

An Exploration of Skills Needed by Principals of Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya to Succeed in Financial Management

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Abstract

Financial management in teacher training colleges is a concern today because of the immense resources vested in these colleges by the stakeholders. Prudent financial management calls for colleges headed by principals who have acquired relevant knowledge skills and attitudes in financial management. Financial management skills may be acquired through training/ learning or experience. The skills acquired through training should be demonstrated in practice by carrying out the relevant tasks. This study was intended to explore the current state of financial management skills and to make recommendations on the type of financial management skills training required. This study used a mixed methodology approach to collect and present data. Mixed research method, combine elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and collaboration. A sample of eleven colleges was chosen out of the twenty one (21) public primary teacher training colleges in the country. Random sampling, purposive and stratified techniques were used in selecting the respondents for the study. The qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently by use of questionnaires, interview schedules and document analysis instruments on finance management. This helped to determine if there was a pattern evident in the data. Comparison of the two data provided valuable information thus enriching the descriptive reporting of the data. The study confirmed that most primary teacher training colleges' principals had limited financial management skills

Keywords: Finance management, principal, accounting and budgeting, auditing, expenditure management, Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), In-service trainings (INSETS)

1. Introduction

Effective teacher training college financial management calls for prudence in bookkeeping, accounting, budgeting, procurement, supervision and expenditure management. The financial manager should demonstrate relevant skills in these tasks. Worldwide competence in financial management is given prominence. In countries like Britain, Australia, and New Zealand, being posted to head a college means added responsibility for the principal and the BOG who must manage the budget of the particular institution regardless of whether or not the principal is ready or sufficiently prepared for this financial role that require frequent checks of the institution's financial records (Di Napoli, 2007). In Hong Kong it is required that potential principals must pass certain qualifying tests which include financial management before being promoted. In Pakistani the teacher training principals get assisted by the state to acquire educational leadership and management training and are required to continually upgrade these skills (Faheem, 2006). In other areas like Miami, London and Ghana the state conducts courses and conferences on management for Teacher Training Colleges' (TTCs) principals. While in other states like California, a vast majority of school principals hold a minimum qualification of a bachelor's degree with most of them having a second degree in a finance related course (Mary, Isabel & Trish, 2006)

Kyambogo University in Uganda offers certificates in principles of management, financial management and resource management among others to teacher educators, and through Teacher Development Management System (TDMS) equips principals of teachers' colleges with appropriate management skills (Henry, Ngobi, Otaala, Maani & Bakaira, 2013). The financial management component is lacking in the Kenyan teacher education courses. The basic courses in Kenya like Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) do not prepare teachers adequately to become principals who can manage educational institutions professionally and especially the financial management aspect. Financial management is a key component of educational management that requires a lot of skills. It is one of the most technical components of educational management. Financial management is multi-disciplinary; it is a science applying rational, logical and systematic skills which use data both qualitatively and quantitatively linking to policy documents. It is an art needing creativity and making it practical by being guided by rules and discipline and therefore a manager should be trained.

2. Statement of the problem

The Education Act cap 211, (revised 2013) of the laws of Kenya require that the principal, as the secretary to the Board of Governors (BOG) now Board of Management (BOM), prepare annual estimates, budget control of the day to day expenditures connected with the running of the institution, and institute internal controls such as auditing and accounting procedures (Education Act cap 211, 2009, 2013). This is an uphill task and challenges the principal's financial management ability. Over the years, quality assessment and audit reports have shown

that there are cases of improper practices in financial management or weak accounting mechanisms, which have undermined effectiveness of the institutions with regard to service delivery (MOE- Education draft Bill, Feb. 2012).

The Koech Commission (2000), as reported in the Education Draft bill (2012) noted lack of accountability, whilst misappropriation of funds was common. One reason identified was the lack of, or poor management training of officers assigned management responsibilities. In Kenya the university basic degree of education (B.Ed), does not offer financial management courses and even at masters level it is offered at the request of the student. This is evident from the university undergraduate degree curriculum. Teachers are trained to teach, not to manage institutions. Teachers are deployed to management positions on account of their classroom performance. This leaves a competence gap in financial management among the persons appointed to headship of Teacher Training Colleges. This prompted an exploration into the skills needed by principals of public teachers training colleges in financial management.

3. Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate skills needed by principals of Teacher Training Colleges in Kenya for effective financial management. It intended to find out the relation between basic financial management training and the effectiveness in financial administration. Specifically this study investigated the principals' competences in (1) strategic management, (2) budgeting as a tool of management, and (3) application of procurement procedures. Secondly, the study looked at how the budgets were being made and implemented, and lastly, the study looked at accounting and auditing procedures as measures of internal control and their impact on principal's performance.

4. Research objectives

1. To establish principals' financial management education background meant to enhance financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya.
2. To determine the financial management training and skills need for financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya.
3. To analyze the impact of financial management training of principals on the success of financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya.

5. Research questions

1. What is the nature of principals' financial management education background, which is meant to enhance financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya?
2. What is the extent of financial management training and skills need for financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya?
3. To what extent does financial management training of principals impact the success of financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya?

6. Rationale/justification

Given that primary teacher training college principals contribute enormously to the education sector but are not very effective due to lack of management skills, it becomes imperative to investigate which financial management skills they have and which ones they lack, and what the implications for training are on financial management of the public teacher training colleges in Kenya. Financial management and skills need, seems not to have received adequate scholarly attention.

While the principals are appointed and given clear guidelines and instructions on financial management and procurement, malpractices such as failure to follow procurement procedures, embezzlement of funds, fraud, misappropriation of funds are still rampant in the teacher training colleges sub sector. Prudent financial management is only possible when the principals have relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes. The object of this study is to contribute towards identification of the relevant skills with an aim of identifying the gaps in skills to help improve in principals' development for enhanced transparency and accountability in the education sector. It will further contribute to the body of knowledge in educational finance. The study also will provide groundwork for further research to investigate other issues in financial management such as performance contracting.

7. Significance of the study

A principal is required by government regulations to initiate internal controls which include regular checks on the income and expenditure status of the institution. The instructions for secondary schools, colleges and polytechnics, "provides heads of educational institutions with a guide that will assist them in establishing systems of internal accounting and administrative controls that comply with the governments standards of financial management" (MOEST, 2006). Principals in Primary Teacher Training Colleges are expected to use the same guidelines yet the management applications in the two levels of education are totally different.

Financial management practices and skills needed for principals in teacher training colleges in Kenya, seem not to have received adequate scholarly attention. The Kenyan university curriculum for Bachelor of

Education (B.Ed) studies does not include financial management as a major unit of study. This leaves the B.Ed graduates ill prepared for administrative functions when the opportunity arises. The teachers are also not trained on management skills before appointment or immediately after taking over the principal's office.

This study was meant to inform the universities on the need to develop a curriculum that can prepare students for management positions right from the start. Teachers in Kenya are appointed to management positions on the basis of their classroom performance or political inclinations. Although these teachers have the basic academic qualification and teaching experience, they lack the managerial skills required for this office. This appointment does not require financial management competence per se. It therefore poses a challenge of management competences to the new principal.

Thus, the study intended to inform the Ministry of Education (MOE) in order to require universities make financial management mandatory for B.Ed students. Further, to put interventions to train the principal's currently in office and newly appointed ones just before they take office. This may mean re-training the ones already in office and an overhaul of the higher education to include institutional and financial management training in the first degree. The in-service and refresher courses could be facilitated by expanding the mandate of Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) to include principals in Teacher Training Colleges as the in-services have been limited to primary and secondary schools' head teachers.

8.Literature review

Paisley as cited in commonwealth (2000) argues that Management in education is a process of relating resources to objectives required in an organization which explicitly exist to provide education. This is to ensure that the desired goals or outcomes are achieved. Therefore financial management means seeing to it that the institution has the required funds to meet its goals and such funds are used for the purpose for which they are meant. Shapiro as cited in Ishara (2007) corroborates that financial management involves financial planning and budgeting, financial accounting, financial analysis, financial decision making and action. Effective financial management ensures that all financial regulations and procedures are complied with; all financial transactions are recorded accurately, adequate controls are in place to ensure that expenditures do not exceed income and only authorized expenditure are incurred. The ultimate responsibility of a college's financial management resides in the principal's office.

The principals responsibility of managing of finances, 'administering the accounting, record keeping and reporting functions which require many detailed and complex systems, reconciling credit and debit accounts of the institution and maintains records to ensure clear audit track (US department of education 34 CFR 668 Subpart, K2011) is quite challenging. These operations must be consistent with Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures (GAAP) and colleges accounting standards of which the principal should be conversant with for him/her to be effective.

Financial management is an integral part of the responsibility of an educational manager because without good financial management practices schools would find it difficult to achieve their goal (commonwealth, 2000). Efficient and effective management of fiscal and physical resources can enhance instructional programs (Drake and Roe, 1992). In Kenya, training or even having a working knowledge of financial management is not considered a pre-requisite for appointment to a principals' position, and consequently principals often lack the essential management skills and specifically financial management skills.

Okumbe (2007) argues that effective educational management, of which financial management is a subset, is not only the most fundamental and precious resource but it is also the scarcer resource in educational organizations. The work of a chief executive officer involves examining the future and drawing up plans which are action oriented, organizing, commanding, coordination and controlling, the activities of an organization to ensure attainment of the goals. Paisley as cited in commonwealth (2000), argues that Management in education is a process of relating resources to objectives required in an organization which explicitly exist to provide education. This is to ensure that the desired goals or outcomes are achieved. Therefore financial management means seeing to it that the institution has the required funds it needs to meet its goals and such funds are used for the purpose for which they are meant.

If teacher education is going to measure with the expectations of vision 2030 of modernizing education, and the global market challenges, then there has to be a paradigm shift in the appointment of teachers to management positions. The objectives of financial management in Teacher Training colleges (TTCs) should be to establish the best management practices and professional service delivery. The institutions are supposed to be guided by legal documents such as the Basic Education Act no 14 of 2013, the Public Procurement and Disposal Act of 2005 and regulations of 2006, and Public procurement manual for schools and colleges among other statutory policies.

Public teacher training colleges are expected to have a strategic plan to guide the prioritization of its operations. The government of Kenya, since 2009, requires that all ministries, local authorities, agencies and higher educational institutions, sign performance contracts and work towards ISO (international organizations standards) certification. This means principals currently have greater financial and managerial responsibilities in

respect of fiscal and physical facilities, staff, students and the community, than in the past. The aspect of performance contracting highlights the principal's role in managing the finances of the college in effective and efficient manner. The principal together with the Board of Management (BOM) accepts the responsibility for ensuring that the college finances are administered correctly.

Educational institutions in Kenya operate under the principles of public management which incorporates the devolution of financial autonomy away from the state towards the institutions and within the institutions. This requires technical and professional know how for effectiveness. An effective financial manager outlines and puts down methods of doing things, and also establishes structures of authority for proper expending of the finances. Financial management requires right training of the personnel and especially the chief executive officer who should be well equipped for the financial management function. This will facilitate proper decision making in directing and controlling the financial aspects of the institutions.

9. Research methodology

The study employed a mixed methodology approach to collect and present data. Mixed research method was found appropriate because the nature of information required to answer the research questions was both qualitative and quantitative. Both data was concurrently collected through the use of questionnaires, and interview schedules.

10. Research design

A descriptive survey design was selected for the study as the study was meant to ask a good number of people questions (in form of questionnaires) and interviews about their management practices. This design allowed for the collection of information necessary for gauging opinions, attitudes and practices that could be used to make inference on financial management competences. The study used descriptive survey design since the variables could not be manipulated, and there existed an opportunity to explore and probe the respondents for more information, to fact find, which resulted in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and suggested solutions to significant problems in financial management. The study targeted the principals and deputy principals of public primary teacher training colleges. Purposive sampling was used to get the principals and their deputies.

The data was analyzed inductively and deductively using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21. Creswell, (2009) corroborates that data analysis within mixed research occurs both with the quantitative (descriptive and inferential numeric analysis) and qualitative (description and thematic text or image analysis) approach and often between the two approaches). The process of data analysis involved several stages namely; data clean up, data reduction, data differentiation and explanation.

11. Results findings

The study sort to determine the skills needed for effective financial management in primary teacher training colleges. To achieve this, salient areas were examined. These areas included: financial management skills acquired at the basic academic training, certified financial management qualifications of the principals and their deputies, any on the job training in financial management, challenges faced by principals in managing institutional finances and skills needed in order to succeed in financial management. The objectives were also analyzed using inferential statistics involving chi-square test. Relationship between training and financial management skills needed was done. The results indicated a very high significant relationship between training and financial management skills needed.

11.1 Principals' financial management education background

The study assessed the nature of financial management education background of principals who managed teacher training colleges in Kenya. The principals were asked to state the type of financial management training they may have received at their basic academic and professional training and financial management courses attended. Data collected was analyzed and the results were presented in frequencies and percentages in Tables a, b and c.

The results in table (a) indicate that majority of the principals were not trained on financial management. 63.6% of the principals indicated that they did not get any form of financial management training at their basic academic training but 36.4% said they got some knowledge in their academic course although very little was incorporated in the unit on financial management and it was not practical.

Table (a) principals formal financial training at basic course

	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	4	36.4
No	7	63.6
Total	11	100.0

11.2 Principals financial management training

Results in table (b) show the principals who have attended management courses. 54.5% have attended financial management course organized by the government, 18.2% had not while 27.3% were non committal. The courses attended by the principals were very short lasting between one and two weeks. This indicates that very little content was covered. The respondents argued that the time allocated for the course was not enough.

Table b-principals financial management training

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	54.5
No	2	18.2
Total	8	72.7
Missing	3	27.3
Total	11	100.0

From the results in table (c), 54.5% attended the course after appointment, 18.2% of them attended the course before appointment and 27.3% did not commit themselves. In the responses the principals said the little training they received was very useful in helping them be able to prepare budgets, interpret financial statements and advise on stores keeping. However others said the course did not help much as it was short and there was a lot to learn. Also the content was said to be technical and needed a lot of practice for one to master the skills.

Table (c) was the course before or after appointment

	Frequency	Percent
Before appointment	2	18.2
After appointment	6	54.5
Total	8	72.7
Missing	3	27.3
Total	11	100.0

11.3 Financial management training and skills need

The study examined how the financial management training of principals of teacher training colleges matched with the financial training needs. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to describe their financial management needs verses training received. Data collected was analyzed under the question ‘What is the extent of financial management training and skills need for financial management in public teacher training colleges in Kenya?’ Results were presented both in descriptive form and using inferential statistics. The descriptive results on financial management training are presented in tables (d) and (e), while the inferential statistics results are presented at the end of this section.

The results in table (d) indicated that financial management was not received at the basic academic/professional training of the principals, and that the principals were not prepared on financial management before assuming of office. 54.5% of the principal had not been introduced to financial management at their basic professional training course, and none was ever in-serviced before assumption of the principal’s office. 72.7% had not also undergone any training organized and financed by the government immediately they took over office. 63.6% of the principals said they lacked adequate knowledge and skills to undertake financial management in teacher training colleges. They only follow their predecessors’ financial culture which they find in place; therefore they require urgent additional training in order to manage college resources effectively.

In summary an average of 35.42% said they have what it take in financial management while the rest, 64.58% indicate they are ill-prepared for the job and therefore require additional training for efficiency and effectiveness.

Table (d) principals’ responses on financial management training

	YES		NO	
	Freq	%	Freq	%
I did a course on financial management at my initial training as a teacher.	5	45.5	6	54.5
I underwent some training just before assuming the principal’s office, organized by the government.			11	100
I have undergone some training immediately I took over the principal’s office, organized by the government.	3	27.3	8	72.7
The government organized and financed the training	7	63.6	4	36.4
Time allocated for training was adequate			10	90.9
I have adequate knowledge and skills to undertake financial management in a teacher training college.	4	36.4	7	63.6
I require additional training in order to successfully manage the college resources	8	72.7	3	27.3
Average appropriate choices		35.42		64.58

The results indicated lack of formal financial management training for the principals either at their basic academic training or as managers of educational institutions, the government seems not to have made any deliberate effort to train teacher training colleges’ principals on management and specifically financial management. Principals cried foul over their lack of skills and feeling incompetent yet the government and the society expects them to perform exemplary in managing the educational institutions. They argued that they learn through trial and error and in most cases do not try to change the procedures they found in these institutions even

if they are not effective for lack of a better option. They rely on the accounts office staff for advice and in many cases they are misadvised, misled and taken advantage of. Some of them said they would employ the private services of the district (Sub County) auditors to balance their books at very exorbitant fees. The principals said that financial management and management of educational institutions training is long overdue.

The results on the relationship between training and developing mission statement, as indicated in Table (f), depict a chi-squared test statistic of 1.925 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, which is < 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between training and developing a mission statement. The findings of the relationship between training and developing strategic plan depict a chi-square test statistic of 1.925 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, which is < 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between training and developing a strategic plan.

From the findings, a chi-square test statistic of .016 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, which is < 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between training and developing appropriate work plans. A chi-square test statistic of 2.357 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, of < 0.05 depict a significant relationship between training and proper recording of all financial transactions.

From the findings on relationship between training and instituting strong internal controls, a chi-square test statistic of 2.357 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, this is < 0.05. Thus, there is a significant relationship between training and instituting strong internal controls. A chi-square test statistic of 11.000 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, of < 0.05 depict a significant relationship between training and Internal and external auditing. From the results, a chi-squared test statistic of .351 with associated Chi-Square, likelihood ratio and linear-by-linear association p, is < 0.05 indicating a significant relationship between training and record keeping. From these findings there is significant relationship between principals' financial management training and dependent financial management skills required.

Table (f) chi-square results: relationship between training and various financial management skills

	Developing a mission statement			Developing strategic plan			Developing Appropriate work plans			Recording Financial Transactions			Instituting internal controls			Internal and external auditing			Record keeping		
	Value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	Value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	Value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	Value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)	value	df	Asymp.sig.(2-sided)
Pears on chi-square	1.925	1	.005	1.925	1	.005	.016	1	.008	2.357	2	.007	2.357	1	.005	11	1	.001	.351	1	.004
Likelihood ratio	2.203	1	.038	2.203	1	.007	.017	1	.008	3.330	2	.039	3.330	1	.028	14.421	1	.000	.361	1	.021
Linear-by-linear	1.750	1	.036	1.750	1	.019	.015	1	.003	1.931	1	.005	2.143	1	.043	10.000	1	.002	.319	1	.002
No of valid cases	11			11			11			11			11			11			11		

12. Discussion and recommendations

Finance management skills such as planning, budgeting, bookkeeping and accounting are critical for success or failure of an educational institution. Financial managers are responsible for the financial health of their institutions. The principals and their deputies identified the following skills as urgently needed by the managers. They included; Human resource management, management of technology, financial management, Project management, planning skills, budgeting, negotiation skills, time management, managing change, financial decision making, strategic management, procurement procedures.

In order to create an enabling environment for principals in teacher training colleges it requires that the issues that stifle their effectiveness be addressed. Initiatives such as tailor made financial management courses facilitated by officers from the office of planning, treasury, Kenya school of government and Kenya national audit services are necessary to enable the principals effectively and efficiently manage finances in the colleges.

A more permanent solution could be put in place by having modules that the principals must cover within a certain period of training which is mandatory. Sometimes this is done for secondary school principals facilitated by KEMI.

It is recommended that the deputy principals, deans and heads of departments in teacher training colleges be trained on management. This team works very close to the principal in managing the colleges. The training should lead to a recognizable certificate. Regular INSETS would go a long way in updating and upgrading the principal and the management team.

13. Conclusion

From the study, it was clear that effective financial management was a government requirement that is expected to give the public value for their money, with the aim of improving service delivery. However, very little effort was being expended to equip the financial managers with the relevant skills. A lot of benefits would be realized in the colleges if the right training was given to the financial managers. Continuous training was deemed necessary from the study, to keep the officers abreast with current requirement like strategic planning and performance contracting. The principals surveyed had not attended seminars or workshops on financial management in the last three years. This showed that there were a lot of discrepancies as far as financial management was concerned. Therefore there is a need to streamline this aspect due to its usefulness as a management tool. According to the respondents, the colleges had tried their level best in financial management despite the many challenges they were facing. Despite lack of training the principals were making a notable effort to improve their performance. Since their appointment to management position, it was evident that the principals had become more committed to their work, there was increased job satisfaction and morale and that they were motivated to work. Service delivery had improved tremendously and there was deliberate effort to increase efficiency in processes aimed at resulting to financial gain.

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