

Head Teachers' Preferred Parent-School Conflict Management Styles in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu Sub-County, Kenya. The Effect of Gender and Headship Experience

John Kanjogu Kiumi

Abstract

Formal education is a critical determinant of the rate of development in a nation. In this regard, the government of Kenya has initiated strategies to enhance access and completion rate in primary education. Some of the key initiatives include the school feeding programme in arid and semi-arid areas and the provision of Free Primary Education (FPE). However, nearly 30percent of primary school graduates fail to secure secondary school places in the country, a factor that has in some cases generated parent-school conflict in low performing schools in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination. Pupils learning outcomes is a high stakes issue and as adduced from management literature, disputes relating to the same can be addressed through integration rather than avoiding, compromising, competing or accommodating approaches. What is not clear is the styles/modes that head teachers in the study area are inclined to. This is what informed the study. Using a modified Thomas Kilman conflict mode instrument, data were collected from 58 head teachers in Nyahururu sub-county and subsequently analyzed using t-test and ANOVA statistics. The results showed that the head teachers had a higher preference for the avoidance mode while the least preferred was accommodation mode irrespective of their gender and headship experience. Male head teachers, in addition, had a higher preference for competing mode than females ($p > .05$) while females inclination towards collaboration mode was stronger compared to males ($p > .05$). Preference for competing mode lowered towards the more experienced head teachers ($p < .05$) while the converse was the case for the collaborating mode. Based on these findings, head teachers should minify the use of avoiding mode in favour of collaborating mode. Head teachers can be assisted in this paradigm shift through workshops and seminars organized by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and Ministry of Education.

Keywords: Conflict management styles, head teachers, parent-school conflict.

Full text:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329391333_Head_Teachers%27_PREFERRED_Parent-School_Conflict_Management_Styles_in_Public_Primary_Schools_In_Nyahururu_Sub-County_Kenya_The_Effect_of_Gender_and_Headship_Experience