



International Journal of Educational Management

School leadership preparation and development in Kenya: Evaluating performance impact and return on leadership development investment

Gladys Asuga Scott Eacott Jill Scevak

Article information:

To cite this document:

Gladys Asuga Scott Eacott Jill Scevak , (2015), " School leadership preparation and development in Kenya Evaluating performance impact and return on leadership development investment " , International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 29 Iss 3 pp. 355 - 367

Permanent link to this document:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2013-0158>

Downloaded on: 26 January 2017, At: 15:39 (PT)

References: this document contains references to 24 other documents.

To copy this document: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

The fulltext of this document has been downloaded 360 times since 2015*

Users who downloaded this article also downloaded:

(2014), "Leadership for school success: lessons from effective principals", International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 28 Iss 7 pp. 798-811 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-08-2013-0125>

(2015), "Mentor teachers as leaders and followers in school-based contexts in the Republic of Ireland", International Journal of Educational Management, Vol. 29 Iss 3 pp. 368-379 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-09-2013-0142>

Access to this document was granted through an Emerald subscription provided by emerald-srm:609314 []

For Authors

If you would like to write for this, or any other Emerald publication, then please use our Emerald for Authors service information about how to choose which publication to write for and submission guidelines are available for all. Please visit www.emeraldinsight.com/authors for more information.

About Emerald www.emeraldinsight.com

Emerald is a global publisher linking research and practice to the benefit of society. The company manages a portfolio of more than 290 journals and over 2,350 books and book series volumes, as well as providing an extensive range of online products and additional customer resources and services.

Emerald is both COUNTER 4 and TRANSFER compliant. The organization is a partner of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) and also works with Portico and the LOCKSS initiative for digital archive preservation.

*Related content and download information correct at time of download.

School leadership preparation and development in Kenya

Evaluating performance impact and return on leadership development investment

Gladys Asuga

School of Education, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, Australia

Scott Eacott

Faculty of Education, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia, and

Jill Scevak

School of Education, University of Newcastle, Callaghan, Australia

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the quality of the current provision for school leadership in Kenya, the extent to which they have an impact on student outcomes and the return on school leadership preparation and development investment.

Design/methodology/approach – The paper draws from educational leadership, management and administration courses delivered by universities and other institutions to aspiring and practising educational leaders in Kenya. It employs a method for evaluating return on leadership development investment first articulated by Eacott (2013).

Findings – While there is growth in provision, consistent with international trends, this provision is more recognised for its standardisation than points of distinction; there is minimal attention to identified dimensions of leadership leading to higher student outcomes which raises questions regarding the universality of school leadership preparation and development curriculum; and the high course costs of current provision is an inhibiting factor in assessing the return on investment in school leadership preparation and development.

Research limitations/implications – The study was limited to publicly available documents from a limited sample of institutions. There is a need for more studies in the area.

Practical implications – Institutions seeking to offer school leadership development have grounds on which to make decision about what programs their school leaders should undertake in terms of cost and quality. The study provides institution offering school leadership development courses evidence on which to base future policy direction.

Social implications – The findings provide a case for investing in school leadership development given the impact courses may have on student outcomes.

Originality/value – The paper provides a comprehensive overview of the current provision on school leadership preparation and development in Kenya. It contributes to its understanding in Africa in terms of quality, performance impact and return on investment.

Keywords Return on investment, Preparation, Leadership, Kenya, Development, Courses

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

On a global scale education reform focused on school improvement has been a key political agenda over the past few decades. Within these broad discourses the preparation and development of school leaders has gained importance primarily because of the perceived links between school leadership and school outcomes. Consequently leadership preparation and development courses have been constructed as one of the major leverage points for policy makers and a topic of interest for scholars. While there is an established, and



continually expanding, research programme on school leadership preparation and development in developed nations – especially the USA and England – in developing nations, particularly those in Africa, we are seeing an increasing emerging voice in this discourses supporting the view that effective leadership and management are essential to developing good schools (Eacott and Asuga, 2013; Government of Kenya, 2008).

In Kenya, school leadership preparation and development has been recognised through the provision of courses offered by universities, systemic authorities, professional associations and consultants. However, school leadership preparation and development has been criticised for being ad hoc, haphazard and not responsive to the needs of the current and aspiring school leaders (Asuga and Eacott, 2012; Onderi and Croll, 2008; Wanzare and Ward, 2000). Despite these claims what remain under researched is the current provision for school leaders and any form of evaluation of this provisions.

This paper, reports on the analysis of the provision of school leadership preparation and development courses in Kenya. The courses identified focus on educational leadership, management and administration and are delivered by universities and other institutions to aspiring and practising educational leaders. We employ a method for evaluating return on leadership development investment first articulated by Eacott (2013). Given the substantial investment made by the Government of Kenya in school leadership preparation and development a methodology for analysing courses is timely and significant.

School leadership preparation and development in Kenya

Unlike the USA, England and Scotland who have a formal system of certifying, licensing and credentialing aspiring leaders, Kenya has adopted a modified version of the “apprentice model” (Su *et al.*, 2003). Principals are traditionally appointed from serving deputy principals or assistant teachers without any specific leadership preparation or development (Kitavi and Van der Westhuizen, 1997). This method of selection has generated concerns on the basis that rapidly changing societal and education conditions requires the continuous development of staff to enable them acquire knowledge and skills necessary for their dynamic roles (Kindiki, 2009; Onderi and Croll, 2008; Onguko *et al.*, 2008).

A pivotal reform initiative implemented by the Government of Kenya was the establishment of a national institute, the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI). It is charged with the goal of serving as a catalyst for poverty reduction by enhancing educational leaders’ competencies and bringing about a paradigm shift among educational leaders and managers. However, a report on the Kenya Educational Management Capacity Assessment (KEMACA, 2008) conducted by the Ministry of Education – through funding from USAID – concluded that despite considerable financial resourcing, most principals feel that they have either not been prepared for their role or lacked key administrative skills even when they attended courses.

Kenya continues to receive support to prepare and develop school leaders from different donors. Currently, 3,000 principals are participating in a project funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation and Varkey GEMS Foundation entitled 10,000 Principals Leadership Programme. In the programme school leaders across three countries (Kenya, India and Ghana) undertake leadership and professional development courses to improve their skills and knowledge in line with their identified needs.

As a policy initiative, the Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC, the employing body of educators) requires school administrators to attend a minimum of two development courses annually. The courses serve as a pre-requisite for recruitment or promotion to principalship. The TSC has also recommended that educational administration be

embedded into initial teacher training, however, as yet there is no evidence to show this has been done (TSC, 2007).

Given the questions that have been raised regarding the quality of the courses on offer and the dearth of empirical research on school leadership in Kenya, this research is timely and significant. In addition as Kenya is currently engaged in the expansion of its school system (as can be evidenced in the roll out of free primary education since January 2003, and secondary schooling since January, 2008), we take, or focus on, the provision of school leadership preparation and development courses. In particular, our argument is built upon three features: the current provision of courses; a potential quality measure of courses; and a measure of return on (financial) investment in courses. In making our argument, drawing on courses from the 2012 calendar year, we ask serious questions about the cost of courses and the utility of frameworks for leadership.

Current provisions

To compile a comprehensive listing of educational leadership, management and administration development courses, a systematic and thorough search conducted on publicly available documents was undertaken. The sources were located on university web pages, local newspapers, education policy documents, institutional libraries, institution notice boards, institution bookshop and prospectus, university calendar and/or bulletin and brochures for prospective students at the reception desk. The analysis presented in this paper draws from data generated regarding KEMI and universities.

As much information about the courses and related units was gathered. This includes the course titles, course descriptions, objectives/focus and target group, mode of delivery/how they were offered, duration and cost. The information was analysed using the following broad categories: preparation (pre-appointment to a principal position) or development (post-appointment) course the duration of the course; and how it was offered (e.g. on-site, off-site and online).

In addition to KEMI, 11 out of 27 universities in Kenya offered courses in education leadership with a total of 21 individual courses offered.

Educational leadership courses were offered at the diploma ($n = 2$), masters ($n = 12$), doctoral ($n = 3$) level and some short courses lasting less than three months ($n = 4$). Across the 21 courses there was little divergence between the titles. Across the 21 courses, 177 individual teaching units (modules) were identified. As with the course level, there was very little variation in unit titles and content description. We argue that while institutions have developed courses to meet the perceived demand for school leadership preparation and development in Kenya, there is very little publicly available information that creates a distinction between institutions.

The majority of the courses ($n = 17$) were targeted at both current principals (i.e. development) and aspiring leaders (i.e. preparation). Two were specifically identified as aspirant and two explicitly for development. KEMI courses on the other hand target current principals. The level of qualification had an impact on the course duration. As such, the durations ranged from one year for diploma course, one to three years for masters' degree course and three to seven years for a doctoral study. Part-time study options extend the duration of courses.

Quality of provisions

Consistent with calls to revise preparation and development courses against evidence of capabilities required for effective leadership this part of the study draws from Robinson *et al.* (2008) work identifying five leadership dimensions that have the

greatest impact on student outcomes. The dimensions (the effects sizes and standard error) are:

- (1) Establishing goals and expectations (ES = 0.42, SE = 0.07): includes the setting, communicating and monitoring of expectations learning goals, standards and expectations, and the involvement of staff and others in the process so that there is clarity and consensus about goals.
- (2) Resourcing strategically (ES = 0.31, SE = 0.10): involves aligning resource selection and allocation to priority teaching goals and also includes provision of appropriate expertise through staff recruitment.
- (3) Planning, co-ordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum; promoting and participating in teacher learning and development (ES = 0.42, SE = 0.06): includes direct involvement in the support and evaluation of teaching through regular classroom visits and the curriculum provision of formative and summative feedback to teachers. Direct oversight of curriculum through school wide coordination across classes and year levels and alignment to school goals.
- (4) Promoting and participating in teacher learning development (ES = 0.84, SE = 0.14): leadership that not only promotes but directly participates with teachers in formal or informal professional learning.
- (5) Ensuring an orderly and supportive learning environment (ES = 0.27, SE = 0.09): involves protecting time for teaching and learning by reducing external pressures and interruptions and establishing an orderly and supportive environment both inside and outside classrooms.

The selection of Robinson *et al.* (2008) as a framework is based on two reasons: first, the framework is based on a meta-analysis of research linking leadership practices with improving learner outcomes; and second, the dimensions were used in the methodology developed to measure performance impact and return on leadership development investment by Eacott (2013), allowing for some comparative work with the findings.

The identified courses and their contributing units were analysed against the five dimensions. A binary coding protocol of yes (1) or no (0) was used. Table I provides an illustrative example of units assigned a 1.

To strengthen the quality of the data generated, two members of the project team coded the data. Initially this coding was undertaken independently, allowing for inter-rater reliability (IRR) and inter-rater agreement scores to be calculated. Team members met numerous times to clarify the meaning of dimensions prior to coding to ensure a consistency in their application. Subsequently, the raters came together to reach a consensus rating which was used in further analysis.

Due to the nature of the data (two possible outcomes and two raters), Cohen's (1988) unweighted kappa (κ) was used. Cohen's κ measures the agreement between two raters who each classify N items into mutually exclusive categories. The formula applied is:

$$K = \frac{Pr(a) - Pr(e)}{1 - Pr(e)}$$

where $Pr(a)$ is the relative observed agreement among raters, and $Pr(e)$ is the hypothetical probability of chance agreement, using the observed data to calculate the probabilities of each observer randomly saying each category. If the raters are in complete agreement then $k = 1$. If there is no agreement among the raters other than what would be expected by chance (as defined by $Pr(e)$), $k = 0$.

Dimension	Course	Description
Establishing goals and expectations	Strategic management in education	The course will examine the concepts of strategic management and its application to educational institutions. The learner will be exposed to strategic planning styles to broaden their understanding of planning for school improvement. Topics explored include, the evolution of strategic management, global economic and social trends, current trends, the strategic nature of decision and policy in education, strategic planning process, key stakeholders in the planning process and their role, implementing strategy; analysing strategic change, selecting an implementation approach of organisational change
Resourcing strategically	Human resource management in education	The course examines the concepts of HRM in education; it reviews educational organisation and social system and discusses the view that the school is an organisational system; goals of an organisational system; the courses provides the learners with tools for human resource planning; recruitment, selection, induction; motivation; communication, appraisal and performance; HRD and training; compensation; industrial relations
Planning, coordinating and evaluating teaching and the curriculum	Supervision of instruction	This course is designed for educators concern with the improvement of teaching and learning process. The role, aims and principles of instructional supervision and the supervisory techniques in educational institutions are discussed. The following topics are covered: definitions of administration, management and supervision; similarities and differences between administration and supervision; areas of supervision learning, learning systems, teachers, teaching process, teaching and learning facilities, curriculum, classroom, training of teachers(in-service and pre-service), induction and orientation of new teachers, inspection, guidance services and evaluation; supervisory techniques for individual teachers classroom visitation; recording of notes and observed teaching and learning activities, teacher evaluation by students and peer evaluation; supervisory techniques for groups of teachers, group conference, workshops and conference, teachers' meetings, demonstration teaching, inter-visitiation, directed professional readings, professionalism and professional ethics; qualification of an instructional supervisor; the characteristics of a failing supervisor, a merely successful supervisor and an effective supervisor

(continued)

Table I.
Illustrative example
of course
classification against
dimensions

Dimension	Course	Description
Promoting and participating in teacher learning and development	Educational supervision	Through the course students will develop a clear conceptualisation of education supervision as a problem-solving process. Emphasis is placed on supervision as a process aimed at arming professional educators with constructive skills rather than being reactive and defensive teachers in the face of educational challenges. The course also aims at highlighting principles that should enable teachers to see supervision as a development process of cooperative effort towards diagnosing and solving substantive problems in the classroom and school. This is premised on the presumption that the professionalisation of supervision and teaching hinges on the elimination of deficiency-oriented supervision in favour of a development approach. topics covered; theory and practice of supervision in schools, concepts and principles of supervision of instruction in schools; evaluation of supervision; roles of supervisors in the supplementation of policies and objectives; emphasis on the role of supervision in the improvement of instruction and curriculum development; supervision and teacher effectiveness; supervisor and school curriculum design and development; establishing and administering the inservice education programme; problems of supervision; practice of skills, techniques of supervision through role play, case studies and analysis of teaching
Ensuring an orderly and supportive learning environment	Curriculum implementation	This course focuses specifically on the process of curriculum implementation and curriculum development. It includes the following elements: strategies of implementing a new curriculum and the various stages of curriculum implementation. Finally, the course gives students an opportunity to analyse factors that promote or hinder effective implementation of the school curriculum

Table I.

These data generated from the units was then used to construct the course impact measure (PIM). The methodology to establish the course impact measure was articulated by Eacott (2013). The PIM uses the course level mean for each dimension as a function of the effect size (ES) established for that dimension as identified by Robinson *et al.* (2008). The PIM formula is as follows:

$$PIM = \frac{(MD1 \times 0.42) + (MD2 \times 0.31) + (MD3 \times 0.42) + (MD4 \times 0.84) + (MD5 \times 0.27)}{5}$$

The PIM was used in the next level of analysis (return on investment) as a proxy to establish the degree of difference between participating and non-participating individuals in the absence of experimental evidence of the impact of trained versus untrained cohorts (Eacott, 2013).

While school leadership preparation and development courses are offered by 11 universities and one government management development institute, the data analysed here was from the institutions (nine universities and KEMI) that made their units/course outlines and/or descriptions available. Two universities were unwilling to make them available citing matters of confidentiality and the need to protect copyright and/or intellectual property.

From the institutions that provided their course information 14 courses were identified. Across the 14 courses, 177 individual units were identified with 885 individual coding opportunities (177 courses and five dimensions). As noted previously, two members of the project team did the coding. The two raters operated at a 97.07 per cent level of exact agreement (with a range of 94.35-98.87 per cent across the dimensions). The level of IRR, using Cohen's 1988 unweighted Kappa (κ), was an appropriate level (scientifically publishable) with scores of 0.8510, 0.8648, 0.8816, 0.8873 and 0.8543 across the five dimensions. In Table II, the institutional (applying codes to protect anonymity, with the number of contributing individual units named in parentheses) and overall means and standard deviations are displayed.

Table II shows that institutional means ranged between 0.0000-0.4286 while the overall means across the five dimensions were 0.2712, 0.1695, 0.1412, 0.0848 and 0.0283.

The overall standard deviations on the other hand were large in comparison to the means across the five dimensions. This may have been as a result of the small sample size. The standard deviation is important as it is used to establish the rate of returns for low, average and high returns (Eacott, 2013).

Institution (units)	Robinson <i>et al.</i> (2008) dimension of effective leadership				
	1	2	3	4	5
A (13)	0.1539	0.0769	0.4615	0.0769	0.0769
B (15)	0.2667	0.2000	0.1333	0.0667	0.0667
C (12)	0.3333	0.0833	0.1667	0.0833	0.0000
D1 (15)	0.3333	0.0000	0.0000	0.0667	0.0000
D2 (10)	0.1000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
E1 (14)	0.4286	0.1429	0.1429	0.1429	0.0000
E2 (6)	0.1667	0.3333	0.0000	0.1667	0.0000
E3 (7)	0.2857	0.4286	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000
F (10)	0.2000	0.1000	0.0000	0.2000	0.0000
G1 (19)	0.2222	0.1667	0.2222	0.1111	0.0000
G2 (15)	0.3750	0.2500	0.1875	0.0000	0.0625
H (13)	0.2308	0.1539	0.1539	0.1539	0.0000
I (12)	0.1667	0.4167	0.1667	0.0000	0.0000
J (16)	0.3125	0.1250	0.1250	0.1250	0.0625
Overall Mean	0.2712	0.1695	0.1412	0.0848	0.0283
SD	0.4458	0.3763	0.3493	0.2793	0.1662
κ	0.8510	0.8648	0.8816	0.8873	0.8543
SE	0.0458	0.0543	0.0522	0.0645	0.1453
95%CI	0.7613 to 0.9407	0.7584 to 0.9711	0.7794 to 0.9839	0.7609 to 1.0137	0.5696 to 1.1391
Raw % of agreement	0.9435	0.9661	0.9717	0.98305	0.9887

Table II.
Overall institutional
means for
educational
leadership courses

Having established the means and standard deviations, an impact measure for the courses was calculated. The overall standard deviation for each dimension was used to establish the degree of rate of return on investments. Following Eacott (2013), plus or minus one standard deviation sets the parameters for low and high returns on courses. Table III displays the results of the overall impact measure.

From the results displayed in Table III above a person undertaking an average return university based school leadership preparation and development course would be 6.09 per cent better at improving students' outcomes than someone not undertaking a course. A high impact course (plus one standard deviation) would be 20.69 per cent better with a low impact resulting in 8.51 per cent loss in performance. Earlier work done in Australia by Eacott (2013) found an average impact of 6.72 per cent, high impact of 22.40 per cent and a loss in performance (low impact) at 8.96 per cent. These findings potentially have implications for policy makers, practitioners and training institutions.

Return on leadership development

Avolio, Avey and Quisenberry (2010), contend that while administrators are trained to consider the financial return on investments, the same expectation typically does not exist for investment in leadership development. To calculate the return on school leadership preparation and development investment three resources were used: first, the programme impact measure (PIM) displayed in Table III and described in the previous section; second, the Kenyan teacher through to principal salary information; and third, Cascio's "return on development investment" (RODI) methodology (Cascio and Bourdeau, 2008).

Cascio's formula is similar to other return on investment equations in that the expected financial cost of investment (in leadership preparation and development) is subtracted from the expected financial increase from that specific investment. This number (overall change, increase or decrease) is then divided by the overall initial investment cost. The product is a rate of return or RODI. The data that is typically required to calculate the RODI include the number of people undertaking the training, the

Dimensions	Mean	<i>d</i>	Impact	PIM
<i>Low</i>				
Dimension1	-0.1746	0.42	-0.0733	
Dimension2	-0.2068	0.31	-0.0641	
Dimension3	-0.2081	0.42	-0.0874	-0.0851
Dimension4	-0.1945	0.84	-0.1634	
Dimension5	-0.1379	0.27	-0.0372	
<i>Average</i>				
Dimension1	0.2712	0.42	0.1139	
Dimension2	0.1695	0.31	0.0526	
Dimension3	0.1412	0.42	0.0593	0.0609
Dimension4	0.0848	0.84	0.0712	
Dimension5	0.0283	0.27	0.0076	
<i>High</i>				
Dimension1	0.7170	0.42	0.3011	
Dimension2	0.5458	0.31	0.1692	
Dimension3	0.4905	0.42	0.2060	0.2069
Dimension4	0.3641	0.84	0.3058	
Dimension 5	0.1948	0.27	0.0526	

Table III.
Course impact scores
at lower, average
and upper bands

cost of training, the expected effect of training and the duration of that effect, as well as the estimated dollar value impact for those who have undergone and those not gone through the intervention. Casico's formula is:

$$\text{RODI} = NTdSD_y - C$$

where N is the number of participants in development intervention, T is the expected time duration of change in leadership behaviours (converted to a fraction in years such that one year and 6 months would be 1.5), d is the effect size of the intervention, also considered as the average difference in outcomes between training participants and untrained counterparts, SD_y is the standard deviation valued job performance among untrained employees, when dollarised performance metrics are not available, then 40 per cent of the participant's annual salary maybe used. In the case of organisational leaders, 40 per cent of one's annual salary is considered a conservative estimate of that individual's dollar value to the firm in terms of performance; C is the total cost of training the expected number of participants.

The salary information is drawn from the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC, 2012). The specific levels used are: entry level secondary school teacher; entry level deputy principal; and senior principal. Kenyan secondary school teachers are ranked according to grades from "K" entry level through to "R" for chief principal level. Entry to deputy principal or principal is at grade "M", senior principal is at grade "P". Grade "P" senior principals was used in this study rather than Grade R for two reasons; first, principals are expected to have undertaken a master's degree prior to promotion or appointment to "R"; and second, there are very few principals at this level. The annual salary information used was: teacher grade K (Kshs. 410,400), deputy principal grade M (Kshs. 499,080) and principal grade P (Kshs. 930,324). Given the difference in course costs for the different institutions three categories are used: public universities (funded by the government); private universities (privately owned or sponsored); and KEMI (national management institute). The study employed an average costing of Kshs. 260,000 and Kshs 360,000 for courses offered by public and private universities, respectively, based on advertised prices from institutions and Kshs. 30,000 for KEMI courses. The majority of students undertaking school leadership preparation and development courses in Kenya do so part time, so following Eacott (2013) the duration effect for this analysis is twice the length of the course. The results for this analysis are displayed in Table IV.

Discussion

From our analysis, and consistent with previous calls, school leadership preparation and development needs to be a current focus in Kenya. From the scope of this study, our argument regarding school leadership preparation and development in Kenya is identified by three markers: while there is growth in provision, consistent with international trends, this provision is recognised for its standardisation rather than its points of distinction; the minimal attention to identified dimensions of leadership leading to higher student outcomes raises questions regarding the universality of school leadership preparation and development curriculum; and the high course costs of current provision is an inhibiting factor in assessing the return on investment in school leadership preparation and development.

Our first argument is based on the standardisation of provision. The findings from the survey of provisions shows that despite a proliferation of school leadership preparation and development courses to address the needs of school leaders, there is

Number of participants	Return on investment		
	Low return	Average return	High return
<i>Public institutions</i>			
Teacher			
1	(511,460)	(80,047)	351,364
5	(2,557,301)	(400,239)	1,756,823
10	(5,114,602)	(800,478)	3,513,646
Deputy principal			
1	(565,7960)	(41,163)	483,469
5	(2,828,981)	(205,817)	2,417,347
10	(5,657,962)	(411,634)	4,834,694
Principal			
1	(829,357)	147,927	1,125,882
5	(4,150,136)	739,639	5,629,414
10	(8,300,272)	1,479,278	11,258,828
<i>Private institutions</i>			
Teacher			
1	(611,460)	(180,047)	251,364
5	(3,057,301)	(900,239)	1,256,823
10	(6,114,602)	(1,800,478)	2,513,646
Deputy principal			
1	(665,796)	(141,163)	3,834,469
5	(3,328,981)	(705,817)	1,917,347
10	(6,657,962)	(1,411,634)	3,834,694
Principal			
1	(930,027)	47,927	1,025,882
5	(4,650,136)	239,639	5,129,414
10	(9,300,272)	479,278	10,258,828
<i>Kenya education management institute</i>			
Teacher			
1	(57,940)	(10,005)	37,929
5	(289,700)	(50,026)	189,647
10	(579,400)	(100,053)	679,294
Deputy principal			
1	(63,997)	(5,684)	82,607
5	(319,886)	(28,424)	263,038
10	(639,773)	(56,848)	526,077
Principal			
1	(93,336)	15,325	123,986
5	(213,336)	76,626	619,934
10	(933,363)	153,253	1,239,869

Table IV.
Return on
investment by salary
level and number
trained

more evidence of uniformity than differentiation. This is best captured in the significant similarity across courses/unit titles and content descriptions. Gronn (2008) makes a similar argument on the provision of courses in Melbourne (Australia) with the expansion of the market in higher education. He argues that as a result of competing for students, and fear of missing out on market share, courses tend to regress to the lowest common denominator and in doing so, remove diversity from the marketplace. However, it is through engagement with a diverse set of courses/units that potential candidates have their differing needs not only met but also at scale the quality of the system is enhanced through creativity and the capacity of individual institutions to capitalise on their unique strengths (Lamagdeleine *et al.*, 2009). Although, with

contracting government spending on institutions of higher learning in Kenya, the need for the student shilling – or quantity – far outweighs the quality argument. This is not to suggest that quality is not important to institutions, rather fiscal pressures are conducive for risk adverse strategies in bringing courses to the market. With increased competition from the many private institutions (who are continuing to proliferate and enter the market) competing for students from the same pool, university management teams may be unwilling to push for distinctions for risk of losing their market share.

The second argument is based on minimal attention to the dimensions. The data displayed in Table II shows the relatively low level of focus on the dimensions identified by Robinson *et al.* (2008) as most effective in improving student outcomes across courses/units. The minimal attention is not that dissimilar to the earlier work presented in the Australian context (Eacott, 2013) but does – particularly in light of the similarity of courses outlined above – raise questions regarding whether the Robinson *et al.*'s framework is aimed at the right target and/or the utility of knowledge across national contexts. Given the similarity of courses identified in this study and our previous work on the need for a context specific understanding in educational leadership, management and administration studies (Eacott and Asuga, 2014), we argue that the universality of leadership is problematic. Using the (western) framework, the Kenyan courses could be constructed as deficit. However, this may have more to do with the need for an indigenous conceptualisation of what it means to lead in the contemporary Kenyan context. Or more specifically, the Kenyan courses may be reflective of the professional development needs at the local level. Leadership like education is a political and culturally loaded concept. It takes place in a particular time and socio-political space. As such, it is difficult to apply frameworks across countries or even continents and expect to get similar understanding of constructs. There cannot be one way of approaching the preparation and development of school leaders which can claim to be definitive. There are too many culturally mediated understandings of what may appear to be commonly experienced problems to ever develop a comprehensive universal course. That is, with education as a highly parochial practice, the requirements for preparation and development will almost always rest with the particular more so than the universal. This is not to suggest that courses and scholarship can ever be isolated from broader discourses rather that the minimal attention to the dimensions identified by Robinson and colleagues may say more about Kenya as a context than anything else. Therefore, while we recognise the use of existing research to extract the most robust, rigorous and relevant evidence from across the globe to enhance school leadership preparation and development (Oduol, 2006), the limited focus on Robinson *et al.*'s (2008) dimensions we see as a strength in the Kenya courses for the purpose of delivering a context specific suite of courses.

One of the key points of distinction between the Australian study (Eacott, 2013) and this one is the negative return on investment results. This result is primarily a function of the high costs – relative to salary – for courses in Kenya. For a teacher, the average cost of a public university course represents 63.35 per cent of their annual salary, with a private university reflecting 87.72 per cent. The figures are less substantial at the deputy principal (52.10 and 72.13, respectively) and principal (27.95 and 38.70) levels, yet still constitute a significant portion of one's salary. It is beyond the scope of this study to suggest reasons as to the high costs of courses and the potential impact on how affordable they are. However, even if spread over multiple years through part-time study and given the absence of any formal requirement for a master's degree, the outlay of undertaking a course for an individual, or a system to sponsor a cohort, is a substantive investment.

Without a degree of certainty regarding the improvements in performance as a result, this would be a high risk activity to undertake. During a period of substantive investment in school leadership preparation and development, nationally and internationally, yet also fiscal contraction on a global scale, the return on investment for activities will increasingly become a matter for public, and private, attention in policy discourses.

Conclusion

As with many nations, Kenya has a range of courses available to support the preparation and development of school leaders. This study has identified a number of courses offered by universities and KEMI, but this is not a capture of all courses offered in Kenya. Nor does it capture the many informal means in which preparation and development takes place, such as mentoring, professional learning networks and through experience in the field. However, this survey provides considerable insights into the provision of courses.

While investing in school leadership preparation and evaluating its perceived impact has been the focus of attention in the is paper, a key concern is whether leadership development returns can be quantified in monetary terms and whether such returns should be a concern for institutions such as schools. This is a concern previously raised by English (2006) in the US context. Although we too have doubts about such measures, we cannot simply not acknowledge or engage in the space given the contemporary fiscal condition of many economies internationally. As a result, the information that this paper provides will hopefully serve as a conversation starter. It is not the final word, and if anything, aspires to stimulate dialogue between policy makers, academics, systems, school leaders and others for the sole purpose of generating empirical evidence that can be used in the decision making processes of resource allocation. In the face of scarce resources, we see evidence, even if not complimentary as the most appropriate means of having genuine dialogue and informed decision making.

References

- Asuga, G.N. and Eacott, S. (2012), "The learning needs of secondary school principals: an investigation in Nakuru district, Kenya", *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, Vol. 4 No. 5, pp. 133-140.
- Avolio, B.J., Avey, J.B. and Quisenberry, D. (2010), "Estimating return on leadership development investment", *The Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 21 No. 4, pp. 633-644.
- Cascio, W.F. and Bourdeau, J.W. (2008), *Investing in people : Financial Impact of Human Resource Initiatives*, FT Press, New York, NY.
- Cohen, J. (1988), *Statistical Power Analysis for the Behavioral Sciences* 2nd ed., Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Hillsdale, NJ.
- Eacott, S. (2013), "The return on school leadership preparation and development courses: a study on Australian university-based courses", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 27 No. 7, pp. 686-699.
- Eacott, S. and Asuga, G.N. (2014), "School leadership preparation and development in Africa: a critical insight", *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, Vol. 42 No. 6, pp. 919-934.
- English, F.W. (2006), "The unintended consequences of a standardised knowledge base in advancing educational leadership preparation", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 42 No. 3, pp. 461-472.
- Government of Kenya. (2008), *The Kenya Education Management Capacity Assessment (KEMACA)*, Government Printers, Nairobi.
- Gronn, P. (2008), "The state of denmark", *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 40 No. 2, pp. 173-185.

- KEMACA (2008), "The Kenya Education Management Capacity Assessment (KEMACA)", Government of Kenya, Government Printers, Nairobi.
- Kindiki, J.N. (2009), "Effectiveness of board of Governors in curriculum implementation in secondary schools in Kenya", *Educational Research and Review*, Vol. 4 No. 5, pp. 250-266.
- Kitavi, M. and Van der Westhuizen, P.C. (1997), "Problems facing beginning principals in developing countries: a study of beginning principals in Kenya", *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 251-263.
- Lamagdeleine, D., Maxcy, B.D., Pounder, D.G. and Reed, C.J. (2009), "The context of university-based educational leadership preparation", in Young, M., Crow, G., Murphy, J. and Ogawa, R. (Eds), *Handbook of Research on the Education of School Leaders*, Routledge, New York, NY, pp. 129-156.
- Oduol, T. (2006), "Towards the making of education policy in Kenya: conclusions and implications", *International Education Journal*, Vol. 7 No. 4, pp. 466-479.
- Onderi, H. and Croll, P. (2008), "In-service training needs in an African context: a study of headteacher and teacher perspectives in the Gucha district of Kenya", *Professional Development in Education*, Vol. 34 No. 3, pp. 361-373.
- Onguko, B., Abdalla, M. and Webber, C.F. (2008), "Mapping principal preparation in Kenya and Tanzania", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 46 No. 6, pp. 715-726.
- Robinson, V.M.J., Lloyd, C.A. and Rowe, K.J. (2008), "The impact of school leadership on students outcomes: an analysis of the differential effects of leadership types", *Educational Administration Quarterly*, Vol. 44 No. 5, pp. 635-674.
- Su, Z., Gamage, D. and Minneberg, E. (2003), "Professional preparation and development of school leaders in Australia and the USA", *International Education Journal*, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp. 43-59.
- TSC (2007), "Policy on identification, selection, deployment and training of Heads of Post Primary institutions", available at: www.tsc.go.ke/index.php/downloads/finish/17-policies/118-deployment-policy (accessed 4 August 2013).
- TSC (2012), Re-alignment of Teachers' Salary with those of civil servants (Circular no. 21/2012), available at: www.tsc.go.ke/index.php/downloads/viewdownload/15-news/92-re-alignment-of-teachers-salary (accessed 14 August 2013).
- Wanzare, Z. and Ward, K.L. (2000), "Rethinking staff development in Kenya: agenda for the twenty-first century", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 14 No. 6, pp. 265-275.

Further reading

- Eacott, S. (2011), "Preparing 'educational' leaders in managerialist times: an Australian story", *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 43 No. 1, pp. 43-59.
- Government of Kenya. (2005), "A policy framework on education, training and research: meeting the challenges of education, training and research in the 21st century in Kenya", Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005, Government Printers, Nairobi.
- Odhiambo, G. (2005), "Teacher appraisal: the experiences of Kenyan secondary school teachers", *Journal of Educational Administration*, Vol. 43 No. 4, pp. 402-416.

Corresponding author

Gladys Asuga can be contacted at: Gladys.Asuga@uon.edu.au

For instructions on how to order reprints of this article, please visit our website:

www.emeraldgroupublishing.com/licensing/reprints.htm

Or contact us for further details: permissions@emeraldinsight.com

This article has been cited by:

1. Lorri J. Santamaría Andrés P. Santamaría Melinda Webber Sharona Jayavant Tè Ara Hou – The Māori Achievement Collaboratives (MACS): Revolutionizing Indigenous Student Learning through Women’s Educational Leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand 127-144. [[Abstract](#)] [[Full Text](#)] [[PDF](#)] [[PDF](#)]
2. Gladys Nyanchama Asuga, Jill Scevak, Scott Eacott. 2016. Educational leadership, management and administration in Africa: an analysis of contemporary literature. *School Leadership & Management* 1-20. [[CrossRef](#)]