IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)
Volume 27, Issue 11, Series 4 (November, 2022) 38-45
e-ISSN: 2279-0837, p-ISSN: 2279-0845.
www.iosrjournals.org

Influence of Board of Management Technical and Human Relation Competencies on Completion of Infrastructural Projects in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya

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Abstract
Education is a fundamental human right in all countries that works to raise both men and women out of abject poverty, levels of inequalities and ensure sustainable development.The study was designed to establish the correlation between BoM competencies and the completion of projects in schools.The Board of Management competencies consisted of technical and human relation competencies. BoMs' technical competence was assessed in terms of their education. The project completion was measured in terms of the following aspects:accuracy of original estimates and the progress made. The study was anchored in Agency theory. The study employed mixed methods approach. The population consisted of the management of 25 public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County that benefit from maintenance and improvement. It picked 25 Principals and 25 Deputy Principals; and the 25 chairpersons of the BoM and of the 25 Parents Association (P.A.) to a total of 100 leaders to whom the operations of schools are entrusted, including ensuring that the development projects are completed. The sample was census. Data was collected using questionnaires.To ensure the face validity of the research instruments.Thestudy was conducted using descriptivedesignand Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson r) to examine the correlation between identified variables. The results of the Pearson Correlation showed that most of the BoMs' technical competencies ($r(100) = .817$, $p < .05$) are correlated with the project completion variable. Overall, there is a significant positive correlation ($r(100) = .606$, $p < .05$)betweenBoM'shuman relations competenciesandthe completion of projects.Thecorrelationcanbeinterpretedas a moderaterelationship.Thesignificantcorrelation between BoMs' competencies and project completion implies that BoM should maintain and even increase their competencies if they want projects to be completed in schools. Based on the reasonable output of this study, the researcher proposed a training program to enhancethe competenciesofBoMsofPublic SecondarySchools in Nandi County, Kenya.

Keywords: Board of management,technical competencies,human relation competencies,project completion

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Date of Submission: 02-11-2022 Date of Acceptance: 14-11-2022

I. Background to the study

Education in all countries has been important for personal andsocial development.Education is a fundamental human right that raises people from poverty and inequalities and ensures sustainable development (UNESCO, 2022). The board of management refers to the collective name given to the persons who oversee the operations of educational institutions on behalf of the education cabinet secretary (Basic Education Act 2013); effective management is a competent integral factor for running successful organizations.The Board of Management (BOM) is the central policy-making organ for each educational organization in the U.S. (King'oina, Ngaruiya, & Mobegi, 2017). In Great Britain, however, the school Board of Management is founded from the 8th to the 12th grade to effectively assist the principal in managing the institution (Marayare et al.,2019).In South Africa, the school board of management members is selected from distinguished societal members who have excelled in their areas and are considered role models and mentors in their areas of specialization ((King'oina, Ngaruiya, & Mobegi, 2017).

In Zimbabwe, the ministry of education has laid down rules and regulations regarding the duties of the board of management in schools. The minimal level of education for qualification as a BoM is a secondary school certificate (Aduda, 2001). Kamba (2010) states that the participation of the BOMs in management is extensively recognized in both developing and developed countries. Better performance in various schools results from the parents effectively being involved in school programmes and projects.

In Kenya, the Board of Management (BOM) refers to members of the public who oversee the operations of a school (Basic Education Act, 2013). Each country and government has policies on the appointment of the members of the public to join the school boards (Morel, 2018). The administration and management of secondary schools are in the hands of the BoM.The primary role of the BOM in Kenyan schools is to promote quality education, develop institutional policies, provide adequate infrastructure and monitor curriculum development.Mbii et al. (2020) reveal that after independence in Kenya, the Education Act of 1966 created the Boards of Governors (BOGs). The BOGs were tasked to oversee public secondary schools on behalf of the minister for education as a direct link between the moe and public secondary schools in Kenya. They were responsible for overseeing the school management. In 2012 the Sessional Paper No. 14 of 2012 recommended that the government form the Boards of Management (BOMs) in place of the Board of Governors (BOGs) due to new functions and enlarged participation in school management.

In Kenya, education projects such as laboratory construction, the Kenya school Equipment Scheme, classroom construction, informationcommunication technology, dining halls construction, and water supply, among other projects, have either been executed amid difficulties or, worse, never went beyond the paperwork step. The failure of the projects to be completed shortly before or after implementation speaks volumes about project profligacy that though widely talked of, has yet to be documented. Success in project completion, thus, will depend mainly on good management and organization and close alignment between projects' particular requirements and facilities provided at the local level. Many projects fail due to mismanagement and lack of proper coordination amongst various stakeholders, specifically at the secondary school levelMwikaria, Gori, & Chepkonga, (2019).

In Nandi North Sub-County, schools have been undertaking development projects funded by maintenance and improvement, ranging from the construction of dormitories, the construction of ablution blocks, and the building of modern classrooms and libraries, among others. In addition, the project completion rate in some schools has been challenged, and some have dragged themselves into a single project. In contrast, other schools have completed multiple projects in a given period. The relationship between the project and its completion in Nandi North Sub County can vary from very supportive to antagonistic, but this is based on the influences that have been considered and managed (Gwaya, Masu, & Wanyona, 2014).

II. Statement of the Problem

One of the primary roles of the Maintenance and Improvement (MI) fund is to help provide additional facilities in secondary schools in Kenya. It creates the right learning atmosphere for the learners and other stakeholders. In schools, these funds are meant to facilitate the construction of various infrastructures, including classrooms, laboratories, and libraries. Most of the secondary schools' development projects funded by Maintenance and Improvement take a long time and, therefore, do not help the school achieve its objectives. Moreover, there has been much criticism from various quarters on how secondary school development projects are managed and implemented. According to Transparency International (2014), doubts have been raised about whether the funds set for development projects in secondary schools have met their stated objectives. For instance, there needs to be more transparency in the allocation of funds for development projects; it needs to be made clear how decisions are arrived at on what development projects to be implemented, and organization politics characterize the formation of project committees that are the center of decision-making. The questions being asked here are: Why do the secondary school development projects, like buying and other developmental projects, take years to complete? What is the relevancy of these initiated projects in the school to the students if the project will not be completed? The preceding has resulted in inevitable cost overruns, time over-run, idling resources, and inconveniences to the targeted beneficiaries of such projects (Kikwasi, 2012). This is so because incomplete and unsuccessful construction projects, such as classrooms, dining halls, libraries, laboratories, hostels, etcetera, cannot be used by students and teachers.

Projects which have stalled or are unsuccessfully completed will negatively affect the school community at the secondary school concerned and beyond; thus, the purpose for which the maintenance and improvement were created will be compromised. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the factors in order to examine the influence of BoM Competencies on the completion of physical infrastructure in secondary schools, theresearcher focussed on the following objectives:

1. To establish the influence of the BoM technical competencies on the completion of infrastructural projects in secondary schools.
2. To find out the influence of BoM human relations competencies on the completion of infrastructural projects in secondary schools

The following hypotheses guided the study:

Ho1:There is no relationship between BoM technical competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects in secondary schools

Ho2:There is no relationship between BoM human relations competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects in secondary schools.

III. Review of related literature

According to Okumbe (2001), the overall management of the secondary school is vested in the BOM. It is imperative that the members of these boards not only be persons with good education but also people with sufficient practical knowledge in educational management. The BOM members arecharged with the responsibility of policy making and policy implementation, discipline, upholding high academic standards for the schools, promoting the public image of the schools, recruiting members of the teaching staff and non-teaching staff, controlling financial management and initiation of development projects for the schools (Asiago, 2010).

3.1 Completion of infrastructural projects

Successful completion of public secondary school projects is undoubtedly a significant prerequisite for realizing our country's educational objectives and millennium development goals (MDGs). A school undertakes several projects such as bus buying and construction projects, for instance, class, library, laboratory, dining hall, social hall, administration block, furniture, water facility, ICT, and electricity infrastructure. These projects are aimed at helping to provide a conducive opportunity for the achievement of educational goals. Mulwa (2004) insists on the participation of stakeholders in the development of projects right from the conception stage through the implementation stage up to the evaluation stage. He claims that though there is no 'expert' or 'correct' way of developing a project, He agrees that the involvement and participation of project stakeholders is a critical element in the implementation and successful completion of projects.

Different school stakeholders, such as school management, parents, sponsors, and government officials, may lead to either desirable or undesirable outcomes for the dependent variable. Successfully completing secondary school infrastructural projects depends on the stakeholders' effectiveness or ineffectiveness of participation. Effective participation of BoM may result in desirable outcomes, that is, successful completion of infrastructural projects within the given timelines, of the right quality, transparent management, good relationship with partners, and consequent achievement of school goals. Ineffective involvement and lack of participation by BoM may result in an undesirable outcome: incomplete infrastructural projects, misappropriation of public funds, failure to meet educational goals, and untimely delivery of essential projects.

In Ghana, Frimpong al. (2003) identified five significant causes of project delays. These include monthly payment difficulties to contractors, poor contract management, material procurement difficulties, poor technical performance, and material price escalations. Poor professional management, fluctuating prices, the rising cost of materials, and poor site management have also been identified as factors causing a delay in project completion. To forestall the challenge of timely project delivery, Meredith and Mantel (2011) recommend that project time management is an essential priority for the contractors and that the appointment of a registered project manager for each contract should be a mandatory condition of tender. Nakitare, (2016) study shows that a significant delay occurs during the project implementation phase. Hence (Gaturu, & Muturi, 2014) study shows that factors such as monthly payment difficulties, poor contractor management, material procurement, poor technical performances, and escalation of material prices contributed during the construction of groundwater projects in developing countries.

3.2 BoM technical competence and completion of infrastructural projects

The term competence is one of those that, in recent decades, have become very popular. Interest in board members' competencies is derived from the widespread belief that they are the organization's most valuable asset. According to Šiugždinienơ (2006), the competency approaches were expected to help to identify the skills, knowledge, behaviors, and capabilities needed to meet current and future management selection needs and to help eliminate the gap between the competencies required by a project, job role, or enterprise strategy and those available.BoM technical competence includes the experience level of the board member, the amount of technical education completed by the board member, the level of technology employed in the project, the project phase, and the project team's caliber. Studies reveal that board members with more technical education perceived technical competence to be more critical.The BoM needs to be competent:Professional competence, ability to apply office policies consistently, ability to analyzeand apply lessons learned from other organizations, having financial management including the ability to demonstrate an understanding of the roles of the office, division of administration, and the legislature in the budget process. BoM should have the ability to make sound decisions on the procurement of equipment, supplies, or services and an understanding of state and office procurement regulations as well as long-range thinking: the ability to recommend effective strategies and the ability to consider all factors when making decisions (e.g., legal aspects, political and organizational reality, media, special interests).

Earlier studies by Jeselskis and Ashely (1991) designed a predictive model to rate project managers' level of education and experience to understand project management success. Their model showed that success is dependent on many characteristics relating to the project manager" capability, experience, and authority. These characteristics directly relate to the project manager's education level and training. The size of the previously managed project also affects the manager "s performance. The level of education and training is, therefore, essential factors that may affect the quality of pre-project planning, contributing significantly to its success.

3.3 BoM human relations competencies and completion of infrastructural projects

Progress in the projectification of public schools creates an increasing need for developing competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes) for public schoolboard managers. Human relations competence is about getting along with others, resolving workplace conflicts, managing relationships, communicating well, and making good decisions.Human relations competence is inseparable from communication. Good communication happens when there isgood feedback, instruction, and transparency. Mutual respect and customerloyalty will grow a good relationships among human beings. (Onong Uchjana Effendy,2007).David Wirick (2009) highlights that board members in public secondary schools faceteam management challenges such as the inability to link performance and reward, compensation systems biased towards longevity, and the inability to select project team members based on their expertise. In addition, public sector project managers work in an environment that very often is not familiar with results-oriented project management and are constantly dealing with political interference in the management of projects and the challenges of working with political appointees. The BoM members should have the following human relations competencies creativity,being result-oriented, and Efficiency. Further, the BoM should have the ability to make negotiations and be able to manage conflicts & crises.According to Yuningsih (2011),Human relation competence helps prevent misunderstandings, develop cooperation, establish teamworkeffectively, and mobilize individuals in a group towards achieving institutional goals.

3.4 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on the Agency theory proposed by Eisenhardt (1989), which states that when executing the tasks within the principal-agent relationship, the agent must choose actions that have consequences for both the principal and the agent. Therefore, this theory underpins the value of top school management, which in this case are the BoM's competencies in maintenance and improvementproject completion**.**From the theory, the implication and scope of application can best explain the role of board managers (the agents) in promoting the sustainability of maintenance and improvement projects to stakeholders (principals) through their engagement roles in project identification, planning, implementation, and monitoring and control. The study developed the conceptual framework based on the agency theory. The theory can be applied in maintenance and improvementprojects to show how the interest of the maintenance and improvement committee may align with that of BOM depending on the consultations and commitments made so that project identification, implementation, and monitoring follow the strategic plan and subsequent completion of the projects in secondary schools.

IV. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design which is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group (Orodho, 2008). This method was suitable since it allowed flexible data collection, and the respondents were not manipulated. Descriptive research design is used when the problem is known and well-designed, as was evident in this study. A descriptive survey research design also allows the use of questionnaires.

4.2 Target Population

The study targeted the management in the 25 public secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County that benefit from maintenance. The researcher targeted the Principal and Deputy Principal, the chairpersons of the Board of Management and of the ParentsAssociation (P.A.) to a total of 100 leaders to whom the operations of schools are entrusted, including ensuring that the development projects are completed.

4.3 Sample Design and Sample Size

According to Orodho (2008), sampling is selecting some elements in a population from which the same conclusions can be drawn about the entire population. He also says that, as in our case, where the targeted population is small and manageable, and all the respondents arecovered, a census design is acceptable. Accordingly, this study adopts a census sample design that allows taking the entire 100 respondents as the sample.

4.4 Research Instruments and Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through a questionnaire with closed-ended questions. The questions were simple and logical, giving straightforward directions to the respondents to make answering the questions easy. The researcher personally collected the data. It helped administer the questionnaires to the sampled population since it ensured that respondents were reached without external influences.

4.5 Reliability

Reliability explains that the result will be the same even if another researcher researches on a different occasion. Furthermore, it should not be subject to bias or observer bias and should not have any subject error (Kothari, 2008). Test-retest was used to measure reliability where questionnaires were given to respondents to school administrators in Chesumei Sub County in Nandi County, and after three weeks, this was repeated. The data were subjected to a correlation coefficient to ascertain the reliability coefficient. According to Kothari (2010), a correlation coefficient reliability of 0.7 is desirable for newly developed questionnaires.

4.6 Validity

The validity of a research instrument refers to the extent to which a test or instrument measures what it was intended or supposed to measure (Mbwesa, (2006), Ranjit and Kumar (2005). further, define validity as the quality of measurement procedure that provides respectability and accuracy. The questionnaires administered were discussed and agreed to with colleagues in the department.

4.7 Data Analysis Techniques

The data analysis process included sorting, editing, coding, variable generation, data entry, cleaning, processing, and interpreting results. The researcher used the SPSS tool to analyze data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean, median, and mode were used. Quantitative data has been presented using tables, while qualitative data is presented in narrative form.

V. Presentation of data analysis and interpretation for each hypothesis

One hundred (100) questionnaires were administered to the respondents, and 100 (100%) were collected and used for the analysis. Headings in this section are based on the research hypotheses. Descriptive analysis (means and standard deviations) of the study variables, as shown in Table 1, was used during computation for the establishment of relationships using Pearson r with the help of SPSS.

Table1

StudyVariables'Meansand Standard Deviations

Variable	Mean(M)	StandardDeviation(S.D.)
BoM technical competence.	1.64	.38
BoM human relations competence	1.68	.35
Completion of infrastructural projectsofsecondaryschools.	1.63	.33

5.1 BoM Technical competence and completion of infrastructural projects

Hypothesis 1.

Ho1:There is no relationship between BoM technical competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects in secondary schools.

Table2

Pearson's CorrelationAnalysis of the BoM Technical competence and Completion of Infrastructural projects of Secondary Schools.

Variable Competences		BoM Technical	Completion of Infrastructural Projects
BoM Technical Competences	Pearsoncorrelation	1	.817*
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
	Pearsoncorrelation	.817*1	
Completion of Infrastructural	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	

Projects		
	N	100100

The first hypothesis, "There is no relationship between BoM technical competenciesand completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools inNandi North Sub County," was tested using a Pearsonproduct-moment correlation analysis. To determine the relationship between BoM technical competencies (M=1.64, SD= .38) and completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County (M=1.63, SD= .33) as indicated in Table 1.With 100 degrees of freedom (*df*), at an alphalevel of 0.05. The analysis produced an *r* of .817 (see Table 2).The resultsin Table 2 indicate a positive correlation between BoM technical competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County. The two variables werestronglycorrelated($r(100)= .817, p<.05$).

5.2 BoM human relation competence and completion of infrastructural projects

Hypothesis 2.

Ho2:There is no relationship between BoM human relations competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects in public secondary schools.

Table3

Pearson's CorrelationAnalysis of the BoM human relation competence and completion of Infrastructural projects of secondary schools.

Variable Competences		BoM Human Relation	Completion of Infrastructural Projects
BoM Human Relations Competences	Pearsoncorrelation	1	.606*
	Sig.(2-tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Completion of Infrastructural Projects	Pearsoncorrelation	.606*1	
	Sig.(2-tailed)	.000	
	N	100100	

The second hypothesis, "There is no relationship between BoM human relations competencies and completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County," was tested using a Pearsonproduct-moment correlation analysis. To determine the relationship between BoM human relations competencies (M=1.68, SD= .35) and completion of infrastructural projectsof secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County (M=1.68, SD= .35) as indicated in Table 1.With 100 degrees of freedom (*df*), at an alphalevel of 0.05. The analysis produced an *r* of .606 (see Table 2).The resultsin Table 2 indicate a positive correlation between BoM human relations competencies and the completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County. The two variables werestronglycorrelated($r(100)= .606, p<.05$).

5.3 Discussions

Funding of infrastructure in secondary schools in Kenya is done in many forms. One of these forms is by the MoE sending to secondary schools' funds under the maintenance and improvement vote-head. Fromthe results of the analysis done to test Hypothesis 1 (see Table 2), it was found that there is a significantrelationship between the BoM technical competence and the completion of infrastructural projects ofsecondary schoolsinNandi North Sub County.Thetwovariableswerefoundtobestrongly correlated.A Pearson'scorrelation value of .817 means that the relationship was significantly strong. This means that BoM's technical competence influences the completion of infrastructural projects. The analysis results also indicate that there was less than the observed *r* (.817) used to determinethe rejection or retention of the null hypothesis in this study. This means that the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus there is a relationship between the BoM technical competence and the completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools in Nandi North Sub County.

Out of the analysis of variables for hypothesis two, this study revealed that the BoM human relations competenceinfluenced secondary schools' completion of infrastructural projects in Nandi North Sub County.

The analysis results that gave an observed r of .606shows a moderate relationship between BoM human relations competence and completion of infrastructural projects of secondary schools. This result shows that the BoM human relations competence influences the completion of infrastructural projects of schools in Nandi North Sub County. Maintenance and Improvement funding by the national government to schools may need to be increased. There is, therefore, a need for the prudent use of the funds. Hypothesis two was, however, limited to testing whether the BoM human relations competence was essential for schools' completion of infrastructural projects and to what extent the BoM human relations competence influenced schools' completion of infrastructural school constructions.

The researcher recommended the following: school managers and principals should undertake professional courses tailored to enable them to acquire relevant skills for project management in schools. Stakeholders like the BOMs and P.A.s should be composed of persons who have academic and professional experiences in construction work or have attended related courses. The study proposes that schools should engage in some income-generating activities. Other recommendations are for the government to subsidize the cost of some of the construction materials, such as cement and iron sheets, and school BoM should be trained in conflict management. The researcher recommended the following suggestions for further research: Research on school infrastructure should be carried out to determine the influence of ministry of public works personnel on the quality of school infrastructure in Kenya; Research should be carried out on income-generating projects that schools can engage in that can provide extra funds that could go into supporting the construction of school projects.

5.4 Conclusions

This study concludes that funds for the completion of projects from maintenance and improvement funds in secondary schools were insufficient and though reliable. Completion of the projects is also compromised by the poor relations between various stakeholders due to personal interests and allowing negative politics to interfere with the equitable distribution of available resources among schools. However, the study establishes that the schools have skilled, competent, and hands-on leadership that, despite the negative factors recorded in this paragraph, has ensured that all projects have been started and a fair number of them completed.

5.5 Recommendations

1. The government should encourage the school management to diversify their sources of funds by engaging in income-generating activities. This will minimize the schools' dependency on government funds alone, thus, ensuring the successful completion of school projects.
2. The school management and the government should encourage the stakeholders to enhance their technical competence in order to ensure that school projects are implemented without any delay.
3. The Ministry of Education should ensure that school management, through relevant tailor-made courses, is constantly equipped with the necessary knowledge on human relations to enable it to cope with situations in developing and completing projects as they arise.
4. Based on the reasonable output of this study, the researcher proposed a training program to enhancethe competenciesofBoMsin public secondaryschools.

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Dr. Susan Chepkonga, PhD. "Influence of Board of Management Technical and Human Relation Competencies on Completion of Infrastructural Projects in Public Secondary Schools in Kenya." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, 27(11), 2022, pp. 38-45.