



DETERMINANTS OF DELEGATION OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN MBEERE SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, EMBU COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Delegation of tasks to the subordinates is an important activity in the administration of schools. It helps the school principal in running the institution effectively though it may affect the subordinates negatively depending on how the process is done. The purpose of this study was to investigate on the determinants of delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools in Mbeere South Sub-county, Kenya. The study was guided by two objectives; to establish the effects of teachers' attitude on delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools and to establish the effect of workload on delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools. The study adopted descriptive research design. The sample of the study was 35 principals, 35 deputy principal's and 63 heads of departments. The study used three questionnaires to collect data. A pilot study was carried out to establish the reliability of the research instruments. The findings of the study revealed that both the teacher's attitude and workload influenced delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools.

Keywords: Administration, attitudes, duties, responsibilities and workload



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1.0 Background to the Study

Delegation is the assignment of any responsibility or authority to another person (normally from a manager to a subordinate) to carry out specific activities. Delegation is one of the core concepts of management and leadership, (D'Souza, 2002). The concept of delegation of duties and responsibilities has recently drawn the attention of many educational managers. Delegation of authority stems from the fact that authority should not be centralized at the apex of the organization due to the myriad of problems experienced in organizations and commitments of the organizational administrators and managers. Ruto (2011) argues that delegation is not an act of evading of responsibility and authority; instead it is an avenue for training subordinates on managerial skills. In addition, delegation of duties and

responsibilities is necessary when the volume of work to be done is in excess of an individual's physical and mental capacity (Smyth, 2011).

In Kenya, the government has undergone several changes since independence. There has been creation of new ministries, departments and decentralization of services to the grass root levels. The decentralization of services embraces the concept of delegation of duties and responsibilities. For instance, the Teachers Service Commission has delegated recruitment of secondary school teachers to Board of Management at the school level. Similarly, many school activities have been delegated to Deputy Principals and Heads of Departments.

The private sector has remarkably increased employees' performance because of embracing the process of delegation of duties and responsibilities within various departments. A good example is Safaricom and the Coca-Cola Companies. They have various departments each with their own managers and they have the authority from the head offices to carry out any activity related to distribution of their services such as promotion of sales and marketing provided it meets the objectives and goals of the company even if in foreign branches (Ruto, 2011).

In the education sector; school management, teaching, coordination of co-curricular and administrative tasks have been entrusted to teachers by the principal in the hope that they will carry out the work or task that they have been delegated to do (Allen, 1988). According to Jackson (2000) the school, by its nature, is a complex organization such that delegation of duties and responsibilities is unavoidable. This therefore, implies that school managers and administrators at whatever level, primary, secondary or tertiary needs to understand and embrace the concept of delegation as a way of promoting efficiency and effectiveness in delivery of services.

The principal has the duty and responsibility of running the day to day school activities in addition to his core business of teaching. As a school administrator, one cannot achieve the school goals and objectives if they do all the tasks alone (Jackson, 2000). In other words, one cannot teach all the subjects in the school, head all departments, be on duty every day of the week, deal with all the correspondence and discipline cases and be in charge of all the clubs and societies. Therefore school principals need to use talents of their teachers who work under them, without fearing that they may overthrow them, but rather trusting them and having confidence in them. Moreover making use of even the most critical or uncooperative members of staff may make them trust the principal and a feeling of being secure. Several

studies have shown that teachers are more highly motivated to realize goals when they have played a predominant part in drawing upon the original plans of delegation (Jackson, 2000). Both subordinates and entire school community stands to benefit from delegation if well-handled as it leads to effective utilization of the available human and material resources; bettering the performance of the school as an organization. There is improved productivity among teachers and this leads to better use of time which is an invaluable asset to any organization because it gives the manager more time to attend to more strategic management functions rather than stressing himself out in doing the work (Missik, 2004). Of great significance is the fact that delegation engenders participation on the subordinates' part and can serve as a training ground to improve their knowledge and skills as well as test their suitability for job performance and promotion. It also provides opportunities for subordinates to take part in the schools' decision-making process, which can help to boost their morale, reduce conflicts and enhance job satisfaction (Ejiogu, 1988).

2.0 Overview of teachers' attitudes and its effect on delegation of duties and responsibilities

Mzure (1999) revealed that perception of teachers towards head teachers' administration practices was influenced by internal and external factors. Internal factors refer to characteristics of the perceivers learning needs acquired through experiences, self-concept and personality. HaileSelassie, (1997) agrees with (Smyth, 2011) when he stated that many teachers in Ethiopia resent or even fear being delegated a job because of the history of supervision which has always been biased towards evaluation and inspection.

Studies carried out by (Adikinyi, 2007), and (Marwanga, 2004) also observe that teachers have a negative attitude towards delegation hence any guidance given is not taken seriously. Yunus (2010) concurs with the above sentiments when he noted that because of its evaluative approaches; less experienced teachers have more negative perceptions on the practice of delegation than more experienced teachers do. They consider supervisors as faultfinders; they fear that supervisors will report their weaknesses to their school administrators. Muriithi (2012) however had different opinion when he observed that majority of teachers have positive attitude towards delegation.

2.1 Effect of Workload on Delegation of Duties and Responsibilities

Through delegation of duties and responsibilities the executive can transfer routine work to the subordinates and concentrate on other important organizational tasks. The manager who chooses to try to do everything with his/her own hands will suffer at least three undesirable

results: reduction of one's productivity; limits the potential contribution to the organizational goals and, frustration accompanied by an excessive amount of personal effort. Subordinates can help to make manager's work easier and more productive if one knows how to utilize them and makes an effort to permit them to assist him.

A study by Abdille (2012) in public secondary schools on delegation of duties in Mandela East District found out that the function of classroom observation was neglected even in the event of having adequate staffing levels. It thus negates the essence of according the responsibility of instructional supervision to head teachers. The research argues that the head teachers should empower and delegate instructional supervisory roles to subject panels, departmental heads and senior teachers. Okumbe (1998) says that although educational organizations are bureaucratic, the teachers who occupy the bottom of the hierarchy are highly educated professionals, sometimes even more educated than the head- teachers are.

According to Koontz and Weinhrichn (1998), managers should be receptive and willing to give other peoples' ideas a chance. They further say that decision-making involves some discretion and subordinate's ideas may differ from those of managers. Orora (2007) adds that poor delegation makes the chief executive the only member of an enterprise. In addition, an enterprise's plans, decisions and tasks are enormous and any attempt by anyone to operate them singly leads to failure.

3.0 Research Design

This study adopted descriptive research design. Kothari (2004) define research design as the overall plan for obtaining answers to the questions being studied and for handling some of the difficulties encountered during the research process. The study employed a descriptive research descriptive design because it describes variables rather than testing predicted relationships between variables. The design seeks to explain how one variable affects another.

3.1 Location of the Study

The study was carried out in Mbeere South sub-county, Embu County. The sub-county is approximately 150 kilometers from Nairobi city along the Nairobi-Meru Highway. The sub-county is made up of Mwea, Makima and Gachoka Divisions. The sub-county borders Kirinyaga County to the West, Machakos County to the South and Tharaka-Nithi County to the East. The sub-county has been selected for this study because it comprises of diverse schools; mixed boys and girls day, boarding, private and public schools. The sub-county is

also situated in a hardship area therefore making it vulnerable to so many problems that may influence the teachers’ attitudes towards delegation of duties and responsibilities.

3.2 Target Population

Burns and Grove (2003), describe target population as all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study. The target population comprised of 33 public and 2 private secondary schools with a population of 35 principals, 35 deputy principals and 315 teachers.

Table 1: Target Population

Subjects	Number
Principals	35
Deputy principals	35
Teachers	315
Total	385

(Source: Mbeere South County Education Office, 2017)

3.3 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study used purposive sampling procedures to select 35 secondary schools in Mbeere Sub-county. The sample of the study was selected using convenient and simple random sampling techniques comprising of 35 principals, 35 deputy principals and 63 heads of departments (HOD’S) Therefore, the total respondents were 133 respondents as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Sample size

Subjects	Target population	Sample (%)
Principals	35	35(100)
Deputy principals	35	35(100)
Teachers	315	63(20)
Total	385	133(34.5)

3.4 Research Instruments

The study used three questionnaires to conduct the study. The questionnaires were administered to principals, deputy principals and Heads of Departments. The researchers used close-ended questions, open-ended questions, and contingency and matrix questions. Open ended items required the subjects to give direct views. Close- ended items required definite answers.

4.0. Research Findings

4.1 Attitudes towards Delegation

The first objective of the study sought to establish the effects of teachers’ attitude on delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools. The findings from the Likert Scale on the principal respondents are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Principals’ opinions on Attitudes towards Delegation

Code	Interrogating statement	SA	A	N	D	SD
A	Much of my work has to be delegated or else I will have a burn out.	0	3	3	1	3
B	I do not feel having time to delegate authority properly	6	6	3	1	0
C	If I were to delegate authority, my job would not be nearly as much fun.	0	6	0	1	3
D	I would delegate more but I am pretty much a perfectionist	0	3	3	1	9
E	The credit of a successful delegated duty should always go to the person delegating.	0	3	0	1	6
F	I fear delegating duties since my juniors may take credit for a job well done	3	0	0	1	12
G	I feel that when I delegate authority I lose control	3	0	0	1	9
H	I have not really found that delegation saves any time.	0	9	6	3	9
I	When I have given clear instructions and authority and the task is not done right, I get upset.	0	3	6	9	6

Table3 shows the agreement views of the principal respondents on the effect of attitude on delegation of duties. Based on the data analyzed, majority of the respondents pointed out that delegation was not by any means a way of saving on time. This constituted 33% of the respondents who participated in the study; while 44% disagreed that principals failed to delegate due to the fear that their juniors would take credit for a job well done or the feeling that they would lose control. Contrary to this, a large percentage of the respondents constituting 67% pointed out that much of their work was delegated and that the delegating authority brought fun to the job and credit of a successful delegated duty to the person who did the work.

On the contrary, the largest percentage of the deputy principals disagreed that principals delegate duties so as to spare time away from the workplace and attend other official duties. Further, they did not perceive the delegated duties as somebody’s responsibilities. These findings were further supported by 60% of heads of departments’ respondents who noted that delegated work was poorly done and it was an extra burden to them.

4.2 Effect of Workload on Delegation of Duties and responsibilities

The second objective of the study was to establish the effect of workload on delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools. According to the principal respondents, the management of the school routine was too much and hence the need to delegate some of their workload their juniors. Twenty ((57.1%) principal respondents agreed that they delegate duties based on the current workload of the staff. On the other hand,

25% of the principal respondents disagreed that they used their teachers' workload as the yard stick for delegating duties and responsibilities. In this case, they were always ready to delegate duties irrespective of their teachers' workload. This opinion constituted 28.6% of the respondents.

The deputy principals were also asked to give their views on the effect of workload on delegation of duties to the staff. According to 45.7% deputy principal respondents, they were allowed to delegate duties and responsibilities only when they are overwhelmed by the work. On the other hand, the respondents noted that delegated duties and responsibilities made them become ineffective. The findings from the Heads of Departments on the effect of workload on delegation of duties and responsibilities are summarized in figure 1

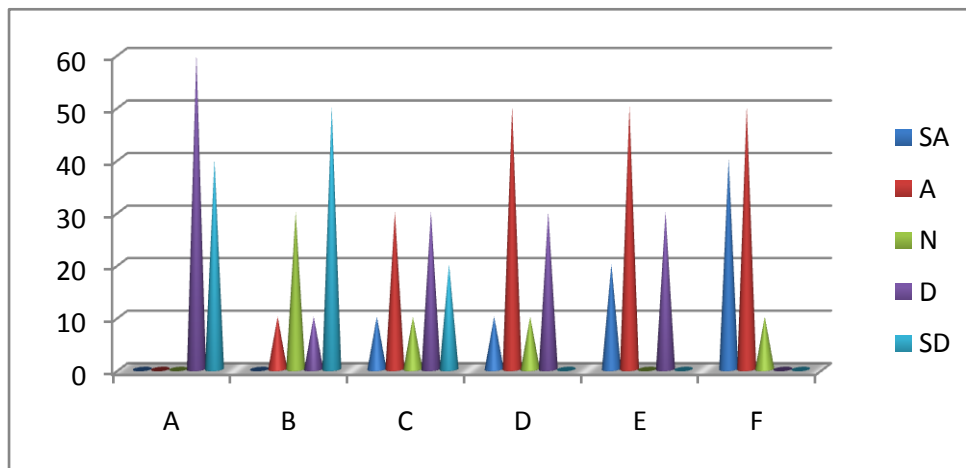


Figure 1: HOD's responses on effects of Workload on Delegation

Based on the analyses presented in Figure 1 above, 65.1% respondents agreed at a great percentage that the principals delegate duties due to pressure they are put under. Secondly, through delegation the principal can transfer routine work to subordinates and thereby concentrate on tasks that are more important. However, 73.0% of the respondents noted that failure by the principals' to consider their teachers current workload lead to inefficiency. In addition, the respondents not that selective delegation leads to over burdening both deputy principals and the head of departments. Generally, respondents have agreed with Okumbe (1999) and Orora (2007) that delegation reduces heads workload. However, these findings seem to differ with those of Polit& Beck, (2003) when they noted that there was no significant relationship between teachers' workload and efficiency on delegated duties and responsibilities.

5.0 Conclusion

From the results presented and discussed in section 4.0 above, it was concluded that principals' attitude influenced delegation of duties and responsibilities in the administration of secondary schools in Mbeere Sub-County. The failure by principals to put into consideration their teachers' current workload negatively influenced their efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out delegated duties and responsibilities.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the study recommends that;

- i. Secondary principals should address the challenges posed by teachers' negative attitudes towards delegation of duties and responsibilities.
- ii. Secondary school principals should come up with a policy on workload and delegation of duties and responsibilities as this affects efficiency in delivery of services.

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