FACTORS INFLUENCING THE PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF NAIROBI PROVINCE

BY

SAMUEL K.N. KIMANI

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MARCH 2009
DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university.

SIGNATURE........................................ DATE..........................

SAMUEL K. N. KIMANI
D53/OL/1085/02

This research project has been carried by the candidate under my supervision as the university supervisor.

SIGNATURE........................................ DATE..........................

CHRIPEN MAENDE

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as chairman of department.

SIGNATURE........................................ DATE..........................

MR. D. K. NGABA

CHAIRMAN, DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my wife Mwihaki and our children, Kimani, Njeri and Wambui for their support. May the project be a source of inspiration as they pursue their dreams.
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

BOG  Board of governors
CEO  Chief Executive Officer
CPA (K)  Certified Public Accountant of Kenya
DOE  Director of Education
ICM  Institute of Commercial Management
ICPA (K)  Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya
ICPS (K)  Institute of certified Public Secretaries of Kenya
IFAC  International Federation of Accountants Committee
IT  Information Technology
KASNEB  Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board
KATC  Kenya Accounting Technician Certificate
KNEC  Kenya National Examination Council
LAN  Local Area Network
MBO  Management By Objective
MBWA  Management By Walking Around
MIS  Management Information System
MOE  Ministry of Education
PDE  Provincial Director of Education
SAGA  Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies
SMART  Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time
SPSS  Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC  Teachers Service Commission
VCR  Video Cassette Recorder
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accounting Staff: Any employee in public secondary school working in the schools' finance office.

Auditing: Involves examination of the books of accounts with a view of proving a true and fair view of the institutions state of affairs.

Board of Governors: TSC management agent at the institutional level in public secondary schools.

Confidentiality: Refers to the information acquired in the course of professional work should not be disclosed except when consent has been given.

Education policy: A guideline that facilitates decision-making on educational activities.

Ethics: The study of standards of conduct and moral judgment

Fraud: An intentional mis-representation of accounting information by one or more individuals in order to defraud the institute of financial resources and assets.

Grape vine: The organization's informal communication network that is formed and maintained by social relationships rather than the formal reporting relationships.

LAN: A small collection of interconnected computers in a building or office

Management By Walking Around (MBWA): The practice of getting out of the offices and learning from others in the organization through face-to-face dialogue.

Mismanagement: controlling or dealing with financial matters wrongly.

Motivation: The act of providing one with a strong reason or cause to do something or taking an action.

Policy: A statement of commitment by the government to undertake specific programmes directed at the achievement of certain goals.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence performance of accounting staff in public secondary schools. The study was prompted by the fact that secondary school's accounting staff performs numerous tasks in schools, and yet no researcher had studied these important personnel in secondary schools. Most researchers have concentrated on principals and teachers. The broad objective of the study was to assess the factors that influence accounting staff's performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. Specific objectives aimed at establishing the levels of education and training of the accounting staff, evaluating channels of communications, control measures and technology available. The study targeted all the forty-eight, (48) public secondary schools in Nairobi province. The study did not focus on private secondary schools since they have different management procedures from their public counterparts and this would have influenced their responses. The researcher used questionnaires to collect data since they are able to collect large amount of data from diverse regions and saves on time. The questionnaire was first piloted in two secondary schools to establish its validity and reliability. The schools used in the pilot study were excluded from the main study.

The target population for the study was all the forty-eight, (48) public secondary schools in Nairobi province. Descriptive survey approach was used. The data was analyzed with the help of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) whereby descriptive statistics such as frequencies, and percentages were computed. The findings were presented using frequency distribution tables, pie charts, bar-graphs and percentages among others.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

According to the Ministry of Education (MOE) sessional paper of 2004 which provides a policy framework for education training in Kenya, the MOE has the overall responsibility to manage all aspects of education and training in Kenya. The Education Act, Cap 211 put more emphasis on this responsibility. Part II section 3, subsection 1 of the Act states that, “The Ministry of Education shall promote the education of the people of Kenya.”

The Ministry of Education appoints Board of Directors (BOG) to be its Agents in public secondary schools. “Every maintained or assisted school other than a primary school maintained by a local authority shall be managed by a board of governors, or as the Minister may otherwise direct, in accordance with this Act and any regulations made under this Act. [Education Act, Cap 211, Section 6 b]”. Section 10 (1) continues, “ The Minister may, by order, establish a board of governors for any maintained or assisted school, other than a primary school managed and maintained by a local authority.” Broadly the BOG is required to perform the following functions in accordance with the provisions of the Education Act Cap 211 and any other rules and regulations approved by the Minister for education: Planning and development of physical facilities for the purpose of learning/teaching in school; Sourcing and management of school finances which includes receiving all fees, grants out of public funds, donations and any other income to the school; Organize, direct, supervise and monitor approved projects and programmes of the school; Recruit, appoint and discipline the non-teaching staff in the school; Discipline of teachers and students under the general guidance of the Teachers Service
Commission (TSC) and the Director of Education (DOE) respectively; and Regulate the admission of students subject to the general direction of the Director of Education.

Kamunge, (1988) summarizes the BOG functions as; Develop the school through management of their finance; Enhance both student and teacher discipline; and Employ the non-teaching staff. BOG however, does not officiate the day to day running of the schools. This responsibility is left to the school principal. The principal who is a member of the BOG and its secretary is an employee of the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). The TSC is one of the “Semi Autonomous Government Agencies” (SAGAS) established by an act of Parliament [Cap 212] to provide services to teachers. “One of the main responsibilities of principals is to ensure proper management of the school finances; however this is one responsibility that principals perform dismally (MOE, 2003).”

According to Okumbe (2001), the principal is charged with the task of managing: School Curriculum and instructions; Staff personnel; Students personnel; School equipment and assets; School/Community relations and; Ensure that school finances are managed in accordance with the guidelines given by the ministry in consultation with the BOG. School principals need to plan carefully on how to use resources (human and physical) that are available to them so that they can achieve the objectives of the institutions they are running. To assist the principals in management of the school finances specifically, the BOG employs school accounting staff; school accountants or school account clerks Solomon, (1963) depending on the size of the school [herein after called, The Accounting staff]. The school accounting staff therefore plays a pivotal role in school financial management as assistants to the principal.
Kami, (1997) describes five major tasks of financial administrators [accounting staff], which include; Forming a strategic vision of what the institution’s (school’s) future performance make up will be and where the organization (school) is headed so as to provide long term directions; Setting objectives and converting the strategic vision into specific performance outcome for the institution (School) to achieve; Crafting the strategy to achieve the desired outcome; Implementing and executing the chosen strategy effectively and efficiently; and Evaluating performance and initiating corrective adjustments to the vision long term directions, objectives, strategy or implementing action in light of actual experience, changing conditions, new ideas and new opportunities.

To effectively and efficiently perform the foregoing stated tasks, the principal should effectively delegate some of these tasks to the school accounting staff. Delegation would ensure participation of school accounting staff in school financial management. However, according to Gilbert (1988), “managers view participation as an aid to management rather a desirable objective in its own right”, principals therefore, rarely delegates financial matters. Mungai’s, (2001) research also found that participatory management enhances ownership and commitment to organization decisions. Mutinda (2003), research found that principals rarely motivate those under them. Chagmasa, (1993) stated that school workers are unlikely to be satisfied with what they do.

Several groups that are interested in the good performance of accounting staff are such as: The principal who is the head of the school and therefore the one who is ultimately answerable; Parents and sponsors of students would like their financial dealings with the school to be free of errors; The ministry of education monitors all schools on how their financial affairs are managed. [The ministry has a section that deals in auditing school financial records and reports
the performance of each school in terms of financial management]; The professional body of accountants, which is the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK), is interested to see that all accountants follow the professional ethics it issues; The BOG and school employees are also interested in having information from the accounting staff’s office to be free of errors.

Reasons for researching on accounting staff’s performance

School financial responsibilities as stated earlier are delegated to the school accounting staff by the principal. The role of the principal and the BOG in general is to oversee proper financial management. “However, principals almost never involve other School employees like teachers on financial matters, (Mugnai, 2001).” It would be very unlikely that principals would absolutely delegate financial duties to Accounting staff. Moreover, most accounting staff are not capable of performing the delegated tasks on account of their training and experience. In addition scarce literature exists on their performance since most studies on participatory management done by, Karugu, (1980); Okumbe, (1992); Muchiri, (1998); Changmasa, (1993); Njoka, (1995); and Mungai, (2001), in schools have been targeted on teachers and principals.

Accounting staff are supposed to belong to a body of professionals of accountants. They should therefore be trained professional accountants capable of following all the professional ethics of accountancy. They are supposed to have been trained to the highest professional level of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya [CPA (K)] to provide the best professional accountancy services. Unfortunately, most school accounting staff rarely tries to achieve this level of training, (Nzomo, 1999). It is for these reasons that the researcher sought to establish the factors influencing their performance in an effort to improve their efficiency and effectiveness. The results of the research will be useful for future consultations on Schools’ Accounting staff’s
performance in general. It can also be used for preparing a curriculum that suits the education and training of accounting staff in schools and future developments in the educational sector.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The several studies have shown that most accounting staff employed in secondary schools have very little impact on the overall success of any school; Solomon,(1963); Chagmasa,(1993); Nzomo,(1999); Mungai,(2001) and Mutinda,(2003). Success of any school may partly be attributed to the prudent financial management of the school. Moreover, little has been done to survey the factors that affect the performance of accounting staff who assist principals in financial management of schools. “Accounting staff are supposed to be professionally trained accountants belonging to a professional body, which in Kenya is called ICPAK. Their work is supposed to be impeccable and professionally presented Nzomo, (1999) “. However, every year media reports of alleged malpractices by accounting staff ranging from school finances being misappropriated; Fraud being committed; Embezzlement of school funds; School moneys getting lost in unexplained circumstances and many more. Some accounting staff have also committed outright theft of school funds. There have been many irregularities that even where evidence has not been available, there is a general impression that most accounting staff” work has been below expectations.

On the other hand, success stories are known of few schools which are well managed financially by similar accounting officers, (MOE, 2003). Accounting staff of such financially well managed schools may be having some common factors that influence them to succeed in their performance. Since there is no study taken of these common factors, as stated earlier, this study sought to; investigate the level of education and training accounting staff employed in public secondary schools have and how this affect their performance; evaluate how channels of
communications practiced by school principals affect accounting staff performance; evaluate
the levels of technology available; and find what control measures are set and how they affect
accounting staff performance.

The study results will provide information to school accounting staff in general, on the
importance of providing quality services to their clients; to the MOE for employment policies of
accounting staff and on control purposes especially in auditing of school accounts.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General objective
The General objective of the study was to investigate factors that influence performance of
accounting staff in public secondary schools in Kenya.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives
The study had the following specific objectives:

1. To establish how levels of education of accounting staff affects their performance.

2. To establish how the level of professional training of accounting staff affects their
   performance.

3. To determine how the channels of communications affect accounting staff performance.

4. To find out how the level of technology available affects accounting staff performance.

5. To establish how the control measures set by the MOE affect accounting staff performance.
1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What extent does the level of education affect accounting staff performance?
2. What extent does the level of professional training affect accounting staff performance?
3. How do channels of communication practiced by school principals affect accounting staff performance?
4. To what extent does the level of technology available in a school affect the performance of the accounting staff?
5. To what extent does control measures set by the MOE affect accounting performance?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study will provide information to school accounting staff on the importance of providing quality services to their clients. This would help them follow professional ethics in their performance of duties.

This study will generate information, which will be important to MOE, and the BOG as far as employment of accounting staff is concerned. MOE should be able to come up with better guidelines for the BOG to follow while employing accounting staff. MOE could also introduce better schemes of service for accounting staff in public secondary schools. The BOG to enhance their performance could also introduce performance contracts in the employment policies of these officers. The study outcome could also be used for controlling purposes especially by MOE when auditing school records and thus improve on accounting staff transparency. The study findings will provide a performance feedback to the government, MOE and TSC about the devolutions of TSC functions to BOGs. Corrective strategies can then be put in place for effective and efficient accounting staff management.
The study findings will provide information to ICPAK to use while upgrading the accountancy policies and professional ethics. The Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board [KASNEB] could also benefit from the findings by improving future curricula.

The study findings will ultimately contribute to the enrichment of the existing knowledge in the area of accounting staff’s management in general and the secondary management in particular. Finally, the study findings will provide valuable literature for those who may wish to carry out a similar research. It can also be used as a launching pad for other extensive studies that may be carried out in this area.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The research study was carried out in public secondary schools in Kenya. The researcher concentrated in Nairobi province. The province was selected purposely among others because of its centrality; it’s the capital city of Kenya and its proximity to the researcher.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

One limitation of the study is that the study was restricted to public secondary schools only. Private secondary schools were not researched since they have different management procedures which could influence their responses. The second limitation is that, school financial matters are shrouded with secrecy and therefore there was a risk of the respondents not giving accurate information.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature related to the study and provides a framework to answer the research questions in the study. It includes a review of the literature as it relates to the factors such as education and training, working environment and personal attitudes, professionalism and ethics, communication channels, technology and government control measures. The last part of the chapter is the conceptual framework which shows the variables of the study.

2.2 Education and Training

Accounting staff’s technical training is acquired through undertaking the rigorous program prepared by Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examinations Board (KASNEB), which is the body entrusted by the government to set examinations and examine all those willing to qualify for the accountancy profession. The chief executive officer (CEO) of KASNEB writes, “In the examinations front, the board (KASNEB), recognizes that to ensure its trainees remain relevant to the demanding job market, it must brace itself for the daunting challenges ahead. It has been called upon to ensure that the trainees who sit for its’ examinations are well equipped to handle the exact challenges of a very competitive and ever-evolving job market. Its’ graduates must therefore be well equipped with distinct qualities.” (KASNEB Newsline, Editorial: January-March 2000). The CEO goes on to give the necessary qualities as: High level of analytical skills; the ability to make viable managerial and administrative decisions; Competence in management information systems and communication techniques; Ability to lead and work in teams; and Knowledge, expertise and competence in the
accounting profession and professional ethics. [KASNEB Newsline, Editorial: January- March 2000]. KASNEB examinations are in two levels:

i. Kenya Accounting Technician Certificate (KATC) that is examined in two levels namely; Intermediate level; and Final level.

ii. Certified Public Accountant (CPA) that is examined in three parts namely; Part I, II and III.

Accounting staff should have acquired at least a certificate in KATC to be able to keep accounting records. In their editorial in the KASNEB Newsline, the editor writes that KASNEB embraces the principle of setting, “Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time (SMART) bond objectives for their management and training schedule. [KASNEB Newsline, October- December 2005].” Accounting staff that has undergone through the KASNEB syllabus should be: Specific in all they are doing and intending to do especially when recording school transactions; Measure the work which is possible to perform in a given period of time; Attempt only what is achievable. Any work that cannot be measured and therefore, is not specific would not be achievable; Realistic, where the records show it is not possible then, they should not attempt; Time, conscious and perform every activity according to time allocated for it. “The board has kept abreast with the changing demands in the workplace and has closely monitored the progress its graduates have made in the job place.” [KASNEB Newsline, Jan.-March 2000]. This means that accounting staff that have been trained through the KASNEB syllabus should have acquired all the necessary knowledge required in a changing world. “However, all along the board has sought to give its graduates the mandatory all- rounded competitive edge through introducing new syllabus in areas which are critical and crucial for the individual’s good performance in the job market,” [KASNEB Newsline, October-December 2005]. When trained by taking KASNEB syllabus, accounting staff are better performers in
their work. However there are other professional qualifications that make those wanting to work as accounting staff qualifies such as:

I. A diploma in Accountancy offered by Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC).
II. A diploma in Accountancy and finance offered by the Institute of Commercial Management (ICM).
III. Bachelor of Commerce degree (accounting) offered by any recognized university.

2.3 Working Environment and Personal Attitudes

2.3.1 Working Environment

Environment is explained as the physical world in which we live. These include the resources of land, air and water. These resources have their limitations, therefore their availability, quality and purity is paramount. To sustain adequate availability and purity of these resources, legislations have been enacted to protect the environment. Statutes and By-Laws have been enacted to cover environmental features such as: Waste collection and disposal; Water usage, satisfaction and efficient discharge; Noise control; Pollution of the atmosphere; Safety and health at work. (Gichira, 1997).

Environment factors affecting accounting staff performances may be divided into two groups, namely:

A. Internal factors related to the place of work.

These factors will include:

i. Location and layout of the accounting staff office.

Office position and accessibility and adequacy of space are very important. A crammed up office will not be very conducive to good performance. The office should be pleasing, providing
adequate ventilation to ensure effective temperature regulations and plenty of natural lighting.
(Gichira, 1997).

ii Health factors.

Health for the accounting staff and all office workers indeed is very important. In the health matters, it is a two-way exercise of responsibility the office staff has to exercise reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and their colleagues. The provisions of free health facilities for the workers help in alleviating the worry of the workers,( Gichira, 1997).

iii Safety and security

Distinctive internal measures designed to protect the office environment will include: Electricity installation and connection needs proper maintenance and operation; Fire escape and fire fighting systems should be well maintained; Office equipment should be the ones that reduce hazards (Gichira, 1997).

iv The school size

Most secondary schools in Nairobi are of two or more streams. This means that the number of students averages about four hundred or more. Accounting staff's work is however intense during the first few days of a new term when students are registering for the new term.

B. Physical and psychological influences on work

The physical changes occurring in the body as a result of effort, subjective feeling of tiredness and unexplained reduction of output during a working spell is referred to as fatigue. Rest can initiate fatigue recovery, pauses for example having breaks for ten o'clock tea. (Graham and Bennett, 1996).
Stress at work

This has both positive and negative aspects. Some employees thrive on pressure, it helps them draw on physical and emotional resource and actually enjoy tense and challenging situations, (Graham and Bennett, 1996).

2.3.2 Personal Attitudes

Attitude is explained as an individuals’ characteristic way of responding to an object or situation. Attitude is based on experience and leads to certain behavior or the expression of certain opinion. Personal attitude determine the general approach of an employee to work such as; The care that is taken to avoid mistakes; The way that clients are dealt with and; The degree of persistence shown in achieving work objectives. (Graham and Bennett, 1996). The appropriate attitude may already be present in a person when such a person enters the occupation for example, a Nurse having chosen the career in consequence of possessing attitudes favouring the care of sick people. However, other persons may not have felt a vocation towards the job but have, perhaps taken it because it was convenient or respectable. Most accounting staff may have chosen the accounting profession not because it was their first choice but because they had failed in joining their first choice. Such accounting staff may not have the right attitude towards their responsibility.

Personal attitude towards work may also be influenced by ambitions of accounting staff. Accounting staff that have a desire to rise to the top in terms of learning, training and experience may have the same attitudes as found in successive few professionals who rise to the very top of the ladder of success. Misati, (2001) has listed these attitudes as: Maintain a high level of drive; Deftness in handling people; Ability to immerse all thoughts in an analysis of whatever problem is at hand; Ability to respond to provocation objectively; Ability to originate
and communicate ideas; Enjoy organizing and running large projects; Ability to generate
confidence about oneself.

2.4 Professional Ethics

“It is recognized today that professionals play an important role as they offer essential services
and are trusted by the society. To earn and retain this trust, professionals must have codes of
ethics that guide their members’ behavior. A professional Accountant should act in a manner
consistent with the good reputation of their profession and refrain from any conduct that might
bring disgrace to the profession.” [Guide to Professional Ethics, by ICPAK]

“Early Greek philosophers notably Plato and Aristotle viewed ethics broadly as a systematic
intellectual discipline, which seeks to investigate carefully what makes a truly good human life
and how such a life may be achieved. Ethics seeks to discover and articulate principles, values
and commitments that guide human actions and choices with a view to ensuring a truly good
and satisfying life. Ethics is generally viewed as a system of moral principles (or roles) and of
conduct. Morals refer to the standard behavior or principles about right or wrong. Ethics can,
therefore be seen as concerning the judgments an individual makes concerning what is right or
wrong and the behavior that results from it. The term “ethics” is generally used to mean the
discipline (area of learning) dealing with what is right or wrong. Right Behavior is taken to be
ethical and wrong Behavior unethical, (Nzomo, 1999).” The encyclopedia Britannica looks at
the subject of ethics by raising several questions. “How should we live? Shall we aim at
happiness or knowledge, virtue or creation of beautiful objects? If we choose happiness, will it
be our own or the happiness of all? Is it right to be dishonest in a good cause? What are our
obligations to the other creatures with whom we share this planet and to the generations of the
human who will come after us? (Britannica, 18:492)”
Nzomo, (1999) continues, “Profession on the other hand is defined precisely as an occupation or vocation requiring advanced study in a specialized field. The term refers to a group of people pursuing a learned art as a common calling in the spirit of public service”. The qualities and the characteristics that are common to all professions are: Service to society; Ethical principles which emphasizes the virtue of self coordination, honesty, uprightness and devotion to the welfare of those served; Legal regulations for admission and entry into the profession; Disciplinary procedures for those whose conduct violates ethical standards; A body of specialized and organized knowledge acquired through formal education and training; A language of its own which in its more sophisticated forms is understandable only to the initiated.

The accountancy professional ethics in Kenya are issued by a body established by an act of parliament; The accountant act, cap 531. They are regulated by the institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK). ICPAKs’ guide to professional ethics complies with the code of ethics for professional accountants issued by the International Federation of Accountants Committee (IFAC). IFAC gave the qualities and characteristics of the profession to be:

i. Mastery of particular intellectual skills, acquired by training and education.

ii. Adherence by its members to a common code of values and conduct established by its administrating body, including maintaining an outlook which is essentially objective and

iii. Acceptance of duties to society as a whole (usually in return for restriction in use of a title or in the granting of a qualification); (Nzomo, 1999).

These guidelines and principles to professional ethics apply in all specializations and to all professionals in public practice, in employment, in industry and in education. For accounting staff, they should gauge their performance on these professional ethics. They are required to
have honesty and integrity. Honesty is referred to, as that state of mind whereby one will not consciously mislead others. Integrity requires one to be straightforward, honest and sincere. Integrity therefore, embodies truthfulness, good faith and independence in judgment. Accounting staff's integrity should not be questionable. IFAC, (1998) maintains, “A professional accountant should be straightforward and honest in performing professional services”. Other factors that a professional accountant should have and that should determine his/her performance are as such as; Objectivity; Neutrality; Independence; Confidentiality; Professional attitude and Behaviour. The accountant Act, Cap 531 enforces professional conduct by law. Subsection (1) of section 28 of Cap 531 stipulates that a member of the institute (ICPAK) is guilty of professional misconduct if in general he/she conducts themselves contrary to the guidelines of professional ethics.

2.5 Communication

Communication is said to be the process by which information is transmitted and understood between two or more people. In his article “Effective Communication” Mbaya (1994) writes, “The nature and uses of communication in excellent organizations (schools) are notably different from the non-excellent ones.” The Author concludes that excellent organizations have intense communication and use a variety of philosophies, practices and structure to encourage communication, for instance open door policies; management by walking around (MBWA); face-to-face contacts; clear channels of communication and proper feedback. The emphasis of communication is due to several factors:

1. Communication affects every area of work; for instance, communication to employees about performance appraisal, organizational goals and objectives, job changes are all necessary for the proper functioning of the organization.
II. Decision makers in any organization need the right information from many people to perceive problems, recognize new ideas and identify emerging clients' needs. In its objectives, Canon, the Japanese optics and electronics company, recognized this through its emphasis on "heart-to-heart and mind-to-mind, communication corporate philosophy".

III. It is said that managers spend 85% of their time on communicating through scheduled and unscheduled meetings, telephone and mobile calls, reading, writing and researching. Principals of schools spend a high percent of their time in meetings the different groups of people interacting in their schools. Scheduled and unscheduled meetings always interrupt accounting staff's work in most cases with the principal.

IV. Organizations communicate internally as well as externally. Internally, communication is needed to establish and disseminate the goals of the institution; develop plans to achieve; organize human and other resources efficiently and effectively while protecting them from waste; select, develop; lead, motivate and create a climate in which people want to contribute; and control performance. Externally, communication enables an organization, through information exchange to: be aware of the availability of suppliers; be aware of the changing needs of customers/clients; be aware of the regulations of the government; and be aware of the concerns of the society.

V. Managers determine the pace, tone and character of communication in the organization and thereby influence the attitude of employees.

Communication therefore has several functions such as:

a) Information function. Communication provides information about alternative future events and potential outcomes of decisions to make reasoned choices, which must be communicated, to relevant personnel.
b) Motivation Function. Communication ensures personnel achieve organizational objectives. Accounting staff who work according to the information/instructions communicated to them by principals will perform according to expectations and will be motivated.

c) Control Function. Through communication, duties, authorities and responsibilities are clarified and this permits management to be able to control workers. Principals who issue clear communications to accounting staff enhance their performance.

d) Emotional Function. Communication permits the expression of feelings and the satisfaction of social needs. It also helps vent frustrations, (Mbaya, 1994). Accounting staff who have clear channels of communications with their principals will have no difficulties in expressing their needs. This would help reduce frustrations and enhance performance.

Communication is however, hampered by several causes of communication barriers such as: Perception where the receiver of the communicated message determines what information to screen out, to select and how the selected information is organized and interpreted; Filtering where some messages are stopped altogether on their way up or down the organization hierarchy; Language that involves words, gestures, symbols, and signs that may carry no meaning to the receiver of the information; Information distraction, misrepresentation and information retention, are other communication barriers.

Managers have to learn about these communication barriers in order to find ways of overcoming them so as to communicate effectively. Many suggestions have been offered to overcome these barriers by various scholars of communication, which include use of feedback, number of
2.6 Levels of Technology Available

In the year 2007, when one mentions the word Technology, the general understanding is the use of computers and the knowledge of information technology. This is because computers are relating to information technology and the operations of the Internet. Information Technology, (IT) is explained as the use of computers to help collect, stores, processes and send information in the form of pictures, words or numbers more reliably, quickly and economically. Guenard, (2001) indicates that IT includes equipment such as computers, radios, televisions, Video Cassettes Recorders (VCRs) and digital cameras that can be used by teachers and accounting staff to support their work. Halliday, (1997) illustrates the administrative uses of the Microcomputers in schools as being; Word processing; Registration and scheduling; Time management; School needs; Assessment studies; Discipline problems; Attendance; Accounting; Budgeting; Inventory control; and Accounting records. All these uses are to make administrators roles/tasks more efficient.

In his article on the computer literacy, Dougherly, (2000) points out eight areas in computer literacy that are applied by school administrators in their day-to-day uses of IT which include: Word processing; Data bases; Spread sheets; Presentation programs; Online service areas; E-Mail; Troubleshooting which is the most common computer use and; Uses and evaluation of software. Accounting staff would most likely be interested in using the spreadsheets, databases and the presentation programs. Kanyeki, (2006) states that three sets of technology applications are of particular interest to school administrators and therefore by association to accounting staff. These applications are:
I. Computer based communication, mail and networking

II. Management Information Systems (MIS), which are used to access management information, such as databases.

III. Word processing, spreadsheets and desktop publishing.

Just like they are useful to administrators the above uses of IT are also useful to accounting staff. They will need this technology since as helpers of principals in financial management matters they have to be computer literate.

However, there are barriers hindering the utilization of IT knowledge in most secondary schools. According to Bates (2000), any move towards using new technology requires significant up-front technical investment, computers need to be made available and network connected software installed and the technology needs to upgraded and maintained to allow for technological change. More so most secondary schools may not have provided adequate support and training for accounting staff to use IT appropriately in educational settings.

Despite these barriers, there are many private institution and Cyber cafes that offer training in the operation of computers in Nairobi city and thus accounting staff would have no problem in gaining their knowledge.

2.7 Control Measures set by Ministry of Education

All the control measures that accounting staff encounter are spelt out the Education Act, Cap 211. Part V of the Education Act Cap 211 deals with Inspection and control of schools. Section 18(2) states that “The minister shall appoint officers with authority to enter any school at any time, with or without notice and inspect or audit the accounts of the school or advice the manager of the school on the maintenance of accounting records, and may temporarily remove any books or records for the purpose of inspection or audit.” Section 18 (3) continues “on being
so requested by an officer appointed under this section, the principal of the school shall place at
the disposal of the officer all the facilities, records, accounts notebooks, examination scripts and
other materials belonging to the school that the officer may reasonably require for the purpose
of the inspection of the school or the inspection or audit of accounts.” The financial provisions
is given in Section 32(1) which states that, “Every board (BOG) shall cause to be kept all proper
books of accounts and other records relating there to, in respects of all its funds, property and
transactions, and shall prepare such accounts in such form as the minister may prescribe.”
Section 32(2) continues, “The minister shall appoint the controller and auditor-general or some
other auditor to inspect, examine and report to the board (BOG) on the annual accounts and the
financial records of the board.” And Section 32(4) states, “On receipt of a report by the auditor,
the secretary of the board (principal) shall, within three weeks of such receipt transmit a copy of
the report and the accounts certified by the auditor to the minister.”

Inspection of the school accounts is a regular periodic activity, however if the ministry suspects
there has been, mismanagement, misappropriation, embezzlement of funds and corrupt deals an
inspection may be ordered immediately. These terms are not synonymous. Each represents a
characteristics offence by description and purpose and in reference to the code of regulations for
teachers. The offence although professional in origin, is actually criminal and a court action will
take precedence. It is the heads of the schools that are usually implicated since they are the
accounting officers by virtue of their positions in the schools. Due to the same, positions they
may easily compromise their institutions’ finance officers (accounting staff) ignoring
professional and legal provisions.

Mismanagement cases are usually followed up with inspection of the school and an audit
inspection report is written for the period in question.
2.8 Accounting Staff’ Performance

According to Hersey and Blanchard, (2001) as cited by Mutinda, (2003), there are many factors that affect the performance of workers. Initial training of accounting staff is a crucial factor to affect their performance. Accounting staff’s technical training is acquired through undergoing the Kenya Accountants and Secretaries National Examination Board (KASNEB), training curricula. A accounting staff should have at least acquired a certificate in KATC. The initial training offers opportunity for an aspiring job seeker to be considered for a post of a accounting staff. Further job experience however, improves their performance.

The working environment of accounting staff is also very crucial in improving their performance. Good working environment such as spacious office reduces the stress that may occur due to poor environment. Experience is said to be the best teacher. Accounting staff gain experience gradually as they continue perfecting their performance.

Professional ethics are yet another factor that will affect performance. Accounting staff as accountants should adhere to the accountants’ professional ethics for their performance to improve. These professional ethics are stipulated in the Guidelines to professional ethics. They are; Intellectual Honesty and Integrity; Professional competence; Neutrality and Independence; Confidentiality; Professional Attitude and finally having Technical standards of performance.

Communication channels found an organization also determine the accounting staff’s performance. Communication is emphasized due to some factors such as:

a) Communicating the results of performance appraisal. Performance appraisal is an evaluation of the performance level of employees against standards to make decisions about promotion, compensation, additional training, or firing. Accounting staff
performance needs to be appraised by the principal so that if there is need of further training this may be done.

b) Management by Objectives (MBO) teaches that in any organization (school) one key to successful management and motivation is the establishment and maintenance of open two-way communication between and among managers and workers together effectively and efficiently to achieve them, (Nickels, McHugh and McHugh, 1996). This communication takes the form of directives, policies, announcements, memos, rules procedures etc.

c) Communication channels are used to motivate workers. Without communication, workers would not come to know about motivation.

d) New methods of communicating are brought by new information technologies (IT). Accounting staff who apply new IT will have no difficulties in their communication with other stakeholders in a school environment.

Information Technology (IT) has revolutionized institutions of all types, schools included. Most tasks earlier performed manually in institutions are done using computers nowadays. “Keeping current with the latest in computer and Telecommunications technology has become critical for workers (Nickels McHugh and McHugh, 1996).” Using database information improves information capture.

In addition to the control measures as stipulated in the Education Act Cap 211, most principals will have their own measures to control the performance of all non-teaching staff in the school. The principals closely monitor accounting staff’s performance.
Accounting staff will be much more motivated by having opportunities for growth and development. Employees will intend to work harder when the reward for good performance means a career step, (Gomwe, 1992). Participative, Collaborative styles of management is said to encourage workers to be innovative and therefore, feel more motivated. Motivated accounting staff will enhance their performance.

2.9 Chapter Summary

It has emerged from review of related literature that, factors affecting performance of accounting staff are: Education and training; Working environment and experience gained on the job; Professional ethics; Communication channels; Level of technology and control measures set by MOE and the principal. As such the principal and the BOG should strive to facilitate the enhancement of these factors.

2.10 Conceptual Framework

Study about the factors influencing the performance of accounting staff has not been undertaken in the past. Most studies in secondary schools have been on performance of principals and teachers. The need to investigate on accounting staff’ performance is therefore vital since they also play a part in the overall school performance.

Factors affecting accounting staff performance are the independent variables. The intervening variables are; Education and Training; and Levels of technology; Control measures from MOE among others. Acceptable performance of accounting staff is the dependent variable. These variables are illustrated in figure 2.1 below.
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.2 shows the Conceptual Framework on the factors affecting the performance of accounting staff in secondary schools.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE
Factors affecting performance

DEPENDED VARIABLE
Accounting staff Performance

INTERVENING VARIABLES
- Education
- Training
- Communication
- Levels of Technology
- Control measures from MOE

Source: (Researcher, 2009)
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction
Research methodology is discussed under the following section:- Research design; Target population; Data collection procedure; and Data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research Design
The study adopted a descriptive survey design. In the survey, a Questionnaire was administered to the accounting staff of the public secondary schools in Nairobi. The descriptive survey design was preferred by the researcher because; it gives the researcher control over the research process and the data obtained is easily standardized allowing easy classification.

3.3 Target Population
The target population for this study consisted of all public secondary school accounting staff or accountants in the Nairobi province. Among the public secondary schools in the province; there are 15 boys' secondary schools, 17 girls' secondary schools and 16 mixed secondary schools. The researcher interviewed one accounting staff in each school.

3.4 Sampling Procedure
A census was undertaken since all the public secondary schools were selected. This census method was considered feasible because the total target population was small being only 48 public secondary schools in Nairobi province.
3.5 Data Collection

Data was collected using a questionnaire which had both structured and unstructured questions. The open ended questions enabled the researcher to get more information, opinions and recommendations, while the close ended questions gave the researcher precise information on particular issues. The questionnaire was distributed by drop and pick method. Any explanation required by the respondent was provided before the respondent was left to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire was picked by the researcher immediately it was filled up.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

After the collection of data the questionnaires was checked and edited for completeness, accuracy and uniformity of information obtained. The researcher then categorized the data according to organizational characteristics such as the accounting staff’s age, sex, professional experience, academic qualifications and school category and size. The categorized data was then coded and keyed into a computer then analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences [SPSS]. The Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as Frequencies and percentages. Frequency distribution tables, Pie charts and bar charts were used to present the findings.
4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This study sought to investigate the factors that influence performance of accounting staff in public secondary schools in Kenya. The field data was coded and then edited to ascertain accuracy and completeness. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software was used to analyze the data. The study targeted all the 48 public secondary schools in Nairobi. However due to study limitation, the study was able to gather a total of 40 responses which represented 83.3% response rate. This formed the basis for the analysis and the findings presented in this chapter. The findings are presented in frequency tables, percentages, pie charts and bar graphs.

4.2 Demographic Information

Figure 4.1: Gender of participating accounting staff.

Gender Of Participating Staff

![Gender Pie Chart]
Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents interviewed in the various public secondary schools in Nairobi. The figure shows that majority of the respondents (60%) were male while 40% were female.

Table 4.1 Age categories of the respondent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Categories of the Respondents</th>
<th>21 to 25</th>
<th>26 to 30</th>
<th>31 to 35</th>
<th>36 to 40</th>
<th>over 40</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Majority of the accounting staff 27.5% were aged between 36 and 40 years old. Only 15% of the respondents were 40 years and above. This information was necessary to access the responses of various age groups working as accounting staff.

Figure 4.2: Current position held
The findings further shows that positions held by the various respondents included: clerical staff, Accounts assistants, Assistant accountants and Accountants. Each of these categories accounted for a quarter of the respondents, (25%).

Table 4.2: Duration in the current position

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration in the current position</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 5 to 10 years</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 10 to 15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 15 to 20 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The finding also shows that more than half of the respondents, 22 which are 55% had held their current position for less than 5 years. 12 had held their current position for 5 to 10 years. This is only 30%. Only less than 2% had held their current position for more than 15 years.

4.3 Levels of Education of Accounting staff

This study sought to establish how level of education of accounting staff affects their performance. To achieve this, the study sought to establish the level of education of the various accounting staff in the public secondary schools. The findings show that majority of the accounting staff (37.5%) had acquired O-level certificate while those with Higher National Diploma accounted for 32.5%. Those respondents with Bachelors degree and A-level Certificates accounted for 15% each as shown in table 4.2. This shows that most of the
accounting staff in the public secondary schools are holder of O-level certificate and therefore hence have overall limited knowledge and hence not very effective in their performance.

Table 4.3: Levels of Education of Accounting Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Qualifications</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bachelors Degree</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher National Diploma</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A level Certificate</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O Level Certificate</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 Level of Professional Training of Accounting Staff

This study sought to establish how the level of professional training of accounting staff affects their performance. To achieve this, the study sought to establish the level of professional training of the various accounting staff in public schools as well as their experience in the accounting profession. As shown in table 4.4, majority of the respondents (30%) had attained ACNC or KATC certificates. Those who had attained CPA1, CPA2 and CPA3 accounted for 27.5%, 22.5% and 20% respectively.
Table 4.4: Level of Professional Training of Accounting Staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Highest Professional qualifications</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACNC or KATC</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Duration in the Accounting Profession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration in accounting field</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentages (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>less than 5 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 6 to 10 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 11 to 15 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 16 to 20 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings further show that majority of the respondents (35%) had been in the accounting profession for less than 5 years as shown in table 4.4. This shows that most of the accounting staff in public secondary schools have low professional training as well as low experience in their job. This has direct negative effect in their performance in their respective institutions.
4.5 Channels of Communications

The study sought to establish how the channels of communications adopted by school management affect accounting staff performance. The main issues considered in this respect included; methods of communication used by the school management, management consultation on schools' finances and frequency of meeting with management.

4.5.1 Methods of communication used by the school management

The study accessed the various methods of communication used by the school management. According to half of the respondents (50%), the schools management used oral face to face communication. Communication via telephone and memo responses accounted for 30% and 18% respectively while communication through local Area Network (LAN) accounted for 2% of the responses as shown in figure 4.1. This shows that the main mode of communication between the public secondary schools management and accounting staff is oral face to face communication.
4.5.2 Management Consultation on Schools’ finances

According to 85% of the respondent the management of public schools consults the accounting staff on matters concerning school finances. Only 15% of the respondent said that the management does not consult as shown in table 4.5. The respondents highlighted the key areas that the management consults on. These included: monthly and daily reconciliation, Fee balances, bank statements, payments of subordinate staff payments as well as various suppliers, receipts from non-fees transactions, budgeting, audit reviews, Staff payroll, preparing the financial statements, bursary allocation and determining the financial strengths and weaknesses of the schools.
Table 4.6: Management Consultation on school finances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>85.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.3 Frequency of Meeting with Management

The findings show that majority of the respondents (47.5%) meet the school management once a week while a quarter of them (25%) meet the management two or more times in a week. 12.5% of the accounting staff meet the school management everyday while 15% never meet the school management as shown in figure 4.2. This shows that most of the accounting staff in public schools have regular meetings with the school management which is a step forward towards good staff performance in the school.

Figure 4.4: Frequency of Meeting with Management
4.6 Technology Available for Accounting Staff

The study sought to establish how the level of technology available affects accounting staff performance. To achieve this, the study established the level of accounting staff computer literacy in public secondary schools.

4.6.1 Computer literacy

The findings presented in figure 4.3 show that majority of the respondents (92.7%) were computer literate. Only 7.5% of the respondents were not. The findings further show that out of the entire respondent that were computer literate, 80% had Certificate earned from computer colleges. Above diploma certification, diploma certification and knowledge acquired from friends responses accounted for 7.5%, 10% and 2.5% respectively as shown in table 4.6. This show that most of the accounting staff in the public school were computer literacy and have certificate earned from computer colleges. This is a move that improve their performance in their job.

Figure 4.5: Computer Literacy of the Respondents
Table 4.7: Level of Computer Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above diploma certification</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma certification</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate level earned from computer colleges</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>80.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge acquired from friends</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.6.2 Computer Usage

The findings also show that majority of the respondents (67.5%) do not use computers when carrying out their duties. Only 32.5% the respondents used computers in executing their duties as shown in figure 4.4. This shows that despite the fact that most of the accounting staff were computer literate, they did not utilize the computers in carrying out their duties and this in return affect the efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.
However when asked to rate the level of importance of how the computers would be to the administration of their duties, all the respondent rated it as either extremely important or very important as accounted by 67.5% and 32.5% respectively as shown in figure 4.5.

Figure 4.7: Importance of Computer in Administration
4.7 Control Measures set by the Ministry of Education

Finally the study sought to establish how the control measures set by the MOE affect accounting staff performance in public secondary schools. Key issues accessed here included availability on the MOE guideline policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records and MOE auditing of the schools' books of accounts.

4.7.1 Guidelines from Ministry of Education

The respondents were asked to state whether their respective institution have guideline policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records. The findings show that majority of the respondents (95.0%) answered this question on the affirmative while 5% answered otherwise as shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Guidelines from MOE on Financial Records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guidelines from MOE on financial records</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9: MOE frequency of visits to implement policy Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Visits</th>
<th>Frequency (n)</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
<th>Cumulative Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Every month</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every three months</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half yearly</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once per year</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

39
The respondent further stated the frequency at which MOE officials visit the schools to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines. The findings presented in table 4.9 show according to majority of the respondents (67.5%), MOE officials visit the schools once per year to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines. This shows that there is no close supervision of the accounting staff by the ministry of education hence poor performance of the accounting staff in public secondary schools.

4.7.2 Ministry of Education Auditing of Schools Books of Accounts

Table 4.10: Visits by MOE Auditors (n=39)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visits by MOE Auditors</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>97.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings show that MOE auditing officers visit institution to audit the books of accounts as accounted by 97.4% of the responses. Only 2.6% of the institutions are not visited by the MOE auditing officers as shown in table 4.9. However the findings further show that most of the MOE Auditors visits once in a year (60%) to audit the public schools books of accounts as shown in figure 4.6. This shows poor supervision by the Ministry of Education and this contribute to poor performance of the accounting staff.
Figure 4.8: Frequency of Auditing by MOE Officials

- Every two years: 15.0%
- Every five years: 7.5%
- Any other period: 17.5%
- Once every year: 60.0%
CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the entire project. The main issues presented in this chapter include; the summary of the findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The first research question of this study sought to establish how level of education of accounting staff affects their performance. To achieve this, the study sought to establish the level of education of the various accounting staff in the public secondary schools. The study established that majority of the accounting staff (37.5%) had acquired O-level certificate as the highest level of education. However a small proportion of the accounting staff (32.5%) had attained a Higher National Diploma certificate. This shows that most of the accounting staff in the public secondary schools are holders of either O-level certificate or Higher National Diploma certificate which is lower qualification for an accountant. This low level of knowledge affect their operations and hence not very effective in their performance.

The second research question sought to establish how the level of professional training of accounting staff affects their performance. To achieve this, the study sought to establish the level of professional training of the various accounting staff in public schools as well as their experience in the accounting profession. The study established that majority of the accounting staff (30%) had attained ACNC or KATC certificates. The findings further show that majority
of the respondents (35%) had been in the accounting profession for less than 5 years. This shows that most of the accounting staff in public secondary schools have low professional training as well as low experience in their job. This has direct negative effect in their performance in their respective institutions.

The third research question sought to establish how the channels of communications adopted by school management affect accounting staff performance. The main issues considered in this respect included; methods of communication used by the school management, management consultation on schools’ finances and frequency of meeting with management. The study established that the main mode of communication between the public secondary schools management and accounting staff is oral face to face communication (50%). The study further established that majority (85%) of the management of public schools consults the accounting staff on matters concerning school finances. Among the key areas that the management consults the accounting staff on included: monthly and daily reconciliation, Fee balances, bank statements, payments of subordinate staff payments as well as various suppliers, receipts from non-fees transactions, budgeting, audit reviews, Staff payroll, preparing the financial statements, bursary allocation and determining the financial strengths and weaknesses of the schools. On the frequency of accounting staff meeting with management, the findings show that majority of the accounting staff (47.5%) meet the school management once a week, this shows that most of the accounting staff in public schools have regular meetings with the school management which is a step forward towards good staff performance in the schools.

The fourth research question sought to establish how the level of technology available affects accounting staff performance. To achieve this, the study established the level of accounting staff computer literacy in public secondary schools. The findings revealed that majority of the
accounting staff (93%) were computer literate and had certificate earned from computer colleges. Therefore computer literacy was not an hindrance to the performance of their job. However the findings further revealed that majority of the accounting staff (67.5%) do not use computers when carrying out their duties. Most of the accounting staff handles manual accounting documentation. This shows that despite the fact that most of the accounting staff were computer literate, they did not utilize the computers in carrying out their duties and this in return affect their performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of their operations. However when asked to rate the level of importance of how the computers would be to the administration of their duties, all the respondent rated it as either extremely important or very important as accounted by 67.5% and 32.5% respectively. This show that the accounting staff acknowledges the performance improvement if they are well equipped with the necessary computer equipments.

Finally, the fifth research question sought to establish how the control measures set by the Ministry of Education (MOE) affect accounting staff performance in public secondary schools in Kenya. Key issues accessed here included; availability of the MOE guideline policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records and MOE auditing of the schools books of accounts. The findings show that most of the secondary schools (95.0%) had guidelines policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records. In terms of MOE officials visiting the schools to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines, the findings show this happens once per year (67.5%) which shows that there is no close supervision of the accounting staff by the ministry of education. This contributes to poor performance of the accounting staff in public secondary schools.
The findings show that 97.4% of the secondary schools are visited by the MOE auditing officers to audit the books of accounts. However the findings further show that most of the MOE Auditors visits once in a year (60%) to audit the public schools books of accounts. This shows poor supervision of the books of accounts by the Ministry of Education auditing officials and this has an implication on the performance of the accounting staff in public secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusions

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors that influence performance of accounting staff in public secondary schools in Kenya. Among the key factors that were investigated included; level of education, level of professional training, channels of communications, level of technology available and control measures set by the Ministry of Education (MOE).

On the level of education, the study established that most of the accounting staff had acquired O-level certificate and Higher National Diploma certificate which was low qualification for an accountant. This low level of overall knowledge was found to affect their operations hence not very effective in their performance.

The study further investigated the level of professional training of the accounting staff in public secondary schools. The study established that most of the accounting staff had attained ACNC or KATC certificates. The findings further showed that majority of the accounting staff had been in the accounting profession for less than 5 years. This shows that most of the accounting staff in public secondary schools had low professional training as well as low experience in their job which in turn affected their performance in their respective institutions.
On the channels of communications, the study established that the main mode of communication between the public secondary schools management and accounting staff was oral face to face communication. However in terms of consultation of accounting staff by the management the study established that majority of the schools' public schools management consults the accounting staff widely on matters concerning school finances. Among the key areas that the management consulted the accounting staff on included: monthly and daily reconciliation, Fee balances, bank statements, payments of subordinate staff payments as well as various suppliers, receipts from non-fees transactions, budgeting, audit reviews, Staff payroll, preparing the financial statements, bursary allocation and determining the financial strengths and weaknesses of the schools.

On the level of technology available in public secondary school, the findings established that majority of the accounting staff was computer literate and holder of certificate earned from computer colleges. However the study further established that majority of the accounting staff did not use computers when carrying out their duties. Most of the accounting staff handles manual accounting documentation. Despite the fact that most of the accounting staff were computer literate, they did not utilize the computers in carrying out their duties and this in return affect their performance in terms of efficiency and effectiveness of their operations.

Finally the study investigated control measures set by the Ministry of Education (MOE) on the public secondary schools. The study established that most of the secondary schools had guidelines policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records but the MOE officials visited the schools only once in a year to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines which showed that there was no close supervision of the accounting staff by the ministry of education.
officials. This contributed to poor performance of the accounting staff in public secondary schools.

In addition the MOE auditing officers visited the secondary schools to audit the books of accounts. However the visits were done once in a year. This shows poor supervision of the books of accounts by the Ministry of Education auditing officials and this has an implication on the performance of the accounting staff in public secondary schools.

5.4 Recommendations

1. The government through the ministry of education need increase their level of supervision to public schools through increasing their regular visit to the schools to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines as well as to audit the public schools books of accounts. This will go along way in improving the accountability and transparency of the school financial management and overall performance.

2. This study recommends that the standard for recruitment and selection of the accounting staff in secondary schools be reviewed to accommodate graduates who have a higher level of education since this study established that most of the accounting staff had acquired O-level certificate and Higher National Diploma certificate which was low qualification for an accountant.

3. In addition, the professional training of the accounting staff was found to be too low, that is ACNC or KATC certificates. Therefore this also needs to be reviewed to at least CPA Two. This will ensure that the accountant have qualification that enable them to be efficient and effective in their work since the study established that they are very much depended upon by the school management in critical financial decision making.
5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

This study shown that most of the accounting staff in the public school were computer literacy and had certificates earned from computer colleges. However further studies need to focus on the adequacy of the computer facilities in the public schools to ascertain whether the available facilities are adequately proportional to the number of the users since most of the staff have the needed computer training. This will go along in improving the staff performance in public secondary schools in Kenya.
REFERENCES


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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire Introductory Letter

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PROJECT

SUBJECT: A STUDY OF FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STAFF IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KENYA.

I am a postgraduate research student registered at the Department of Accounting and Finance of Kenyatta University. I am currently carrying out a research on the above subject. Since you are directly involved in the subject of the study, your completion of the attached Questionnaire is important. All responses will be treated confidentially.

All responses will be reported only in terms of the entire population. Therefore, do not write your name or that of your school in the Questionnaire.

Thank you in advance for your anticipated cooperation.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,

Samuel K. N. Kimani
Appendix B: Questionnaire for School Accounting Staff

This questionnaire is designed to gather information on the factors that influence the performance of accounting staff in public secondary schools in Nairobi. You are requested to respond to all the items as honestly and as truthfully as possible. Please put a tick (-) or fill in the blank spaces (...) provided while responding to each item. You are assured that strict confidentiality will be observed in dealing with your responses.

Part A: Background Information

1. What is your gender?
   a) Male [ ]
   b) Female [ ]

2. How old are you?
   a) 21-25 [ ]
   b) 26-30 [ ]
   c) 31-35 [ ]
   d) 36-40 [ ]
   e) Over 40 [ ]

3. What are your highest academic qualifications?
   a) Bachelors’ degree [ ]
   b) Higher National Diploma [ ]
   c) ‘A’ level certificate [ ]
   d) ‘O’ level certificate [ ]

4. What are your highest professional qualifications?
   a) ACNC or KATC [ ]
   b) CPA 1 [ ]
   c) CPA 2 [ ]
d) CPA 3

e) Any other ......................... [Please specify].

5. How recently have you undertaken a course related to the accounting profession?
   a) Within a year
   b) Within the last two years
   c) Within the last five years
   d) More than five years.

6. Indicate the number of years you have been in the accounting field.
   a) Less than 5 years
   b) Between 6-10 years
   c) Between 11-15 years
   d) Between 16-20 Years
   e) Over 20 years

7. What is the position you are holding at your current station?
   a) Clerical staff
   b) Accounts assistant
   c) Assistant Accountant
   d) Accountant

8. Indicate the number of years you have been in the current position.
   a) Less than five years
   b) Between 5-10 years
   c) Between 10-15 years
   d) Between 15-20 years

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9. Are you computer literate?
   a) Yes [ ]
   b) No [ ]

10. If yes, indicate your level of computer literacy.
    a) Above Diploma certification [ ]
    b) Diploma certification [ ]
    c) Certificate level earned from computer colleges [ ]
    d) Knowledge acquired from friends [ ]
    e) None of the above [ ]

11. If none, when do you intend to acquire computer training?
    a) Soon [ ]
    b) Later [ ]
    c) Never [ ]

12. Is your institute currently using a computer in carrying out the accounting work?
    a) Yes [ ]
    b) No [ ]

13. How important do you think computers are /would be essential to your administration of work?
    a) Extremely Important [ ]
    b) Very important [ ]
    c) Slightly important [ ]
    d) Not important [ ]

14. Which methods does the management use to communicate with the accounting staff?
15. How often does management hold meetings with the accounting staff?
   a) Every day [ ]
   b) Once per week [ ]
   c) Two or more times per week [ ]
   d) Never [ ]

16. Does management consult you on any matters concerning school finances?
   a) Yes [ ]
   b) No [ ]

17. What issues does management consult you about in respect to accounting work?
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................
   ..........................................................................................................................

18. Does your institution have guideline policy from MOE on how to keep the financial records?
   a) Yes [ ]
   b) No [ ]

19. If yes how often do MOE officials visit to verify the implementation of the policy guidelines?
   a) Every month [ ]
20. Which issues does the guideline policy from MOE cover in respect of keeping the financial records of the institution?
   a) Collection and banking of all revenue [ ]
   b) Maintenance of fees registers [ ]
   c) Monthly bank reconciliation [ ]
   d) Maintenance of institution assets register [ ]
   e) Any other .................... (Please specify) [ ]

21. Does MOE auditing officers visit your institution to audit the books of accounts?
   a) Yes [ ]
   b) No [ ]

22. If yes how often do MOE officials audit the institutes' books?
   a) Once every year [ ]
   b) Every two years [ ]
   c) Every five years [ ]
   d) Any other period ....... (Please specify).

23. In your own opinion what do you think the organization should do to make your work more comfortable?

...................................................................................................................................................
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Thank you for your Responses
## Appendix C: List of Secondary Schools in Nairobi Province

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<td>1.</td>
<td>Upper Hill high school</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>State House Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Ruthimitu secondary school</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Parklands Arya school</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Ofafa Jericho high school</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Nairobi Milimani Sec. School</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Maina Wanjigi Sec. School</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Mangata high school</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Kamiti Sec. School</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Jamhuri high school</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Embakasi Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Dagoretti high school</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>St. Georges Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Ruthimitu Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Ruaraka Secondary school</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Our Lady of Fatuma</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Nairobi school</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Muhuri Muchiri Sec. School</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Muslim Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Aquinas Sec. school</td>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Kenya high school</td>
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<td>22.</td>
<td>Hospital Hill Sec. School</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Eastleigh High School</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Sunshine Sec. School</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Starehe Boys Centre</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>St. Teresa’s Boys Sec. School</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>Precious Blood Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Parklands Boys Sec. School</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Nile Road Sec. School</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Moi Forces Academy</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Moi Nairobi Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Kahawa Garrison</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Kamukunji Secondary</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Huruma Girls Secondary</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Buruburu Girls</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Uhuru Secondary School</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>St. Teresa’s Nairobi</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Pangani Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Pumwani Sec. School</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Nembu Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>41.</td>
<td>Ngara Girls Sec. School</td>
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<td>42.</td>
<td>Mutu-ini Sec. School</td>
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<td>43.</td>
<td>Lenana Sec. School</td>
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<td>44.</td>
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<td>45.</td>
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<td>46.</td>
<td>Highway Sec. School</td>
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<td>47.</td>
<td>Dandora Sec. School</td>
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<td>48.</td>
<td>Uhuru Sec. School</td>
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