



CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING EFFECTIVE SCHOOL LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN KENYA: A CASE OF THE ROLE OF BOGS AND PTAS IN THE KISII COUNTY

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Abstract: *Board of Governors (BOGs) and Parent Teacher Association (PTAs) can rightly be described as the life blood of a school. They constitute an important component of the school leadership, management and governance structure. They also form an important link between the school and the community. Through such a link local ownership is enhanced. Through their involvement in the life of the school, local resources are mobilised and also school leadership and management is strengthened. This article reports on the findings of a study on PTAs and BOGs roles and/or responsibilities conducted in a region in the Kisii County. A survey design was employed and involved headteachers (30), chairs of PTA (30) and BOGs (30) drawn from thirty secondary schools which were purposively sampled. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The study findings reveal that BOG and PTA performed various strategic roles. However, their effectiveness was overshadowed by tensions and role conflicts among themselves due to role overlap and lack of clear guidelines. The study also identified some challenges that confront them as they execute their role and/responsibilities, among them lack of adequate funds and parental support.*

Keywords: *Parents Teachers Association (PTA), Board of Governors (BOG), Kenya, Kisii County, secondary school, governance, Effective Leadership and management.*

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INTRODUCTION

Review of literature reveals a mixture of relationships among various actors linked to self-governance in schools. These actors are education officials, local authorities, school governors, parent teacher association (PTA), principals or head teachers, teachers and learners (Bush and Hystek, 2003; Hystek, 2011). It is important to quickly mention here that South Africa is among the few countries in the world that include learners in the school governance structure. The relationship between various actors in education can be viewed on a continuum such that at one end it is very conflictual in nature characterized by tensions, conflicts, dilemmas, while at the other end it is very positive in nature. Evidence suggests that the struggle between school heads and school governors is simply linked to decision making powers (Huber, 2011). In many countries legislation has given huge powers and responsibilities to school governors and PTAs such that school heads now require certain level of approval whether mere rubber stamping or in any other form before they can actually execute some responsibilities, something that is very uncomfortable to many of them. Also a majority of the school heads resent the idea those school governors whom they consider illiterate, lay, part time, non-professional, without appropriate and relevant capacity, are to appraise their performance. Consequently the relationship between school heads and school governors has been reported to be conflictual in nature (Bush and Heystek, 2003). There are also reports on conflicts among various actors involved in education in general. This article reports on the conflicts or tensions between Boards of Governors (BOG) and Parent Teacher Association (PTA).

MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATION IN KENYA

In Kenya the management of education is done by different bodies at different levels. For instance, at the institutional levels, school management committees (SMC) manage primary schools; while board of governors (BOG) manage secondary schools and tertiary institutions and at the university levels university council manage universities (Kindiki, 2009). These bodies provide strategic management in both human and other resources, thus contributing and facilitating the smooth operations, infrastructural development and provision of the teaching and learning materials and/or resources. For instance, the university ' council oversees the activities of the institutions and is responsible for the appointment and dismissal of the head of the institution, the determination of the education character and



mission of the institution and matters related to finance and development' (World Bank, 2008a). Their roles are provided for in the Education Act 1968 (revised, 1980) Cap211. Through their involvement practices and outcomes are expected to improve. This is in line with Kindiki (2009) view regarding the purpose of decentralising school governance. He argues that: "One of the rationales for decentralising school governance is that it will improve decision making about teaching and learning, resulting in the effective use of resources, and contributing to more effective practices and outcomes."(Kindiki, 2009). Similar views are echoed by Bush and Heystek (2003). In some contexts school governors and PTAs overstep their boundaries or demarcation and as a result become involved in operation management (Onderi and Makori, 2012).

It is assumed here that the bodies that manages and/or governs education work in harmony to contribute to the improvement of practices and outcomes of education.

EDUCATION ACTS AND WHAT IT MEANS TO SCHOOL GOVERNORS AND PTAS

Through legislation education governance has been decentralised to local schools level (Tsoetsi et al., 2008), as a result, depending on the context, governing bodies and PTAs are expected to ensure high quality education in schools (Heystek, 2011). Consequently, the school governors and PTAs have huge responsibilities which have been described as onerous, complex and always growing. It is also important to mention that school governors and PTA operate in a performance driven milieu such that they are always under pressure to comply with all duties and responsibilities. They also operate in a very conflictual environment. Besides, James et al. (2010) observe that "school governors give enormous amount to the education system in England, yet their contribution is largely hidden from public view". Balarin et al (2008) as cited in James et al. (2010) add that most governing bodies in England were operating effectively except that they are overcomplicated, overloaded and overlooked. Shearn et al. (1995) and Creese and Bradley(1997), among other writers observe that in England the 1986 and 1988 Education Act gave school governors significantly increased powers and responsibilities. Their responsibilities are within a legislative framework and include national curriculum, finance, staffing, vision and direction of the school and conduct of the school among others. However, power between the head teachers and the chair of governors has been



highlighted as a source of tension. This is especially true in relation to decision-making power.

The status and roles of PTA in various contexts are diverse. They are either formal or informal. In terms of status, in a majority of countries apart from Djibouti, Zambia, USA, and the River and Lagos states of Nigeria, PTA exist as purely informal voluntary bodies with little or no authority at all (USAID, 2009 and Okendu, 2012;). As such many of them are ever in an antagonistic situation with other actors in education. In reality for them to function effectively there need to be a kind of liaison relationship with the school head and school governing bodies. It is the absence of such a relation or cooperation between them that often result in conflict. In terms of roles, the most widely reported role of PTA in many countries is fundraising and organising social activities.

CONFLICTS, DILEMMAS AND TENSIONS

Review of literature reveal that tensions and conflicts are underpinned by blurred boundaries of roles and responsibilities and, changing roles and functions of various actors within school governance. In this regard Huber argues that, “due to changing roles and functions of the various actors involved in school governance, tension between and within groups of actors become evident” (Huber, 2011). Among various actors in school governance, it seems that tensions and conflicts between chair of governors and principals are prevalent and widespread. A number of conflict and tension related cases involving chairs of governors and principals have been reported in South Africa, UK and Switzerland, among other countries (Heystek, 2011). But in Switzerland besides, tension and/or friction between chairs of governors and principals, there is also another strand of tension involving principal(ship). In Switzerland there are two types of principal (ships), one in charge of several schools and the other one in charge of only one individual school (site) known as site principal(ship). And tensions among these groups of actors has been frequently reported (Huber, 2011). Huber adds that these tensions relate to the desire to maintain the status quo and the traditional task division. Huber also adds that tensions are increasingly associated with decision-making powers. According to Naidoo (2005), in reality conflicts and dilemmas are central to the experience of schooling and especially in South Africa where there is wide variation against uniform requirements by eternally mandated agencies. Similar views are also echoed by Payne (2003): “dilemmas are found in conflict filled



situations that require choices between competing, highly prized values and the drive for autonomous schools and at the same time accompanied by demands for more regulations, accountability and standardisation”.

According to Payne (2003) conflicts are born out of lack of clear boundaries in terms of roles and responsibilities as well as varying interpretations of what governance and leadership mean in schools today. One study identified areas in which tensions are likely to develop, they include, role definitions; decision making division; the balancing of power, autonomy, expertise and expectations; and the interconnections between conflict and trust. Also conflicts may emerge around different interpretation of roles, the drawing of boundaries or what values mean in practice. The resulting disputes can threaten sustainability of consensus, result in reassessment, disappointment and loss of trust.

Payne (2003) underscores the importance of boundaries in all systems, arguing that they define the uniqueness of an organisation and provide the territory within which groups or individuals operate. According to Mitchell (1997) as cited in Payne (2003), these borders can be defined by physically segregated environments, the internal rituals and the expectations established overtime, the roles people take, and formal documents and policies. Payne (2003) makes further observation that ‘for schools to survive and continue their objectives, they have to contain their border disputes’. Studies have uncovered a widespread concern with regard to divisions of roles, blurring of boundaries and changing boundaries.

In a study Payne (2003) found that difficulties with boundaries were linked to: Drawing of division between the roles of the board and principal; Defining which areas are educational and those in the province of the faculty; Particular people constantly challenging boundaries and Maintenance of boundaries.

Payne (2003) also identifies two dilemmas of boundaries for those involved in governance today, they include, about and where to draw these lines; how to have lines drawn, not so deeply that they cannot be changed but not shallowly that they are blown away in the first wind of dissent. There are also the dilemmas of power and expectations and how to balance the needs of professional autonomy with the tradition of community empowerment and the differing and conflicting expectations being held by different groups within the school.

It is important to underscore the need for drawing of boundaries within an atmosphere of trust. Shearn et al. (1995) calls it a relationship of mutual trust and mutual support.



Within a culture of trust, conflicts could be minimised by having clear, written statements of responsibilities, roles, powers and duties (Bray, 2000). In South Africa the legislation stipulates that the school governing body is to be in a relation of trust with the school. But equally important is the fact that trust is also expected from the principal and teachers (educators) (Heystek, 2006). This is very important because all should be working towards the same goal, the best interest of the school

SCHOOL GOVERNORS, PRINCIPAL AND TEACHERS

The relationships between the governing body and the principal (ship) in Switzerland experiences friction and tensions. Ranson (2011) links tensions with the power between the head teacher and the chair of governors. One cause of tension between principals and parent governors is due to lack of distinction between governance and management. In other words lack of delineation between strategic management and day-today management of schools. The contention is between strategic and operational, but again this varies between contexts, for some contexts governors are allowed to carry out operational tasks while in other contexts they are expected to function strategically. In South Africa for instance, Heystek (2011) reports of frequent interferences from parents (the governing body) in the professional management of schools while parents also proclaim that principals deny them access to be involved or participate in the teaching- learning process. In the UK, governing bodies are excluded from the professional management of the school (James et al, 2011). Shearn et al. (1995) reports significant disagreements the governors have with the head on some matters and the extent of the disagreements varies with schools, for instance, disagreement over exclusion. In another school for instance, a controversy exist over the use of outside speakers such that the head has to seek the chair's approval before he or she can invite any guest speaker (Shearn et al., 1995). To such Heystek (2006) argues that the relationship between the principal and the governing body is important for the effective functions of the school. But tensions and conflicts between school governors, the principal and teacher have been reported in various contexts, for instance, in South Africa, in one study some teachers interviewed felt strongly that the parent's roles on the SGB should be reduced even more so that 'enlightened professional people who know about children should not be placed in a position where they could be outvoted by parents.' (Van Wyk, 2007). Besides, a number of teachers claimed that parents did not fully understand



the South Africa School Act (SASA) and the power and responsibilities it afforded governors because most of them were illiterate and therefore unable to carry out the tasks delegated to them. In this regard, Bagarette (2011) reports that: "This lack of understanding of their roles and functions may also create serious tensions between two centres of power which ultimately result in conflict". The two centres of power in this case are the SGBs and principals. In another study parents interviewed complained that teachers looked down on them and therefore did not treat them with respect (Van Wyk, 2007; Bagarette, 2012).

Based on the foregone comments it is evident that school governors operate in a very foreign and strange terrain where professionals are very uncomfortable about their involvement in certain aspects. The situation can be potentially conflictual and therefore makes their involvement in school matters less effective.

PTA AND PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS

In Kenya PTA just came into existence in 1980 by a Presidential Directive but have no legal status (Kindiki, 2009). PTA members are volunteers who through various means attempt to assess the quality of education offered in schools and then voice their views. Unfortunately in Kenya neither the school head nor the BOG ever provide them with necessary information or documentation to enable them do their job, especially to monitor finance and have an idea how money is spent. Lack of access to information and documents makes it very difficult for PTA to hold the school head accountable. In Ethiopia PTA replaced SMC and are very powerful such that it is within their power to evaluate teachers and even dismiss those who cannot deliver. Further review reveals that teachers are not comfortable with the powers given to PTA and unanimously argue that "the giving of this authority is very bad because most of the PTA members are uneducated and very poor. The educated cannot be evaluated by the uneducated". One teacher added that 'the community has neither the finance nor the capacity to manage the school effectively and that the head teacher and the government agents should be solely responsible for school management'. Another teacher expressed his fear that even "if the money [is given] to the community, they will feel like they are very superior and will have a boss-like feeling toward [the teacher]" (Swift, 2006). However others were rather positive and observed that 'if PTAs had greater resources, trained and involved more parents and others from the greater community, they would be able to use resources wisely' (Swift, 2006). Dunne et al. (2007)



reports that in Ghana the relationship between the school heads and PTA chair was positive. In Zambia, PTA members are elected and raise funds for school materials and activities, and teacher salaries. So in a way they feel responsible for teachers' performance (Dunne et al., 2007). However, Dunne et al. (2007) warns that PTA's role overlaps Zambia's teaching services (a body responsible for hiring and deploying teachers) and occasionally causes conflict between them. In Senegal they have school management council (SMC) for lower and upper secondary schools. Their role is to oversee and include, materials, 'moral' activities, school compliance with health regulations and respond to all questions from the ministry of education and the education inspectorate. In secondary school SMC members are school administrators and comprise representatives from regional council, the mayor's office, the local treasury, the PTA and the student body. It is possible that this kind of configuration minimises frictions between various bodies and especially PTA. The World Bank (2008) report that in South Africa, as in Zambia and Kenya conflicts do arise between governing bodies and money has been singled out as the major source of friction.

SCHOOL GOVERNORS AND PARENT TEACHERS ASSOCIATION (PTA)

In Kenya an elected PTA executive committee is expected to liaise with BOG in various matters pertaining to education, however in reality there is little liaison because PTA and BOG are generally in conflict (World Bank, 2008). In other studies school management committees (SMC) and parent teacher association (PTA) roles and responsibilities have been found to conflict. Nana (2009) adds that the members of SMC and PTAs should be given adequate orientation about their responsibilities in an effort to minimise conflicts related to their responsibilities. Dunne et al. (2007) notes that in many education systems in developing countries there are tensions and contradictions in relations to their roles and tensions which undermined their effectiveness. Also conflicts between school committees and PTA have been noted in Mexico and Malawi. In these countries school committees and PTA are very similar and sometimes collide on what they think their responsibilities are. For instance, the school committees and PTA conflicted because both thought it was their responsibility to collect money. Eventually the clashes between the school committees and PTA led to the former disbanding the latter because the school committee wanted to be PTA (Bray, 2000). In Uganda prior to the introduction of the universal primary education (UPE) policy PTA were responsible for school financing, they raised money from parents and



through that they supplemented teachers' salary, contributing to PTA's substantial power in school governance, although they did not have any legal status. However under the UPE policy the role of the school management committee (SMC) has been revitalised such that they became responsible for the management of the UPE grant and all school affairs. But there is still no clear demarcation concerning the PTA and SMC roles, a situation which in extreme cases results in overt antagonism between the two (Suzuki, 2002).

CURRENT STUDY

The study was conducted in Gucha District, one of the eleven districts in Nyanza province, and part of Kisii County. Nyanza is one of the eight provinces in Kenya. It is situated in the western region of the country, approximately 500 kilometers from Nairobi and roughly 500,000 people based on the 1999 census. There are 174 secondary schools and 474 primary schools with an enrolment of 22,952 and 124,894 pupils respectively. Onderi and Croll (2008) have identified a number of education issues and/or problems confronting the district. They include, poor examination performance, lack of structured in-service training programmes for teachers, a lack of priorities for relevant continuing professional development programmes for teachers, shortage of qualified teachers and shortage of educational facilities such as classrooms, libraries and laboratories. It can be argued that some of these challenges fall within the remit of school governing bodies (BOG) and parents teachers association (PTA) and equally confront them; the main role of BOG and PTA is to improve teaching and learning outcomes. However issues of lack of capacity and therefore skills deficit have been raised (Kindiki, 2009; Onderi and makori, 2012;), Bush and Heystek, 2003). Many of them have been described as either semi-illiterate or illiterate with poor educational background. Also, many of them lack knowledge and understanding regarding educational matters (Van Wyk, 2007) and therefore require serious training.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The study adopted quantitative methodology to investigate the relationship between BOGs and PTAs in relation to the roles they discharge in various secondary schools in Kenya. The study adopted a survey design and utilised questionnaires as a method approach. One major limitation of the study is that it cannot be generalised to all schools in the county because the participants were purposively sampled and therefore lacks representation. However it can be generalised to all schools that took part in the study. Also knowledge



generated would be important in terms of understanding the nature and extent of the relationship between BOG and PTA in their various roles.

Data was collected from head teachers (30), chairs of the board of governors (BOG) (30), and chair of parents' teachers association (PTA) (30). Although sampling was purposive, there was an element of stratified sampling in the sense that the schools were sampled first, followed by participants. Prior to going to the field to collect data, the researchers gave a self introductory letter to sample school heads. In the letter the researchers introduced and explained the purpose of the study, explained that the study involved the head teacher, chairs of BOG and PTA and request for their permission and participation. In the letter, the researchers also indicated that participants had a choice to opt out of the study at any time without any negative consequences on their part. The participants were also assured that their names and all the information they provided would be treated with strict confidence and used only for the purpose of the study. Through the head teacher, BOG and PTA were served with letters requesting their permission and participation in the study. At the end of the letter participants were requested to sign a declaration of informed consent form in which they confirmed their understanding of the contents of the letter, the nature and purpose of the study, what was expected of them and their voluntary participation. The chairs of the BOG and PTA were asked to leave completed questionnaires in the head teachers' office.

The questionnaires format consisted of open-ended, closed-ended and rating scale items. They were self-administering in nature. This sort of format was necessary to diversify responses as well as reduce what Watson and Coombes (2009) call 'question fatigue'. The open-ended section offered the respondents an opportunity to make comment, expand or clarify some information on their response and thus enable the researcher to capture their perspectives on the skills needs in relation to their roles. All the participants questionnaires has some general items, for instance, chairs of BOG and PTA were asked questions such as gender level of education and occupation, while the head teachers ' questionnaires had items on their experience on headship and period of service in their current school, among others. These areas were considered important for the purpose of providing some understanding on their background. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the participants on different occasions, allowing them some time since they were able to read



and understand the items correctly. The researcher collected all completed questionnaires from the head teachers' office. The response rate was 100%. At the end of the study, the researcher thanked the respondents for their participation in the study.

FINDINGS

Characteristics of participants

The participants of this study consisted of the head teachers, chairs of board of governors and chairs of parents teachers association (PTA) drawn from thirty secondary schools. All participants were males. Perhaps saying something about how women perceived these roles. Data was analysed per category and all figures are rounded to the nearest 10%.

Ninety percent (90%, n=30) of PTA had beyond primary education level, which included Form IV, 'A' Level and certificate in Theology. Just over half of the PTA participants were either professional or semi-professional. Their profession included, church pastor, politician (councillor), farmer, nurse aid and businessmen. The result indicates that PTA chair person were non-educators, therefore were mainly lay people in matters pertaining to education. It also suggests a diverse professional background which provide a bit of rich mix in decision-making in educational matters.

Ninety percent (90%, n=30) of BOG had beyond primary education level, which included Form IV, 'A' level, Diploma, college and university level education. In terms of profession it is evident that less than half (slightly over 40%) were either professional or semi-professional, which included, retired police officer, police officer, church pastor, church officer (Deacon) airline industry and peasant. The result indicates that BOG chair persons were non-educators, and therefore they can be rightly described as lay people in matters pertaining to education. They also come from a diverse professional background.

One hundred percent (100%, n=30) of the head teachers had beyond primary education level, which included, Diploma in education, university Degree and masters Degree in education (Med). On experience in headship position, half (50%, n=30) had less than 5 years, less than half (40%, n=30) had more than 5 years, while a small portion (10%, n=30) had over 10 years of headship experience. Besides, more than three quarters (80%, n=30) of the heads had served in their current school for 2 years and beyond. The result may suggest that a majority of the secondary school head teachers in this study did not have long experience in educational management and governance.



Roles of BOG and PTA

This section is about whose role is it? The PTA and BOG were asked to indicate by ticking in the box on the list of roles or responsibilities provided what they considered to be their role or responsibilities. The head teachers were also asked to indicate by ticking in the boxes on the list of roles or responsibilities on the questionnaires whose task they thought it was, between BOG and PTA. Their responses are illustrated in the following three tables.

Table1: Showing the roles as scored by BOG

Roles	BOG (%) n=30
School finance management	90
Raising funds for various school projects	60
Quality standard assurance	70
Recruitment of staff	90
Salary review	70
Curriculum implementation	50
Identify school development project	90
Improvement of school performance	80
Maintaining school environment	70
Maintenance of discipline in the school	90
Look after the welfare of the school community	70

For BOGs, the key roles are school finance management, recruitment of staff, identifying school development projects and maintaining of discipline in the school. The least of their roles is implementation of curriculum and raising funds. And therefore placed in a continuum you have at one end school finance management, recruitment of staff, identifying of school development project and maintenance of discipline in the school and on the other end are curriculum implementation and raising funds for various school projects and the rest falls in between.



Table 2: Showing the roles as scored by PTA

Roles	PTA (%) n=30
School finance management	90
Raising funds for various school projects	90
Quality standard assurance	60
Recruitment of staff	40
Salary review	40
Curriculum implementation	30
Identify school development project	80
Improvement of school performance	80
Maintaining school environment	70
Maintenance of discipline in the school	70
Look after the welfare of the school community	80

Recruitment of staff, salary review and curriculum appear to be the least PTA roles, while managing school finance and fund raising tops the list. It can therefore be argued that PTAs roles can easily be placed in a continuum such that at one end are fund raising roles and school financial management and on the other end are recruitment of staff, salary review and curriculum implementation and the rest falls in between.

Table3: Showing the roles of PTA and BOG as scored by head teachers

Roles	Heads (%) n=30		
	BOG	PTA	Both
School finance management	80	0	20
Raising funds for various school projects	20	50	30
Quality standard assurance	20	0	80
Recruitment of staff	90	0	10
Salary review	90	0	10
Curriculum implementation	30	10	60
Identify school development project	10	30	60
Improvement of school performance	10	0	90
Maintaining school environment	10	30	60
Maintenance of discipline in the school	50	0	50
Look after the welfare of the school community	10	30	60

Based on the head teachers views in this study (see table 3) PTAs' main role is to raise funds for various school projects. They identify 4 key roles for BOG which includes: Salary review, recruitment of staff, school finance management and maintaining discipline in the school. The headteachers considered roles such as quality standard assurance, curriculum



implementation, identifying school development projects, improvement of school performance, maintaining school environment and looking after the welfare of the school community as shared role between PTAs and BOGs.

Table4: Showing ranked roles based on BOG and PTA scores

Rank(s)	BOG	PTA
	School finance management (90%)	School finance management (90%)
	Identify school dev. Project (90%)	Raising funds for projects (90%)
	Recruitment of staff (90%)	Identify school Dev. Project (80%)
	Improvement of school performance (80%)	Look after school welfare (80%)
	Maintenance of discipline (80%)	Improvement of school performance (80%)
	Salary review (70%)	Maintaining school environment (70)
	Look after the school welfare (70%)	Maintenance of discipline in school (70%)
	Maintaining of school environment (70%)	Quality standard assurance (60%)
	Quality standard assurance (70%)	Salary review (40%)
	Raising funds for school projects (60%)	Recruitment of staff (40%)
	Curriculum implementation (50%)	Curriculum implementation (30%)

On the basis of table4 it is evident that Curriculum implementation ranks least in both the BOG and PTA list, perhaps sending a signal that circular matters are not within their domain. This is also in agreement with the head teachers' scores in table3. Scores between them are very close in looking after the school welfare, maintaining of school environment, improvement of school performance, identifying of school project; school finance and maintenance of discipline; suggesting areas of overlap and therefore likely to be a source of conflict unless clear guidelines are in place. But in table3, the head teacher views such roles as responsibilities that require the involvement of both BOG and PTA.

Conflict and sources of conflict: PTAs perspective

This sub-section reports on the views of PTA

Just fewer than 90% (n=30) identified conflict of interest as one source of conflict; just over 60 %(n=30) non-recognition of PTA in the Education Act; just fewer than 70(n=30) raising and spending money on school projects; Just fewer than 70%(n=30) lack of understanding of roles among PTA; Just over half felt that they were being left out on major decision-making process on school development; 70%(n=30) felt that as PTA members they should have more control ling power in the financial management of the school; just over 30% (n=30) identified poor working relation with BOG and just over 60%(n=30) felt that lack of operational guidelines was a source of conflict. Just over 70% (n=30) rated the damaging



effect of the conflict as serious, very serious and extremely serious. Just fewer than 40% (n=30) indicated that the best way to resolve conflicts is through defining of roles.

However, 70(n=30) of BOG rated PTA role in the teaching- learning process as good, very good and excellent. The rest rated them as average. Just over 80% (n=30) of PTA rated the relation between PTA and BOG as good, very good and excellent. 60% (n=30) of PTA strongly felt that the relationship contributed positively to the teaching- learning process of the school. 90% (n=30) rated the relationship between PTA and the school as good, very good and excellent. Just over 90 %(n=30) felt that the school regarded PTA as partners; just over 90 %(n=30) rated partnership as important and extremely important and just over 90 %(n=30) thought that the school appreciated PTAs' contribution.

Conflict and sources of conflict: BOG's perspective

This section reports on the views of BOG

Just 70 %(n=30) identified conflict of interest as a source of interest; just fewer cited lack of recognition of PTA by the Education Act; 70%(n=30) cites raising and spending of money on school projects; half identified BOG not having a clear understanding of their roles; just 40%(n=30) of BOG felt that they were left out in major decision- making process; just over 40% (n=30) felt that they were not in full control of the school finance; Just 40% (n=30) cited poor working relationship between PTA and BOG; just 20% (n=30) felt that sometimes headteacher leans towards PTA and just over half cited lack of operational guidelines.

However, just fewer than 90% (n=30) viewed PTA as a partner in the teaching-learning process; just fewer than 100% indicated that they regarded BOG, PTA and headteacher as one team in the teaching-learning process; 80% (n=30) felt that the relationship between PTA was good, very good and excellent; just under 90%(n=30) felt that the relationship between BOG and headteacher was good, very good and excellent and just under 100%(n=30) agree and strongly agree that the relationship has a positive impact on the teaching-learning process.

Conflict and conflict sources: headteachers' perspective

Just fewer than 90%(n=30) indicated that conflict of interest was a source of conflict; just fewer than 70%(n=30) identified non-recognition of PTA by the Education Act; 70%(n=30) indicated raising and spending money on school development project; 90%(n=30) cited lack of understanding of roles; just fewer than 80%(n=30) indicated that PTA felt left out in the



major decision-making in the school development; just fewer than 80% cited lack of clear definition of roles; just 70%(n=30) indicated that expectations against reality; 80% (n=30) identified lack of clear operational guidelines and just 80% (n=30) indicated that PTA wanted to have more control and power on the raising and management of finance.60%(n=30) confirmed existence of conflict between PTA and BOG; just over 20% (n=30) described conflict as damaging and just fewer than 60%(n=30) indicated that conflicts get resolved.

However, just fewer than 40 %(n=30) felt that the level of partnership between PTA and BOG was high and very high, the rest felt that it was moderate; just fewer than 100%(n=30) rated the relationship between PTA and BOG as good and very good; just 40%(n=30) rated the relationship between PTA and the school head good, the rest rated it as average; 90%(n=30) agreed and strongly agreed that the relationship between PTA and school head contributed positively to the teaching –learning; 80%(n=30) felt that perceived need guided PTA in identifying school projects; just 40% (n=30) felt that PTA exerted unnecessary pressure on the school heads in order to achieve their aims and objectives; just over half(n=30) felt that PTA compromised established procedures in order to have their ways in school development.

Challenges

PTA identifies a number challenges they face as they execute their roles and responsibilities, they include: 90 %(n=30) lack of adequate finance; 70 %(n=30) lack of support from parents; half (n=30) lack of recognition of PTA in the Education Act; 40% (n=30) lack of cooperation between PTA and BOG; 30% (n=30) lack of support from the BOG; 20% (n=30) lack of support from the school head and 10% (n=30) lack of cooperation between PTA and headteacher. From the challenges identified it lack of adequate of finance, lack of support from the parents and lack of recognition of PTA in the Education Act seems to cause some serious concern.

BOG also identified challenges they face as they execute their role and/responsibilities, they include: An overwhelming number of (90%, n=30) of BOG identified lack of sufficient funds; Just half (n=30) cited lack of parental support; Just fewer than 30% lack of headteachers' support; just fewer than half (n=30) indicated unnecessary red tapes; just fewer than 40% (n=30) cited lack of cooperation between PTA and BOG; just 30%(n=30) identified lack of



cooperation between the headteacher and PTA and just over 40% (n=30) identified lack of cooperation between the headteacher and parents. From the challenges identified lack of sufficient finance and lack of parental support seems to cause some serious concern.

DISCUSSION

This study set out to investigate the relationship between PTA and school governors in Kenya within the context of roles and responsibilities drawing on the literature on the experiences in the country and other international contexts. The study employed extensive review of literature and empirical study in order to understand their relationships. The review of literature revealed that in many contexts their roles have grown immensely, which has been achieved through Education Acts and government guidelines. But literature also revealed that the relationship between various actors in education was conflictual in nature. The reasons attributed to this nature of relationships are varied, for instance, in the UK head teachers were not comfortable with the powers given to school governors by the statute. Many of the school heads felt that school governors who were lay people, non-professional, illiterate, part-time, inexperienced in education matters and with little or no skills and/or capacities were given excessive powers to manage schools. Therefore governors were regarded as strangers in a foreign territory. In South Africa, for instance, prior to 1994 head teachers or principals were the sole decisions makers, but the introduction of SASA mandated power sharing with SGBs (Bagarette, 2011). But sharing of roles between school governors and principals or head teachers has been conflictual and incidences of role overlap and over-stepping have been reported in the literature. There has also been lack of distinction between strategic and operational roles and, governance and management, among other areas of contention. This is attributed to lack of clearly defined boundaries and/demarcation. In other situations boundaries have been blurred or absent. Consequently conflicts and dilemmas have become common experience in schools. Boundaries define one's territory of operation. Issues with boundaries include, blurring boundaries, changing boundaries and maintaining boundaries. Boundaries work well in a trustful relationship, for distrust makes it difficult to resolve differences. It can therefore be argued that positive trust may be the key to effective functions of schools and especially for relationship between SGB and principals and also between BOG and PTA. The findings from the survey is discussed under the following subsections: characters of participants, Roles of



BOG and PTA, Conflicts and conflict sources and challenges confronting BOG and PTA as they execute their roles.

Characteristics of participants.

The participants consisted of headteachers, chairs of BOG and chairs of PTA. The BOG and PTA involved in the survey had beyond primary education. Something that is encouraging because that level of education gives them a certain degree of ability in terms of writing and reading. They also had a diverse professional background thus suggesting rich experiences that may come to bear to school governance. Also it is important to mention that all participants were male. Headteachers had beyond primary education such that some had Diploma in education, others had Bachelors of Education degree and yet others had masters of Education degree. About ten percent had over ten years of experience. The rest had less than ten. Also three quarters had been at the current school for 2 years and beyond.

Roles of BOG and PTA

Tables 1-4 illustrate the perception of headteachers, BOG and PTA on BOG and PTA roles. They also demonstrate a certain degree of role overlap, because both BOG and PTA claims those roles to be theirs. However the headteacher's perception moderates both BOG and PTAs perception by drawing a theoreticalline whose role it is. It is interesting however to note that both BOG and PTA scores low in curriculum matters perhaps that says something about their confidence, skills, knowledge and capacity in performing that function. This findings agree with the finding in the review of literature (Van Wyk, 2006) who reported that BOG were least interested in circular matters.

Sources of conflict

Both BOG and PTA contributed the existence of conflict between them to the following: conflict of interest, non-recognition of PTA in the Education Act; raising and spending money; lack of understanding of roles among PTA; PTA felt that they were left out on major decision-making process in school development projects; PTA felt that they should have more controlling power in the financial management of the school; poor relationships between PTA and BOG and lack of operational guidelines. Beside role over-lap which may lead to overstepping of roles resulting in conflict, all these situations identified contribute to friction and contentions. These findings agree with review of literature that lack of clear



boundaries or demarcation leads to conflictual situations among various actors in education. In order to improve their effectiveness in discharging their roles, there is need for a certain degree of partnership (Bagarette, 2012). The survey however reveals a positive relationship between BOG and PTA.

Challenges confronting BOG and PTA in their roles.

The survey findings revealed a number of challenges that confront BOG and PTA as they discharge their roles. They include, lack of adequate finance, lack of support from parents; lack of recognition of PTA in the Education Act, a situation that affects their participation in the teaching –process. These challenges undermine their effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The review of literature demonstrates that a mixture of relationships do exist among various actors linked to self-governance of schools. There are conflictual relationship on the one hand and positive or less conflictual relationship on the other. Conflictual relationships are underpinned partly by Education Act and changes in government guidelines and partly overlap of roles/responsibilities. The Education Act has given school governors and parent teacher association (PTA) overwhelming responsibilities which causes significant discomfort among the educators. In Kenya the Education Act is silent about the role of PTA and that is an underlying issue in relation to conflicts. A majority of the educators who view themselves as professionals strongly feel that their territory has been invaded by non-professional, lay people who are illiterate and lacks relevant and appropriate capacity to deliver. So the Education Act is a source of conflict in this regards. The survey findings demonstrate that BOG and PTA are in conflictual relationship caused mainly by role/responsibilities overlap among others. They both feel that they have equal claims to various roles/responsibilities. There is no clear demarcation or guidelines in relations to their roles and responsibilities and that potentially cause conflicts. The study also discovered that both PTA and BOG are confronted by a number of challenges as they execute their responsibilities. Among them is lack of parental support and adequate finance. Therefore conflicts and challenges undermine their effectiveness.

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