

# MANAGEMENT AS A DETERMINANT OF EFFECTIVENESS AMONG SELECTED PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN EASTERN REGION OF UGANDA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study was to establish the nature of relationship between management and levels of effectiveness among secondary school in the public and private sector domains in the Eastern Region of Uganda. The study was conducted by adapting the ideas of the Systems Theory to chosen components of school management. Using a quantitative comparative co relational ex-post facto survey design, data were collected from 223 public and private secondary schools from 23 districts of the Eastern region of Uganda. Self-administered questionnaires and school results score sheets were used as the main data collection instruments. Data were then analyzed at univariate level using frequency counts and summary statistics, at bivariate level using t-tests and correlation analyses. At multivariate level, Factor and Chi-square analyses were applied. The study revealed that the effectiveness of a majority of secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda was below average. An array of characteristics that best explained various components of school management were identified. Those characteristics included consultations, personal reward, participatory decision-making, values and beliefs, awareness of staff capabilities, sharing responsibilities, targeted delegation, self-motivation and an open door policy. The conclusion was that despite a variety of management approaches, effectiveness levels of both public and private secondary schools remained low. It was recommended that for the schools in the Eastern Region to improve their effectiveness, school managers and teachers need to be regularly appraised and trained on an array of pertinent school management issues.*

**Keywords:** Management, effectiveness, public, private, secondary schools, Eastern Region of Uganda

## INTRODUCTION

Management features of a school, such as innovative approaches to instruction, discipline, social interactions and curriculum emphasis, are decisions taken by management guided by the operational school philosophy and the school community's validated needs (Musaazi, 2006). As emphasized by De Grauwe (2000) and Visscher (1999), the quality of education depends primarily on the way schools are managed, bearing in mind that those who manage schools do not live in a vacuum. Management appears to differ in schools of different funding dispensations (Lockheed & Jimenez, 1994). In their findings for instance, Lockheed and Jimenez showed that public and private schools differ significantly in terms of their management organization. They provided evidence that proved that as opposed to public school heads, private school principals had significant influence over what occurred in their schools, and also established a school climate that promoted learning.

Governments around the world are introducing a range of strategies, including management, aimed at improving the delivery of education services, with added emphasis on improving

quality and ameliorating enrolments (Barrera-Osorio, Fasih, Patrinos & Santibanez, 2008). Indeed, international experience within the education sector reveals a wide variation in management decentralization designs, ranging from transfers from central to sub-national levels to investing significant authority and responsibilities in schools (Verspoor, 2008). However, Verspoor's observation appears generalized and is rather unhelpful as far as actual school settings are concerned. At school level, Barrera-Osorio et al. for example, identified school-based management (SBM), as a strategy of decentralized educational decision-making.

SBM work, as summarized succinctly by Barrera-Osorio et al., functions through school committees that may (1) monitor the school's performance; (2) raise funds and create endowments for the school; (3) appoint, suspend, dismiss, and remove teachers, and ensure that teachers' salaries are paid regularly; and (4) approve annual budgets. Crucially, Gropello (2006) in his comparative analysis of SBM in Central America made a key conclusion that SBM models have generally led to greater empowerment and teacher effort, resulting in (a) better use of the existing limited capacity of teachers and schools; (b) higher coverage in rural areas; (c) better student flows; (d) improved learning outcomes. The downside Gropello noticed was that SBM ranked poorly in terms of teacher education and experience, adoption of innovative teaching methodologies and supportive teacher involvement in schools.

There are compelling arguments about the concept of management as a variable applicable to the school system just as it is to other types of organizations (e.g. Bennel, 2004; Dembele & Miaro, 2003; Verspoor, 2008). It was noticed in the literature that schools that have poor management in place run the risk of being out-paced by their well-managed counterparts. For instance, in most of Sub-Saharan Africa, head teachers receive little or no specific preparation to manage schools and their appointments are mainly bureaucratically made (Dembele & Miaro, 2003). Bennel (2004) saw it as contextually worrisome that management at the national and sub-national levels was quite chaotic in many African countries. He further lamented that most of the countries exhibit management styles that tend to be authoritarian with limited participation, delegation and communication with respect to school management functions, with a high turnover of head teachers, creating a disruptive climate in schools.

The general opinion in literature is that management processes must clearly follow from educational objectives and lines of authority specified to help avoid overlaps in responsibility and gaps in information (World Bank, 2008). Management processes were also seen as important contributors to high performance and satisfactory effectiveness (Visscher, 1999). In institutions such as the World Bank, the policy is that all staff has to be informed and trained to carry out their roles and responsibilities, with management monitoring mechanisms defined and made functional (World Bank, 2008). The logic behind it is for clear procedures that ensure collection and transmission of data through levels of management so that information reaches the highest authorities and serve as a basis for decision-making and policy-making (Verspoor, 2008). The stated logic however depicted a best case scenario. But the realities in different contexts are another matter and could be different. Therefore, given that management was described in the literature as being broad in scope (Cole, 2004; Koontz, O'Donnell, & Weihrich, 1988), the researcher opted to look at specific but pertinent school management components as determinants of effectiveness in a rural setting in Uganda.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda have been reported to record poor academic achievement in national examinations. For example, a study by Oluka and Opolot-Okurut

(2008) observed that there consistently has been very poor academic performance in primary schools in Teso area, a sub-region in the Eastern part of Uganda, for over 25 years. Over long time lapses, there also had been similar complaints about poor service delivery in schools, including poor quality teaching and lack of sufficiently qualified and experienced staff (e.g. Eremu & Nabusoba, 2010; Passi, 1990).

Kagolo (2011) revealed that in the year 2010 alone, a total of 806 secondary schools across the country failed to produce a first-grade student in Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations of that year. Despite these indications, the effectiveness situation among secondary schools of rural areas had been largely empirically unknown. According to observations of Eremu and Nabusoba (2010), some experts attributed the poor state-of-affairs in Uganda's secondary school education to low morale of teachers and poor supervision, among other factors. The consequences have been poor results and the highest student drop-out rate in East Africa, (Businge, 2010; Oketch & Rolleston, 2007).

Strong management processes are a prerequisite for effective schools. According to the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2004-2015 (Republic of Uganda, 2005), the Uganda Government consistently endeavors to allocate a reasonably large share of its budget to education expansion to increase the number of schools. To fulfill school goals, there is need for management with an acute grasp of key issues (Musaazi, 2006). But as far as Uganda is concerned, many observers (e.g. Asankha & Takashi, 2011; Eremu and Nabusoba, 2010; Kalinaki, 2011; Ssenkabirwa & Mitti, 2010) lament on the extent to which school management and quality of education provided has deteriorated among schools, of which there is a dearth of empirical studies to back up the claims. These concerns clearly pointed at the need to examine management characteristics that determine the levels of effectiveness of educational institutions, particularly in the rural parts of the country. Hence, this quantitative research survey evaluated secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Against the backdrop of school policy reforms in Uganda, and the need to exposit an understanding of how to improve the effectiveness of secondary education, this quantitative survey evaluated the relationships between characteristics of school management and levels of effectiveness among 223 secondary level institutions in 23 districts in the Eastern Region of the country.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research questions used to guide the study were:

1. What are the levels of effectiveness among public and private secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda?
2. What is the relationship between characteristics of school management and levels of effectiveness among secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda?

## HYPOTHESES

The study tested the following null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance:

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the average effectiveness among public and private secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda:

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between characteristics of school management and levels of effectiveness among secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda.

## METHODOLOGY

The study design was a correlational comparative ex-post facto survey with a quantitative approach. The sample size was 223 secondary schools from 23 districts in the Eastern Region of Uganda. Districts of the Region were clustered; the schools stratified into public and private, and were then randomly sampled. The response rate was 85%. The questionnaire, adapted from Heerden (2000), had 40 items in total. They included planning (8 items); decision-making (13 items); organizing (5 items); delegating (6 items) and directing (9 items). Respective school 2010 UCE results were captured independently from Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB)'s archive records and used to derive school effectiveness. The data were analyzed using summary statistics. The researcher used factor analysis to reduce the dimensionality of the independent variables data. Subsequently, the null hypotheses were respectively tested using t, Pearson correlation and Chi-square analyses.

## FINDINGS, DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

**Table 1. Characteristics of secondary schools involved in the study**

	<i>Sub-Category</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Major Category School Type	Public	106	47.5
	Private	117	52.5
	Total	223	100.0
School (day, boarding or mixed)	Day School	97	43.5
	Boarding School	16	7.1
	Mixed (Both)	110	49.3
	Total	223	100.0
Community in which the school is located	A village (fewer than 3,000 people)	72	32.3
	A small town (3,000 to about 15,000 people)	84	37.7
	A town (15,000 to about 100,000 people)	50	22.4
	A large town (with over 100,000 but less than 1 million people)	17	7.6
	Total	223	100.0

As evidenced in Table 1, private schools contributed the biggest percentage, more than half (52.5%), of respondents compared to public schools which had the least percentage of below half (47.5%) of the respondents. As regards the sub-category of the schools, namely day, boarding, or mixed, there were more mixed schools which contributed to 49.3% of the respondents, followed by day schools which made up 43.5% of the respondents. The least percentage of the schools turned out to be the boarding schools (7.1%). Of the community in which the schools were located, a majority of the selected schools in Eastern Region of Uganda (37.7%) were located in small towns of about 3000 to 15000 people, followed by village schools (32.3%) and the least percentage of the schools of the study were located in large towns (7.6%).

Because the dependent variable of the study was school effectiveness, the researcher had to establish the effectiveness of the selected public and private secondary schools in the area of study *ab initio*. A Record Sheet for the performance in 2010 UCE examinations of all the schools under study was devoted to the dependent variable. Then a continuous dependent variable was generated on the effectiveness of the schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda. The “effectiveness” was computed based on the O’ level performance of the secondary schools.

The effectiveness was categorized into those schools which performed either below or above average. Table 2 shows the distribution of the said selected secondary schools in terms of their levels of effectiveness.

**Table 2. Effectiveness of the schools**

<i>Effectiveness level</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Below average	188	84.3
Above average	35	15.7
Total	223	100.0

As seen from Table 2, a majority, or more than four-fifths of the selected secondary schools in the Eastern Region, had their effectiveness level below average (84.3%), while less than a fifth of schools exhibited effectiveness level above average (15.7%) in 2010 UCE examinations administered by UNEB.

**Table 3. t-Test for no significant difference in the average effectiveness of public and private secondary schools**

	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>
N	106	117
Mean	1.6737	1.4685
Std. Deviation	0.62382	0.48224
Variance	0.3891	0.2326

Degrees of freedom,  $df = (106+117 - 2) = 221$ ,  $t = 2.7179$  and  $P=0.05$

To test null Hypothesis One, the researcher applied the t-test statistics and computed the values as shown in Table 3. Since the computed t-score of 2.7179 exceeded the table value of  $t=1.96$ , the researcher rejected the null hypothesis of no difference in the average effectiveness of public and private secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda. Instead, the research hypothesis was accepted with the conclusion that a difference exists in the average effectiveness of public and private schools; and that private schools were more effective than their public counterparts in the Eastern Region of Uganda. This was in conformity with the studies of Aslam (2007) and Dronkers (2004) who obtained similar findings vis-à-vis public and private school dichotomies.

The school management variable had five components which included planning, decision-making, organizing, delegating, and directing respectively. The researcher investigated their descriptive statistics, carried out factor analysis to reduce the dimensionality of the variables, and correlated characteristics of the said components with effectiveness on a case by case

basis. The factors that best explained each of the respective components are outlined component by component.

### **Planning**

It was found that among the secondary schools in Eastern Region of Uganda, planning was carried out by involving consultations with other colleagues. This aspect was prevalent and it showed a positive correlation with school effectiveness ( $r = 0.169^*$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.014$ ). It is in congruence with Akinsolu (2007) who examined planning in a different context. The study also concurs with Akinsolu's assertion that consulting others when planning is a key determinant of school effectiveness. The statistical significance is in support of other scholars' contention that planning is indispensable in school management (e.g. Musaaazi, 2006; Akinsolu & Ojede, 2008).

### **Decision-Making**

The study found evidence that making decisions based on personal reward was significantly and positively correlated to effectiveness in the Eastern Region of Uganda ( $r = 0.213$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.002$ ). The findings echoed Chapman, Burton and Werner (2009) who had noted that head teachers have been reported to exhibit a lack of confidence in skills and knowledge of policy implementation. The finding also highlights the emphasis for the need to develop avenues to fight corruption (Flanary & Watt, 1999). Indeed, favoritism in the making of decisions among the secondary schools of Eastern Region of Uganda is an avenue that could invite corruption, which can equally be detrimental to the effectiveness of the schools of the Region.

It was determined that schools in the Region use participative decision-making most; it is significantly positively correlated with effectiveness ( $r = 0.281$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.000$ ). This was in keeping with the concepts of Barera-Osorio et al. (2008), albeit from the school based management (SBM) perspective. The finding was in tandem with the Systems Theory (Scheerens, 2000), which underscores interrelationships within an organizational system. Also found was a significant positive correlation with effectiveness of the fact that values and beliefs are factors that influence school decisions ( $r = 0.282$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.000$ ) among the secondary schools in the same Area. This was theoretically believable to the researcher, given the rural nature of Eastern Uganda, and the tendency of the people there to stick to their respective cultures. The findings agreed with professional advice of New Teacher Project (2005) who recommends respect and adherence to local surroundings. Thus, such professionalism is generally contextually applied among the schools sampled in the study.

### **Organizing**

The researcher found a non-significant positive correlation of leaders' awareness of their staffs' capabilities and training and effectiveness among secondary schools in the Eastern Region ( $r = 0.106$ ;  $\text{Sign.} = 0.139$ ). This finding lent credence to Lunenburg (2010) who insists on building horizontal communications in order to ensure that stakeholders of the school are attuned regarding to achieving its objectives. The findings seemed to indicate that this is quite pertinent in rural schools which have a deficit of trained teachers. This also echoed the Systems Theory approach advocated by Scheerens (2000) that awareness of training and capabilities will allow proper deployment of the teachers to tasks that they are best trained for is good for the effectiveness of the schools.

The study also brought out that among the Eastern Region's secondary schools there is a positive correlation with effectiveness, though not statistically significant, that authority and assignments are given by different people ( $r = 0.019$ ,  $\text{Sign.} = 0.782$ ). The finding seemed reasonable to the researcher in that there is shared responsibility and task allocation. This was



similar to the ideas of Cranston (2001) who deemphasizes monopoly of authority and tasks by a few. In the context schools of the Eastern Region, different people doing different assignments is necessary and should be upheld for improving the effectiveness of the schools.

### Delegating

The study revealed a positive significant correlation with effectiveness of the fact that among Eastern Region's secondary schools only a few are delegated to do tasks since they are good, fast and do them correctly ( $r = 0.162$ ,  $\text{Sign.} = 0.018$ ). Given that most of the schools are located in rural and small towns, they (i.e. those delegated) are most likely to have been identified as good at doing certain jobs well. Lunenburg (2010) supports this line of approach because it is crucial to effective management. Delegation could and should be encouraged in schools in the Eastern Region.

Also established was that denial to delegate work because managers believed people would think they cannot do the task positively and significantly correlated with effectiveness ( $r = 0.209$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.002$ ) among secondary schools in Eastern Region. The finding supported the assertions of Iqbal (2007) about unwillingness of managers to accept inadequacies of subordinates as one of the reasons they (managers) do not delegate. This appeared to challenge the Systems Theory approach, in that personal considerations exclude the interests of the System.

### Directing

A positive and non-significant correlation was found to exist between the headmaster having an open door policy and effectiveness among secondary schools in Eastern Region ( $r = 0.010$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.557$ ). The finding supports Lowenstein (1998) who advocates that directors should not sit back and hope that things will work out by themselves. Lowenstein is also supported by the findings of this study that revealed a positive non-significant correlation between a headmaster being self-motivated and effectiveness among schools in Eastern Region ( $r = 0.041$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.557$ ). Lowenstein's requirement that directing calls for being involved in day to day work was thus underlined.

After investigating all the factors under management that were selected using factor analysis, the variables were then correlated with effectiveness to get the general result on the relationship between school management and levels of effectiveness which is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4. Relationship between school management and effectiveness**

		<i>Effectiveness</i>	<i>Management</i>
Effectiveness	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.555
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.445
	N	223	4
Management	Pearson Correlation	-0.555	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.445	
	N	4	4

The results (Table 4) suggested a negative correlation ( $r = -0.555$ ,  $\text{sign.} = 0.445$ ) between school management and effectiveness which was not statistically significant, indicating a coexistence of relatively good school management alongside low levels of effectiveness.

After investigating the objective on the relationship between school management and levels of school effectiveness, the researcher tested for Hypothesis Two using Chi-square test as shown in Table 5.

**Table 5. Chi-square test for no relationship between characteristics of school management and levels of effectiveness**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.000	9	0.213
Likelihood Ratio	11.090	9	0.270
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.925	1	0.336
N of Valid Cases	4		

The computed value of Chi-square (12.000) in Table 5 exceeded the Chi-square table ( $= 9.49$ , for  $P = 0.05$ , and  $df = 9$ ). Therefore, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis (with 5% probability of error) and accepted that a relationship seemed to exist between characteristics of school management and levels of effectiveness among secondary schools in Eastern Region of Uganda. However, it was not statistically significant (sig. value = 0.213 exceeded the probability value = 0.05).

This result was dissimilar to the findings of Gaziel (1998), Lekamge (2010) and Ekundayo (2010) who found significant relationships between school management and effectiveness. Theoretically, the finding seems to mirror the systems approach in that the school as a system is equally affected by contextual issues. Among secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda, the non-significance of the relationship could be attributed to the fact that the effectiveness of schools in the Region is below average and hence, to obtain a significant relationship with such levels of effectiveness could be quite a daunting task for the already constrained teachers. The interrelationships between the components under school management could also possibly be complicating the achievement of statistically significant findings, besides other unidentified extraneous variables that may be at play.

## SUMMARY

**Hypothesis One:** Generally, the effectiveness of a majority of secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda is below average. Among the schools, private schools are relatively more effective than their publically funded counterparts.

**Hypothesis Two:** Secondary schools in the Eastern Region of Uganda use a variety of management approaches but levels of effectiveness remain low.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

For the secondary schools in Eastern Region of Uganda are to be more effective, the following are specifically recommended in terms of their management:

1. Planning should be enhanced in all the schools of the region. This could be done in phases. First, school boards and the head teachers have to be professionally trained



or updated with the key planning aspects. Workshops could help in this regard. Secondly, the heads of departments in schools could follow. Lastly, teachers have to equally be appraised about the practical aspects of planning.

2. Decision-making should as far as possible be an integral part of school management in all the secondary schools of the Region. This should involve all the key stakeholders, including students, teachers, head teachers, parents and school boards or governing bodies, including government.
3. Organizing and organization has to be taken seriously in all the said schools. The schools should also be open and actively cooperate and coordinate with sister institutions within and outside the Region.
4. Delegating staff has to be part and parcel of school management process in all the secondary schools in the Eastern Region. Head teachers have to be cognizant of the strengths and weaknesses of their colleagues and exploit the strengths and minimize the weaknesses as much as possible.
5. Directing should encompass an open door policy that encourages self-motivation that goes beyond the head teachers. All employees in the schools should be cooperative with their leaders so that activities are well coordinated, with focused attention to the school and educational goals.
6. As regards school management in general, regular training administered by professionals schooled in management is advised. It should not be left for granted that school management is learnt on the job.

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