragic reality in educational institutions around the world (UNESCO, 2014). Degenerate practices can be recorded in practically every sector of schools from enrolment, procurement, disposal of public assets, utilization of resources, management of funds, transfer and deployment of teachers (McDonnell, 2011). Corruption manifests itself in a wide range of ways, for instance, theft, bias in dealing with guardians and subtler practices, such, phantom teachers, non-attendance of classes and sexual abuse of learners (UNICEF, 2012). At the strategy level, corruption may influence the acquisition of instructional resources, physical facilities and decrease both the level and adequacy of public spending for training of teachers, thus subverting academic outcomes (Azfar & Gurguret, 2005). At the school board and policy levels, financing choices can be made for political and individual reasons instead of informed educational needs or target models. Policy makers can for instance assign assets to specific schools for political reasons, particularly during political decision times. At the school level, assets and supplies can be redirected before arriving at the schools. A review information from a Public Expenditure Tracking Survey (PETS) directed in Uganda uncovered that primary

schools got on average a paltry 13 % of the awards allocated from 1995 to 1999 (Reinikka & Svensson 2004). Some teachers are engaged in part time jobs to get more than one pay, which inevitably compromises the quality of services they deliver to the learners. The payrolls are sometimes expanded with names of phony workers or representatives who draw remuneration from the school kitty without providing any services at all (Azfar & Gurguret, 2005). Instructional related procurement is profoundly vulnerable to dangers of fraud, lack of transparency and operators' self-interest. Reinikka and Svensson (2004) specifically point out that, lack of adherence to procurement procedures in schools can result in purchase of low-quality materials and hardware, and poor maintenance of the schools' physical facilities. Arguing in the same vein, McDonnell (2011) states that poor recruitment and appraisal processes can likewise be corrupt, by overlooking meritocracy, qualifications, experience and competence and instead recruiting unqualified individuals or promoting undeserving persons to positions of responsibility because of underhand considerations rather than merit. Green (2015) continues this argument and notes that at the school level, guardians and parents can be forced to pay unlawful charges for provision of services that should be free and examinations can be sold ahead of time or ahead of assessment. There are additionally more tranquil types of corruption, for example, teacher absenteeism and additional levies for private tuition within the school for what is essentially programmed in the school curriculum. In many developing countries, parents are forced to pay additional levies for motivational services to teachers, which push up the cost of schooling and adds to make free essential schooling restrictively costly for poor families (UNDP, 2011). These dangers can be aggravated in delicate or vulnerable rural and urban settings which are regularly described by weak economic bases.

The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2009), postulates that where schools receive direct financial support through donor funding, the weak systems of accountability can open doors for corruption in the midst of frail establishments. Branelly and Ndaruhustse (2008) add that in poor countries, a large proportion of education funds are allotted to recurrent expenses, basically teachers' pay, notwithstanding acquisition of learning materials, teacher professional development and maintenance of school's physical development. These findings concur with newer studies, for example, Rothstein and Holberg (2011) who established that instructional planning and management of physical facilities in schools are hampered by absence of orderly and judicious information, record keeping and dependable data, making it difficult to check even fundamental information on utilization of funds in schools. Ineffectively working finance frameworks and deficient compensations open doors to corruption, with far and wide acts of phantom workers or more noteworthy opportunities for illegal practices such as extra tuition to enhance poor pay rates (Green, 2015).

In Kenya, corruption is one of the social issues which permeate all sectors of the economy including education. Transparency International (2010) claimed that corruption in government funded schools is compounded when such schools consistently failed to accurately account for utilization of funds, particularly in public secondary schools. With increasing attention to the unfavourable impacts of corruption on education, the procedure to counter it is presently a major concern in educational management around the globe (De Sousa, 2010). Mobegi, Odigi and Simatwa (2012) express that a portion of the monetary maladministration by principals in schools in Kenya occur because of the weak auditing practices that add to money related misappropriation and weak internal control systems, including non-receipting of school expenses and missing cash registers.

Chweya, Tuta and Akivaga, (2005) investigated government strategies to decrease corruption by actualizing an integrity structure with legitimate corruption control strategies. This structure required the usage of approaches one of which was the utilization of other central participants in the battle against corruption (Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, KACC, 2007). These measures fundamentally evaluated the operations of KACC other than making recommendations on the measures to be taken to curb corruption. According to the National Development Plan (2011) the school principal as a monetary director and the accounting officer in charge of bookkeeping in a government funded school is relied upon to show the aptitudes, information, skill and ability of budgetary administration, detect anomalies, illicit practices and take care of school assets. It is therefore acknowledged that corruption in public secondary schools has not been satisfactorily examined hence this study. The study endeavored to fill this gap on the management practices utilized by secondary school principals in counteraction of corruption in public schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Education stakeholders have persistently communicated profound concerns relating to misappropriation of funds allocated to the education sector and consequent effects which are primarily weakening learning in Kenya. Corrupt practices at the school level happen in different ways and forms, including, in instructional processes, utilization of money and material resources and procurement procedures. Instances of corruption in public secondary schools in Kenya are yet to be intensively researched on. This study examined the adequacy of corruption strategies and viability of corruption avoidance methods utilized by principals in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya.

Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant difference between principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in Kenya.

METHODOLOGY

The study embraced an expounding review research plan that was informed by Zimbardo (2007) Lucifer Effect Theory. The population in the study comprised of 420 principals in public secondary schools in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties. The size of the study sample was determined using Cochran (1977) formula which gave 321 respondents. Questionnaires were used to gather information. The validity of the study instrument was set up by strict adherence to the indicators of the research variables and the use of expert opinion. Internal consistency of the tools was computed using Cronbach alpha coefficient procedure which yielded a coefficient of 0.791. The information gathered was analyzed with the aid of the computer programme, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version, 20). Analysis incorporated descriptive statistics measurements such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations while inferential statistics utilized the t-test. Findings were presented in Tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Effectiveness of Corruption Prevention Strategies Utilized by Principals

The objective of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of corruption prevention strategies used by principals in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru

Counties in Kenya. Effectiveness of corruption avoidance strategies was assessed by using 10 items in a five- point likert scale that ranged from Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Undecided, Disagree (4) and Strongly Disagree (5). The responses obtained were collapsed as follows, strongly agree and agree into: "agree" and strongly disagree and disagree into "disagree" and used to compute a mean score and a standard deviation for every item and a global mean score for the effectiveness of corruption prevention strategies. A mean score below 3.0 was interpreted to show that the strategies were effective, 3.0 – 3.99 demonstrated moderate effectiveness and scores of 4.0 or more were considered to demonstrate that the strategies were not viable (Welch, 2011). The researcher ensured that all the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study. In addition, participation was voluntary, confidentiality was assured and information was not divulged to third parties. The findings of the responses are given in Table 1.

Table 1: Effectiveness of Corruption Prevention Strategies used by Principals

Corruption Prevention Strategies	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	n	$\bar{x}$	s
1. Existence of audit and financial committee of BoM	181(66%)	17(6%)	78(28%)	276	2.73	1.30
2. Class registers to record students enrolment in a class	267(97%)	3(1%)	6(2%)	276	1.78	.62
3. Teacher attendance registers in all classes	262(97%)	6(2%)	3(1%)	271	1.73	.55
4. Rescheduling timetable to mitigate time lost during teacher absenteeism in approved activities	254(93%)	12(4%)	8(3%)	274	1.79	.74
5. Strict and timetabled supervision of exams for students	262(95%)	6(2%)	8(3%)	276	1.83	.60
6. Adherence to procurement procedures as per the government regulations	252(92%)	6(2%)	16(6%)	274	1.85	.75
7. Payment of goods accompanied by delivery notes, invoices and receipts and countersigned by store keeper	259(94%)	14(5%)	3(1%)	276	1.74	.60
8. Existence of store ledger in all school stores	259(95%)	11(4%)	3(1%)	273	1.77	.57
9. Adherence to all laid down procedures in recruitment of 30% gender rule	249(90%)	14(5%)	13(5%)	276	1.94	.74
10. Existence of quality inspection committee of goods procured by the school	240(88%)	10(4%)	22(8%)	272	2.04	.90
Mean ($\bar{x}$)=1.92 Standard Deviation (s) =.54						

Table 1 indicated that a mean for each of the variables understudy was $\bar{x} < 3$ while the overall mean had a computed mean score of $\bar{x} = 1.92$ and standard deviation of $s = .54$ were posted. To this end, all the strategies that were put in place by school principals were effective. Specifically, as summarised in Table 1, existence of audit and financial committee of BoM, students class registers, teacher class attendance registers, rescheduling timetable to mitigate time lost during teacher absenteeism, timetabled supervision of students' exams, adherence to procurement procedures, payment of goods accompanied by delivery notes, invoices and receipts and countersigned by store keeper, store ledger in all school stores, quality inspection committee of goods procured and adherence to all laid down procedures in recruitment of 30% gender rule were effective in prevention of corruption in secondary schools. Attempts to get solutions to the menace of corruption in schools largely follow the same procedures as

the fight against corruption in other sectors of the economy (De Sousa, 2010). This involves incorporating systemic measures that anchor accountability in the civil service based on accessibility to information and promotion of transparency and stakeholder participation. It also includes clear penalties for fraud, bribery, fraudulent procurement, appraisal, recruitment, promotions and political interference. The findings of this study concur with Shaw (2007) who opined that effective strategies to fight corruption must incorporate education programme to help change attitudes, develop skills and expand vision for good governance. They are central in promotion of actions to realize greater transparency and accountability in schools, and attainment of outcomes in line with institutional goals.

In addition, the findings are consistent with Ajaegbo (2010) who pointed out the importance of work experience in a principal's managerial skills. Noting that in educational organizations, the responsibility of managing schools for realization of educational objectives rests on the school principal. In order to achieve optimum results, the leaders should be skilled in management. At the secondary level, the principal has the duty to ensure that goals of educational policies and programmes are realized. Azubike (2009) posited that principals are the wheels of execution of government educational policies at the school level. Principals are therefore accountable for all organizational practices in their schools; they are mandated with the responsibility of managing resources in a way that ensures that educational goals are achieved. They relate with the various education authorities to ensure that the desired educational goals are realized. Further, principals perform administrative tasks such as planning, coordinating, communicating and motivating. Specifically, their functions/roles include establishing a healthy school climate and culture; curriculum instructor development and improvement; provision and maintenance of school physical facilities; and instructional and non-instructional supervision.

Fagbamiye (2014) stated that the principal is an important player in organizing and implementing of plans, policy documents and programmes that are designed towards achievement of specified educational objectives. In this regard administrative responsibilities comprise of directing teachers and learners in an atmosphere supportive to maximum benefit of the students. The principal as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is anticipated to put effort towards attainment of set goals using his/her professional training and experience.

According to Karmadonov (2011) the implementation of durable anti-corruption measures in schools and the nation calls for curriculum adjustment with a view to integrate subject matter, methodology, clear bench marks of anti-corruption policy and establishment of practices that make anti-corruption activities an integral part of education.

Effectiveness of Principal Corruption Prevention Strategies by County

The study further investigated corruption prevention strategies among principals in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru Counties in Kenya. The distribution of responses is summarized in Table 2.

Table 1: Effectiveness of Principals' Corruption Prevention Strategies by County

County	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Nakuru	1.9282	177	.53220
Nyandarua	1.9122	99	.55220
Total	1.9225	276	.53851

Table 2 shows the mean scores and standard deviations of the effectiveness of principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties. The results revealed that the mean score for Nyandarua County was ($\bar{x}=1.9122$, $s=.55220$) while the mean score for Nakuru County was ($\bar{x}=1.9282$, $s=.53220$). The overall computed mean score for both counties combined was ($\bar{x}=1.9225$, $s=.53851$). These findings revealed that the principals' strategies in corruption prevention were effective in both counties. This is consistent with UNESCO (2009) report which indicated that the principal is an important determinant of the quality of education management and inequalities. Additionally, the principal had gained worldwide recognition as a predisposing variable in permeation of maladaptive practices in schools.

Thus, in this study the principal was found to be an important constituent in the management strategies used in prevention of corruption. Sweeney, Despota and Lindner (2013) observed that corruption in educational institutions takes place in all countries in the world; the difference is that although in some nations, corruption is abhorred and occurs as isolated incidents; in other countries it is prevalent and widely tolerated as an unavoidable ill in the system. Denisova, Schmidt, Huber and Prytula (2016) add that corruption in schools can take diverse facets; it may be monetary or non-monetary and therefore dissimilar players are likely to perceive corruption activities differently. They further argue that corruption in education institutions seems to be particularly destructive, because it destabilizes public confidence on an essential social institution. These findings affirm the research findings of an earlier study by Early (2013) who states that the role of work experience cannot be underrated in effectiveness of principals' management strategies.

The study further sought to find out whether there were statistically significant differences between principals' corruption prevention strategies in public secondary schools in Nyandarua and Nakuru counties in Kenya. It was hypothesized that there were no significant differences between the principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties in Kenya. The study used an independent-samples t-test to establish whether there were differences. The findings are shown on Table 3.

Results of t-test Analysis on Principals' Corruption Prevention Strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
principals management strategies	Equal variances assumed	.072	.789	.237	274	.813	.01604	.06770	-.11724	.14932
	Equal variances not assumed			.234	198.717	.815	.01604	.06841	-.11888	.15096

Table 3 indicates that the computed t-value (.813) is greater than .05. This indicates that the differences in the mean scores of the principals' corruption prevention strategies in Nakuru and Nyandarua Counties were not significant. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted and the study concluded that corruption prevention strategies adopted by the principals in public secondary schools in the two Counties were largely the same. These, are in agreement with earlier studies by Pearls (2014) that observed that though emphasis was placed on schools in fighting corruption, the manifest of

corruption activities was not contextual in nature. The study went on to suggest that the contextual variables were largely the same in different schools because educational supervision was centralized and schools operated within the same policies. These include; educational structures, management practices and judgment, deterrence instruments and sanctions. These findings are also in agreement with Alhourani (2013) whose study argued that principals do not influence on management efficiency, thus asserting that competence of leadership was independent of contextual variables and leadership was equally effective regardless of location. Kellerman (2015) supports this view and asserts that school leadership has become a complex function that call for adequate training and experience in order to successfully perform it. The principal's roles are not situational dependent but are guided by broad policies that cut across regions to encompass the whole nation. As a consequence, the daily schedule of a principal is usually loaded with managerial and administrative tasks, such as, human resource management, public relations, handling parents, community interests, dealing with learners and teacher concerns and emerging situations (Bottery, 2016).

CONCLUSION

From findings and discussion, in the study it can be concluded that the principals' strategies in corruption prevention were effective in both counties, with Nakuru County posting slightly better strategies. However, the computed t-values for the two counties revealed that the observed differences were not statistically significant. Thus, the study concluded that corruption prevention strategies adopted by the principals in schools in the two counties were largely the same

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends the need to enhance corruption prevention strategies by equipping secondary school principals with skills and competencies to address the menace. This calls for frequent workshops, seminars and training on anti-corruption.

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