The Rights and Equitable Treatment of Shareholders in Early Childhood Education (ECE) Management in Bahati Division, Kenya

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Abstract: Globally, the desire to establish whether schools are applying principles of corporate governance in managing school affairs is of importance. Proper application of corporate principals enables achievement of stated goals in management of ECE. This study sought to examine the rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in early childhood education (ECE) management in Bahati Division, Nakuru County, Kenya. This allowed identification of standards and norms with which to compare the stakeholder’s involvement in proper management of ECE in the Division. This eventually impacts curriculum implementation. The target population was 41 ECE centers in Bahati Sub-County and 123 teachers in the same area. A sample of 10 pre-school teachers, 10 pre-school head teachers and 10 pre-school committee members was taken for the study. A pilot study was carried out on a different set of respondents to better plan for the research. The test-retest procedure was used for testing reliability and it yielded favorable results to warrant reliance on the data collected and its findings. Qualitative and quantitative data was obtained through questionnaires. This was further analyzed and presented through narratives, tables and graphs. The study revealed majority of Pre-School teachers in Bahati, Nakuru North sub-county felt that preventing conflicts of interest influenced the establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders with regard to ECE management, recording a mean of 2.9090 whereas a standard deviation of 1.37510 was recorded from the respondents. The school board should make known the legal and regulatory requirements to key personnel in the schools under study in order to ensure they appreciate and adhere to principals of corporate governance. In agreement with Crawford (2007), the management ought to be able to fulfill its duties and responsibilities irrespective of those who do not act in accordance to stated guidelines. The study recommends the Involvement of stakeholders in all aspects of the management of ECE as a way of observing adherence to principals of corporate governance.

Keywords: Corporate governance, rights and equitable treatment, early childhood education, Nakuru County, Kenya

1. Introduction

Corporate Governance has become an issue of worldwide importance. Good corporate governance practices play a vital role in promoting educational development and social progress. It is the engine of growth internationally, and increasingly responsible for providing employment, public and private services, goods and infrastructure (Khalid, 2011).

OECD (2004) stresses that successful governance structures minimize problems and optimize performance and accountability. The essence of good governance lies in the ongoing development of a culture within the school that embraces ethics, honesty, transparency and high levels of integrity from all members of the school board, under the watchful eyes of its stakeholders, it is vital to recognize that no school can afford to neglect proper and effective governance processes (Low and Albert, 2008).

Ultimately, it is the board which is responsible for governance practices and the board must therefore take responsibility for the processes by which the school is directed, controlled and made accountable. It is a vital ingredient of organizational success for boards to establish and continually develop effective governance policies and practices. Indeed, schools irrespective of their size, complexity, history or affiliation, that establish, implement and actually apply (rather than pay lip service to) good governance principles, will be more successful in serving the needs of their stakeholders. Conflict of one sort or another is likely to be a constraint within a school. The role of governance is to manage the conflict and ensure that through on-going communication and dialogue the interests of the stakeholders continue to be met. In the words of Aldridge, (2004):

A sustainable governance structure should produce stable and effective leadership which underpins achievement of the school’s objectives, and which is sensitive to guarding the vision and values of the past, whilst being responsive to changes in community values and the preferences of the immediate stakeholders.

Governance, the manner in which power is exercised in the management of economic and social resources for sustainable human development, has assumed critical importance in these days of political pluralism. It is a vital ingredient in the maintenance of a dynamic balance between the need for order and equality in society, the efficient production and delivery of goods and services, accountability in the use of power, the protection of human rights and freedoms, and the maintenance of an organized corporate framework within which each citizen can contribute fully towards finding innovative solutions to common problems.

In Kenya, there are efforts towards universal provision of education. But, without efficient institutions for Early Childhood Education, educational standards in the country will drop down. As a result, professionals in the industry may stagnate and collapse hence the country’s economy will be destroyed (Aglietta et al., 2005).
The performance of ECE in the study area is minimal and could be due to lack of adherence to principles of corporate governance. This portends a great risk in realization of Vision 2030 and the Millennium development goals and leads to the research question; what is the extent of application of principles of corporate governance in the management of ECE programs in Bahati Division?

The study was aimed at establishing the rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management in Bahati Division, Nakuru North Sub-County. This study was guided by human relations theory postulated by Mary Parker Fouet, Felton Mayo and Frits Rotulesiberger between 1920 and 1930 also advocated by Okumbe (1998).

This theory is useful in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships for the success of an institution (Dignam and Lowry, 2006). The human relation theory stresses in its principles that workers are more comfortable when they perform as members of a team rather than as individuals, specialization creates efficiency and informal leaders need to be recognized and be given responsibilities. Individuals also need to be involved in decision making process to boost their performance; welfare as well as being sensitive to employees’ interests and both informal and formal channels of communication is emphasized (Clarke, 2009).

The findings of this study are likely to help head teachers, teachers, and ministry of Education and Policy makers establish the effects of principles of corporate governance in ECE management. This is key in decision making towards improvement corporate governance and thus academic performance. The findings may further help the school administration find ways of adhering to principles of corporate governance thus ensuring that their children are properly supported by the schools management to enable them perform better.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey is useful when the researcher wants to describe specific behavior as it occurs in the environment. The main characteristic of this method is that the researcher has no control over the variables; he/she can only report what has happened or what is happening. It also includes attempts by researchers to discover causes even when they cannot control the variables (Kothari, 2004).

2.2 Target Population

The study targeted all 41 public ECE centers in Bahati Sub-County. It involved all managers of the 41 ECE centers and 123 teachers.

2.3 Sampling Techniques

Sample size refers to specific number of individuals or cases that are used as the representative of the target population. Mugenda & Mugenda, (2003) defines sampling as the process of selecting the subject or cases to be included in the study as representative of the target population. Purposeful sampling was done.

2.4 Sample Size

The researcher took 10 preschools head teachers, 10 pre-school committee members and 10 pre-school teachers. This ensured that each member of the target population had equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. This ensured that the sample was representative of the total population under study.

2.5 Data Collection tools and Procedures

In this study, questionnaires, Focus Group Discussion and Observation Checklist were used. The questionnaire was preferred because the respondents were literate and it is easy for them to fill in within a short period of time. As the head teacher filled in the questionnaire, the researcher conducted focus group discussion with the teachers selected in the respective school. At the same time the researcher made observations and recorded them respectively.

2.6 Instrument validity and reliability

Validity is the extent to which research instruments measure what they are intended to measure, Oso & Onen (2008). In this study, the pilot study was done in two schools that were not involved in the actual study. The researcher constructed instruments in accordance with the objectives of the study, theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guide the study.

To test the reliability, the test-retest was used. The questionnaires were given to the respondents to fill in and then after one week, the same questionnaires were given again to the same respondents. After the two tests are administered, the Pearson product- moment correlation was computed to determine whether the scores on the test correlate. A correlation coefficient of 0.7 was considered appropriate (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

2.7 Data analysis

There is qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis. Qualitative analysis of data refers to non-empirical analysis. Thematic analysis was done on Qualitative data derived from open ended questionnaire items. The main themes and patterns in the responses were identified and analyzed to determine the adequacy, usefulness and consistency of the information. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages and means, Mugenda & Mugenda (2003). All the collected data from the field was coded and entered in to computer for fast and accurate analysis by use of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The findings of the data analysis were presented in frequency tables.
3. Results and Discussion

Figure 3.1: Pre-School teachers’ marital status

Figure 3.1 shows that 65% were married, 35% were single. The results imply that majority of the respondents were in a marriage family setup. This could point to experienced members whose views are valuable in the case study in terms of effects of principles of cooperate governance in ECE management in Bahati, Nakuru North sub-county.

Pre-school teacher’s education level

These results are summarized and presented in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2: Pre-school teacher’s education level

Table 4.10: Establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management in the schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective enforcement mechanisms</td>
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<td>1.40130</td>
<td>1.964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effective legal protection</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.7273</td>
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<td>2.618</td>
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<td>Regular meetings</td>
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<td>1.9091</td>
<td>1.30035</td>
<td>1.691</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prevent conflicts of interest</td>
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<td>1.37510</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access to information</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2.2727</td>
<td>1.34840</td>
<td>1.818</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 above shows that majority of Pre-School teachers in Bahati, Nakuru North sub-county felt that preventing conflicts of interest influenced the establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders with regard to ECE management, recording a mean of 2.9090 whereas a standard deviation of 1.37510 was recorded from the respondents. Another portion with mean of 2.8182 and 2.7273 respectively felt that putting together effective enforcement mechanisms and having effective legal protection in the schools influenced the establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management. This is followed by the respondents who were of the view that regular meetings with Pre-School teachers played a key role in the influence of establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management. This is well elaborated in the table and narratives which shows the respondents and the statistics.

Table 4.11 above shows that school committees in Bahati, Nakuru North sub-county felt that preventing conflicts of interest influenced the establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders with regard to ECE management, recording a mean of 3.2000 whereas a standard deviation of 1.22927 was recorded from the respondents. Another portion with mean of 2.6000 and 2.8000 respectively felt that putting together effective enforcement mechanisms and having effective legal protection in the schools influenced the establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management.

This is followed by the majority of respondents who were of the view that regular meetings with head teachers played a key role in the influence of establishment of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management, recording a mean of 3.6000 and a standard deviation of 1.57762.
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<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Variance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>1.2649</td>
<td>1.6000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Effective legal protection</td>
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<td>2.8000</td>
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<td>1.7330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular meetings</td>
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<td>Access to information</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>3.1000</td>
<td>1.5238</td>
<td>2.311</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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4. Conclusion and recommendations

Responses in line with establishing of rights and equitable treatment of shareholders in ECE management were; establishing enforcement mechanisms for the rules set in order not to favor or lean on individuals or groups. All this greatly impacted how the shareholders viewed the ECE management in terms of its discharge of mandate. On the question of the issues surrounding establishment of rights of stakeholders and equal treatment in ECE management, the study indicates that this has been put in place. The findings may help the institutions concerned with ECE education and management to ensure equity and access to education across the country regardless of tribe, race, religion and socio-economic status.

References


Author Profile

Kithuku M. Roselyn is currently a part time lecturer at Machakos University, Kenya. She obtained masters of education in early childhood education from the University of Nairobi in 2014.