**Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal – Vol.3, No.1**
**Publication Date:** Jan. 25, 2016
**DoI**:10.14738/assrj.31.1768.
Wokadala, J. (2016). School Management and Its Effectiveness in Lower Secondary Educaion in Uganda: Examining Perceptions of the Practitioners. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal,* 3*(1)* 141-154.

# School Management and its Effectiveness in Lower Secondary Education in Uganda: Examining Perceptions of the Practitioners

**James Wokadala, PhD**
Lecturer, College of Business and Management Sciences
Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda

## Abstract

**This paper evaluates effectiveness of lower secondary schools in Uganda with specific focus on how school leadership and management practices impact on students' achievement. The study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches considering teachers and students as units of analyses. Results indicate that school success is associated with effective instructional leadership, teacher involvement in decision making and policy implementation, teaching and learning in safe as well as orderly school environment, regular and objective monitoring of student achievement, improved relations between teachers and parents. Effective Instructional leadership in efficient schools culminated into positive behavior reinforcement and recognition to students showing exceptional accomplishments and appropriate behavior approaches compared to opportunism that engulfed low achieving schools with less regard to moral principles. Moreover, teachers are often disappointed over little influence to effect decisions even in matters where their interests are involved. In either of the schools, it is pertinent that promoting academic excellence and fostering students' learning and progress remains crucial tests of effective schooling.**

**Keywords:** Efficiency, Effectiveness, school management, Uganda

## BACKGROUND

Effective schools are by large regarded as those having high academic achievements considering the intake and the variable inputs. It is also important to establish how schools resources are utilized taking into account the technical efficiency aspects. This view point stipulates offering good quality education for the given meager input resources. Effectiveness studies rely on identifying effective schools mainly based on matriculation scores, student family background, school resources and their management as well as school-community relations. Such studies often apply multi-level modeling techniques using individual or institutional data (Kirjavainen, 2008).

Though the literature available establishes the link between education inputs, processes and outputs, there is scanty evidence on quality of institutions and quality of policy implementation as pre-requisites for better learning outcomes in lower secondary education in Uganda. In related studies, analytical methods such as qualitative techniques have been often used to establish the relationship between school management practices and its school efficiency (e.g. Dodd, 2006; Portela and Camanho, 2007). Moreover, quantitative studies that explain efficiency differences mainly employed explanatory factors related to school resources and competition, students' attributes and family background (e.g. Wokadala, 2012; Kirjavainen and Loikkanen, 1998). There is less empirical evidence on school and classroom processes that are critical in promoting social or affective outcomes despite increased funding to the education sub-sector. As Reynolds (2010) emphasizes that, policy led solutions imposed on schools are

not the answer but better approaches, methods and evidence are the practical solutions that make schools work better. This study therefore is set to address the following research questions:

1. How are the perceptions on school management process from educator's point of view (supply side) in efficient and inefficient schools?
2. How are the perceptions on school management process from learner's point of view (demand side) given the school efficiency levels?

The study is based on semi-structured interviews and secondary (quantitative) data. The quantitative information aided in identifying the efficiency distributions of the case schools while the qualitative data entailed information on perceptions, experiences and views as voiced by the respondents. The interview data was analyzed based on school efficiency categories and then themes emerging from interview texts. Previous approaches (e.g. Dodd, 2006; Sammons et al., 1998) analyzed schools management practices and views based on within different categories of school efficiency (i.e. less and more efficient schools). Another study by Kirjavainen (2008) classified the schools into groups based on the themes.

As uniqueness, this investigation employs a combination of the two approaches iteratively as well as considering views from both educators (teachers) and learners (students). The interview text was classified into themes and then discussed the responses based on the classification of school efficiency distribution as it gave further insight into the evaluation of school effectiveness and students' achievements. In particular, emerging issues arising from the analysis indicate that, school effectiveness is associated with effective instructional leadership, to a greater extent focused school mission, students' central learning skills, conducive school environment, regular assessment, monitoring of student achievement, improved school and community relations as well as expectations for student achievement and school success. It is noteworthy that the identification of efficiency distribution is based on Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) and the scores are interpreted as efficiencies. The DEA outputs were measured as the average scores in the matriculation examination in Biology, English and Mathematics subjects respectively (Wokadala, 2011).

The rest of the paper is arranged as follows. Section two provides reviews arising from previous research as well as characteristics of effective schools; the third section provides the methodological approach with selection of the sample as well as descriptive statistics of case schools. The fourth section provides the results and interpretation; section five discusses the results and gives implications as well as conclusion.

## PREVIOUS RESEARCH ON SCHOOL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

### Efficiency and Effectiveness in School Context

One of the studies on school effectiveness was undertaken by Dodd (2006) who investigated relationship between school characteristics and efficiency on English secondary schools. The qualitative aspect of the study aimed at establishing why efficient schools were rated so, and identifying the practices that explain the efficiency levels. The results identified several factors common in efficient schools and these were school ethos that emphasized learning and achievement as well as effective leadership. One major shortcoming to the study was its focus on only efficient schools with no comparison group. The efficiency differences of Portuguese secondary schools using the DEA technique to identify efficiency distributions in stage one of analysis were evaluated (Portela and Camanho, 2007). The qualitative study verified results of the efficiency analysis and identified efficient school practices of benchmark schools as well as

characteristics that differentiated the benchmark schools from other schools. However, this study hardly provided the clear methodology for sampled data and analysis, which posed major shortcoming.

The effectiveness of 12 inner city schools in London was also studied. The study examined differences in various schools outcomes in relation to school processes after taking into account school input resources and student intake (Rutter et al., 1979). Later on, another study evaluated six inner London secondary schools of the 94 schools (Sammons et al., 1998). The results revealed that effective schools were characterized by high expectations and emphasis on student achievement, shared school vision and commitment among staff, strong head teacher leadership with support from senior management team, appreciating quality of teaching and learning as well as effective teacher-parent relationship policies and practices. Similar findings were noted in related studies (e.g. Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Scheerens and Bosker, 1997). One major drawback of these studies was the small sample size and its distribution to show representativeness.

The study by Kirjavainen (2008) analyzed the views of staff on school efficiency of nine Finnish general upper secondary schools that were mostly in upper and lower efficiency distribution measured with stochastic frontier analysis. Teachers and principals were interviewed on their views about students' performance, staff relations, school management, curriculum work, parent-school relations, teacher training and evaluation. Results indicated that appreciating and caring for students as well as professional staff relations were recognized in efficient schools while frustration at low performance characterized inefficient schools. The study falls short of scope and target sample. Views from students were largely ignored and study considered a sample of nine schools that were within easy reach (i.e. within 150km radius) to limit the amount of travel. However, this current investigation, besides teachers, also examines the views of students on school climate, expectations in achievements and home-school relations, as this would provide insights from the demand side of view. Moreover, a nationally representative sample of 24 schools was chosen consisting of both efficient and inefficient schools with a view to establish the practices exhibited in efficient schools and also identify challenges common to failing schools.

## Characteristics of Effective Schools

Instructional leadership: A leader is the key agent who brings about change in many of the factors affecting school effectiveness. Successful leadership involves strength of purpose and sharing of leadership positions with sub-ordinates (Sammons et al., 1995). Purkey and Smith (1983) conclude that leadership is necessary to initiate and maintain school improvement. In the current study, views on teachers' involvement in school management as well as design of students' friendly instructional lessons for instruction effectiveness are also investigated.

Shared vision and focused school mission: Schools are more effective when staff build consensus on the aims and values of the school through; Unity of purpose that involves a consensus on values (Levine and Lezotte, 1990); articulating school mission and values consistently (Kirjavainen, 2008); collaboration with stakeholders in the execution of school values and goal setting (Sammons et al., 1995). Moreover, views on basic principle of "effective learning for all" are emphasized in the current study as these features can provide more insights on equity issues and value for money.

Orderly, safe and secure learning environment: An orderly atmosphere is necessary for stimulating learning and is related to students' academic achievement (Mortimore et al., 1988). The most effective way of encouraging order and purpose amongst learners is through reinforcement of good practice of learning and behavior as well as evaluation feedback (Creemers, 1994). In the current study, aspects related to; school conduct rules and disciplinary procedures as well as recognition in their achievements are also emphasized.

Expectations for student achievement and school success: High expectations correspond to a more active role for teachers in helping pupils to learn. These expectations are most likely to be operationalized where there is strong will and emphasis on academic achievement, where progress on achievement is regularly monitored as well as orderly learning environment (Sammons et al., 1995; Kirjavainen, 2008). Expectations can be achieved if not only when they are made, but also when effectively communicated to students and supported/challenged to achieve them.

Assessment and monitoring of student achievement: Levine and Lezotte (1990) recognized the monitoring of student progress as a factor often cited in effective schools research but argued that there has been little agreement about defining the term or providing guidance for practice. Scheerens (1992) in a review of school effectiveness research argued that proper evaluation is an essential pre-requisite to effectiveness-enhancing measures at all levels. In effect, for effective monitoring, information sharing among stakeholders is vital as well as regularly using assessment data to plan for improvement.

Opportunities for teaching and learning: The importance of teaching and learning at the classroom level to school effectiveness are evident (Mortimore, 1993; Creemers, 1994). This is reflected in maximization of learning time, including the proportion of the day given to academic subjects (Levine and Lezotte, 1990), the proportion of time in lessons devoted to learning (Rutter et al., 1979) or to interaction with students (Mortimore et al., 1988). In context, more views on curriculum content designed in the interest of all students' abilities as well as supplemental activities are investigated.

School, community and parents relations: Community-school effects for the learning process can be a powerful force for improvement (Mortimore, 1993; Coleman, 1994). In some related studies, parental involvement has been proved insufficient in itself and could present barriers to those not within the clique (Mortimore et al., 1988). Moreover, aspects of community resources used to support school activities as well as views on frequent communication between teachers and parents mainly to discuss students' progress are also emphasized under this study.

Teachers' involvement in decision making: The involvement of staff in policy decisions, management and curriculum planning as well as consultation with them about financial decisions in one way or another correlate with school effectiveness (Mortimore et al., 1988). Teacher involvement in decision-making and the development of school happen through a sense of 'ownership' (Muijs & Reynolds, 2010). In this study, teachers' participation in school planning and budgeting as well as monitoring the implementation of school policies and procedures are also considered.

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

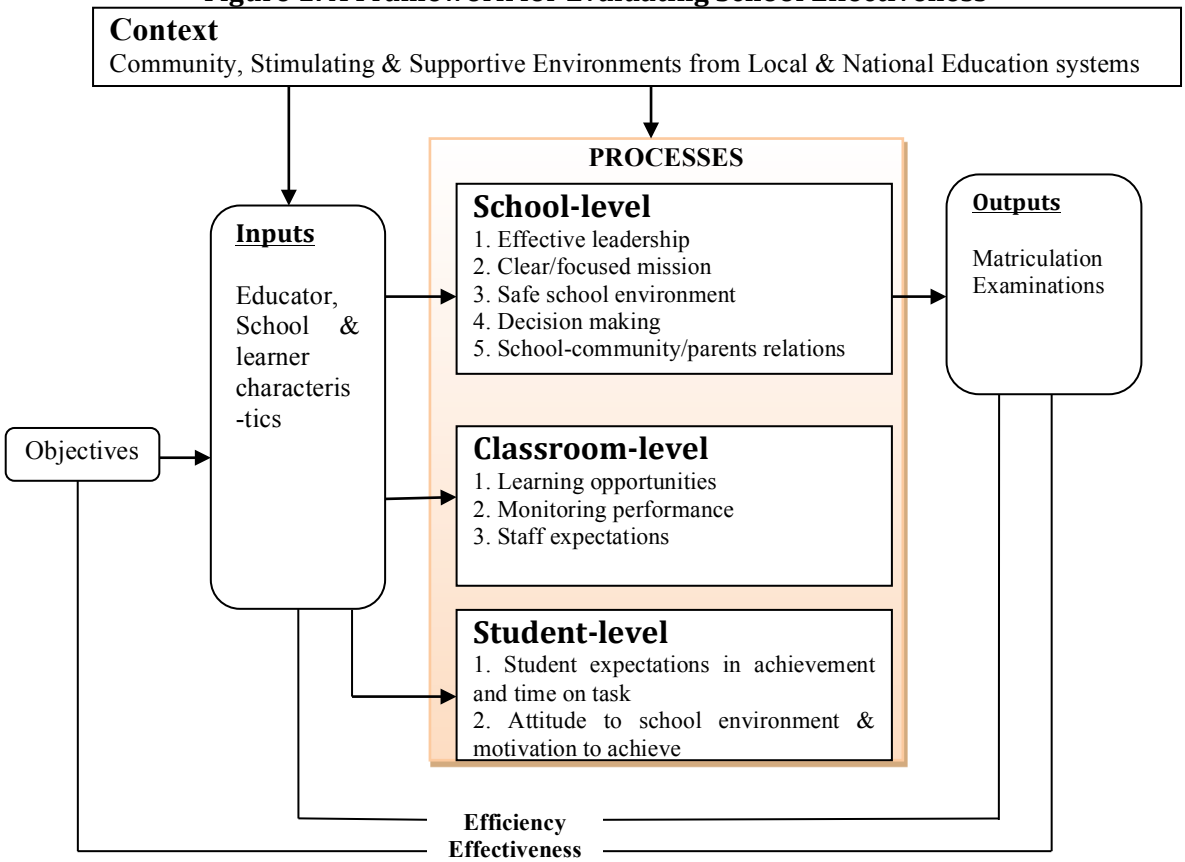
This section provides insight of the appropriate methods that have been employed to address the stated objectives. The section outlines the selection criteria of the case schools considering

their efficiency levels, the conceptual framework guiding the analysis, description of case schools as well as description of survey instruments.

**Conceptual Framework**

Most studies (e.g. Scheerens, 1990 &1992 Rutter et al., 1979) stress the importance of conceptualization and measurement of processes at different levels of the educational system. This particular study utilizes the modified conceptual framework as developed by Scheerens (1990) (Figure 1). The conceptual model is regarded integrated as it draws heavily on production functions, instructional as well as school effectiveness literature. School effectiveness analysis can be at different levels (i.e. school, class and student) as well as casual effects that can be direct, indirect or interaction in nature. Direct effects could be between school level factors and outputs, but also indirect effects mediated by classroom-level conditions. The input variables are related to the educator (teacher), learner (student) and school while the output indicator is achievement (matriculation examinations). However, both the input and output indicators are not the main focus of the investigation but are reflected in the framework for completeness.

**Figure 1: A Framework for Evaluating School Effectiveness**




Source: By Author based on Scheerens (1990) and Wokadala (2011). Note: Safe school environment, monitoring performance, school-home relations, and expectations to achievements are investigated in context of supply (educator) and demand (learner) side point of view

The context factors are conditions from the broader school environment that are regarded as achievements stimulants. The process mechanisms are divided into three levels, namely the school-level (Effective leadership, clear/focused mission, safe school environment, decision

making, school-community/parent relations), classroom-level (Learning opportunities, monitoring performance, staff expectations) and student-level (Student expectations in achievement and time on task, attitude to school environment & motivation to achieve) respectively. This study also considered demand side views, mainly articulated by students, as equally crucial to instruction and achievement as well as providing basis for monitoring and promoting educational aspirations at three levels.

It is noteworthy that this study mainly deals with the quality of policy implementation in the school environment with specific focus on management practices and instructional leadership with general view to generate theoretical explanations for the differences in educational outcomes associated with school system, students and contexts (e.g. Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Sammons et al., 1995).

## Selection of the sample schools

Initially, a sample of 283 schools was used to estimate technical efficiency scores using the DEA model (see Appendix I) and based on cross sectional data collected in 2009. At this stage, 24 case schools (8 efficient & 16 inefficient) were selected for further analysis using the qualitative approach (see Appendix II). The case schools were selected to show representativeness in efficiency status, geographical distribution and school ownership based on Variable Returns to Scale (VRS) technical efficiency scores. The time lag between 2009 (when the initial data for DEA was collected) and the present case data is nearly two years, which however may not significantly affect comparability of the two sets of data as discussed by Sammons et al. (1998). It could be argued that changes in school resources and behavior usually occur slowly, most probably the between cohorts operated under similar environment.

Concerning the case schools, their location varied from rural to urban areas as well as ownership (i.e. 17 government aided schools and 7 private). A total of 69 teachers (including head teachers) were interviewed. Majority of the head teachers and teachers were male (52, 75%) compared to female counterparts. Most of the head teachers had averagely 5 years of working experience in leadership positions and 11 years in teaching. Since the selection of the teachers was somewhat purposive, majority (62%) of them taught English subjects followed by 25%, mathematics and the rest (13%) biology subjects respectively. The study included a total of 191 students (102 Male and 89 female) participants all from grade two.

## Research Instrument

The research instruments for teachers and students were designed based on earlier school effectiveness studies conducted (e.g. Purkey and Smith, 1983; Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Scheerens and Bosker, 1997; Teddlie and Reynolds, 2000). The questionnaire included questions concerning the school as an entity, head teacher, teachers, students as well as parents. Specifically, teacher questionnaire included statements related to: effectiveness instructional leadership; clear and focused school mission; school safety, orderly school environment; expectations for student achievement and school success; assessment and monitoring of student achievement; opportunities for student learning; school-community relations, and teachers involvement in decision making. Student questionnaire contained statements related to: positive school climate; school safety and orderly environment; expectations in their achievement as well as time on task; monitoring of student progress; and home-school relations respectively. The responses were recorded on likert scale with strongly agree (coded 4) and strongly disagree (coded 1). After each theme, participants were asked to provide possible explanations for their choices made under each theme. The questions for head teacher and teacher were similar allowing for comparability of the data.

## RESULTS

### The ethos from educators (teachers) point of view

The results in Table 1 indicate the features and teachers' echoes from both efficient and inefficient schools together with ANOVA (F-statistics) tests that establish the significance of difference in mean scores.

The results indicate that instructional leadership in both kinds of schools is reflected in school management making instructional effectiveness the highest priority. Specifically, in efficient schools, the head teacher encourages and shares leadership roles with other staff (95.8%); the instructional lessons are designed to allow active students' participation (100%) as well as teachers having access to variety of instructional materials to use in teaching and learning program (91.7%). "There is always some level of delegation from top management and teacher responsibility for the delegated service is accountable for his/her action" [Teacher, East 1].

Though there is support (82.2%) on prioritizing instructional effectiveness in inefficient schools, majority views did not agree that frequent communication occurs between head teacher and other staff. Often, such schools are characterized by one way kind of communication (i.e. top-down). There were voices of concern on part of lack of internal promotions of staff (say from 'subject' to 'class' teacher) and less motivation for teachers, thus often making teachers not to care about student learning. Moreover, there were concerns on poor working condition of the teachers and this in a way has eroded their ethical conduct.

There was indifferent view from both kinds of schools on teachers' knowledge of the existing school purpose and goals, and that school is well aligned within subject areas. In efficient schools, all respondents were positive that school mission is regularly communicated to students and parents, and that 'schools use Effective Learning for All as basic principle' is supported by 95.7% of respondents. The school mission that portrays the very existence of school is often visible on billboards and classroom walls [Head teacher, East 1]. In inefficient schools, there is less support (28.9%) on the views that school goals are consistent with teacher goals and that staff participate in review of school strategic plan is supported by 31.1 percent of respondents (Table 1).

**Table 1: Proportion of teachers supporting the statement in Efficient and Inefficient schools**

| | Statements/Items | Efficient (N=24) | In-efficient (N=45) | F-tests (ANOVA) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Effectiveness Instructional leadership | All teachers make instructional effectiveness the highest priority | 0.958 | 0.822 | 1.66 |
| | Head teacher encourages and shares leadership with other teachers | 0.958 | | |
| | Instructional lessons allow all students to actively participate in the learning | 1.000 | | |
| | Teachers have access to a variety of teaching resources | 0.917 | | |
| | Frequent communication occurs between head teacher and other staff | | 0.333 | |
| Clear and focused school mission | Teachers and students are aware of school purposes and goals | 1.000 | 0.756 | 0.77 |
| | School curriculum has been aligned within subject areas and grade levels | 1.000 | 0.711 | 0.24 |
| | School mission is effectively communicated to students and parents | 1.000 | | |
| | School mission uses "Effective Learning for All" as the basic principle | 0.957 | | |
| | Goals of teachers are consistent with school goals | | 0.289 | |
| | School strategic plan is periodically reviewed and monitored by staff | | 0.311 | |
| Safe, positive and orderly school environment | School conduct rules and procedures are taught and consistently implemented | 0.917 | 0.867 | 1.25 |
| | Disciplinary procedures are implemented in a fair and consistent manner | 1.000 | 0.467 | 8.31** |
| | Students, parents and school staff share responsibility for school behavior | 0.917 | 0.778 | 13.8*** |
| | Both head teacher, teachers and students respect and trust each other | 0.916 | | |
| | Both teachers and students believe in positive behavior reinforcement | 1.000 | | |
| | Students and teachers have a positive attitude towards the school | | 0.889 | |
| | Students and teachers are recognized for their accomplishments | | 0.422 | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Expectations for student Achievement | Success is expected of all students regardless of gender and cultural status | 1.000 | 0.911 | 3.22* |
| | Expectations for students are based on their current knowledge and efforts | 1.000 | 0.712 | 2.16 |
| | Expectations are high, appropriate, and often achievable | 0.875 | | |
| Assessment and Monitoring of student achievement | Student performance is monitored in a variety of ways and products | 1.000 | | |
| | Students are regularly informed of their progress and also reported to parents | 0.958 | | |
| | Teachers use assessment data to monitor student progress | 0.917 | | |
| Opportunities for learning | Disruptions to instruction are minimized | 0.957 | 0.889 | 0.07 |
| | Extra-curricular and supplemental activities support instruction | | 0.933 | |
| | Head teacher is perceived as a coach, partner and cheerleader | 0.833 | | |
| School, community and parents relations | Parents actively participate in and support school and instructional activities | 0.989 | 0.400 | 10.67** |
| | Effective and frequent communication occurs with parents and teachers | 1.000 | 0.422 | 21.83*** |
| | Teachers feel comfortable communicating to several kinds of parents | 0.915 | | |
| | Mostly parent-teacher meetings focus on students' academic progress | | 0.778 | |
| | Community resources are used to support the school's program | | 0.600 | |
| | Teachers talk regularly with parents and students regarding their achievement | 0.875 | | |
| Teacher involvement in decision making | Teachers are involved in monitoring and implementing of school policies | 0.959 | 0.733 | 1.13 |
| | Teachers perceive that they can influence school decisions | 0.961 | 0.444 | 20.52*** |
| | Teachers strive to maintain and enhance their professional status | 1.000 | | |
| | Teachers and administrators function as a team | 1.000 | | |
| | Teachers are involved in school planning and budgeting | | 0.444 | |
| | Teachers are involved in developing and reviewing the school's mission | | 0.778 | |

**By author based on field data**

Overall, the findings indicate that in both kinds of schools, most (91.7% for efficient & 86.7% for inefficient) interviewees indifferently agreed that school conduct rules and procedures are consistently implemented during instruction. There is significantly (F-statistic=8.31, 5%) held view that disciplinary procedures are implemented in consistent manner, and that teachers and parents often (F-statistic=13.8, 1%) share responsibility for the school behavior in efficient schools than the counterpart schools. Besides, an aspect of 'respect and trust' between students and teachers is quite evident (91.6%) and all (100%) teachers believe in positive behavior reinforcement in successful schools. In inefficient schools, most interviewees (88.9%) agree that there is spirit of positivity among students and teachers towards the schools. However, few (42.2%) agree that students and teachers are recognized for their accomplishments, probably because of budget constraints.

All respondents from efficient and most (91.1%) from inefficient schools agree that success in achievement is expected of all students regardless of gender and culture, though their level of agreement is significantly different ((F-statistic=3.22, 10%). Moreover, both kinds of respondents are more positive on the statement that 'students expectations are based on their knowledge as well as previous performance'. An attribute quite supported (87.5%) in more successful schools was that always their expectations are set high, appropriate and often achievable.

Views from efficient schools indicate, there was general held view that students' performance is always monitored in variety of ways including criterion referenced tests as well as other portfolios such as games and sports. The view that 'students are regularly informed of their progress in achievements and always reported to parents' was supported by 95.8% of respondents. Another attribute much supported (91.7%) was the evaluation of school effectiveness based on previous assessment data, as one major ways of monitoring student progress.

Research participants from both kinds of schools agreed that disruptions to instructions are always minimized. High (83.3%) held view in efficient schools was that 'the head teacher is

perceived as a coach, partner and cheerful leader' in the management and instruction while in failing schools, an aspect of 'extra-curricular and supplemental activities as tools to support instruction' was also emphasized (93.3%). In the current secondary school curriculum, competitions in co-curricular activities across schools, districts as well as regions have been emphasized.

Most interviewees from efficient schools agreed that parents actively participate and support instructional activities (98.9%) as well as maintaining frequent communication between them and teachers (100%), compared to lowly held views from counterpart schools. Moreover, in successful schools, there was also high held view that 'teachers feel comfortable communicating with different types of parents' (91.5%) and further emphasize that such communication regularly centers on students' achievement (87.5%). From inefficient schools, 60.0% of interviewees agree that community resources are used to support school activities. Besides, most (77.8%) respondents support the view that parents-teacher conferences focus on ways in which students can be assisted in becoming more successful.

Majority of interviewees from both kinds of schools agree that teachers participate in monitoring the implementation of school policies and procedures, but there is significantly (F-statistic=20.52, 1%) different view that teachers can influence school decisions. All views in efficient schools indicate that teachers not only strive to maintain and enhance their professional statuses, but also together with administrators, function as a team. Whilst in less able schools, most (77.8%) interviewees agree that teachers' are involved in developing and reviewing schools' mission and goals but there is less support (44.4%) for the view that teachers are involved in school planning and budgeting (Table 1).

**The ethos from learners (students) point of view**

Students' ethos as presented in Table 2 is further explained as follows: In successful schools, most (89.1%) students stated their parents are aware and usually support the schools' disciplinary rules as opposed to 46.5% support (F-statistic=3.71, %%) from inefficient schools. Moreover, majority (87.5%) of the interviewees from efficient schools agreed with the statement that 'school buildings are always clean and they are proud of the their school', whilst dissenting view emerged from less able schools with few (27.6%) of them emphasizing that school conduct rules are fair and always obeyed by the students.

In efficient schools, majority of interviewees were more positive about teachers and fellow students respecting and mutually trusting each other (93.8%), a behavioral approach that has been echoed by the teachers as well. There is majority (84.4%) view that students are not absent from school quite often. However, in the failing schools, majority (80.3%) of students agreed they feel safe at school but weakly (45.6%) supported the view that the school gives rewards to students and teachers for their accomplishments.

Students from both kinds of schools agree, though at significantly (F-Statistic, 10%) different levels that their teachers expect them to do their best and succeed irrespective of their cognitive skills. For instance, among inefficient schools, students were less positive (45.7%) on the statement that 'teachers expect all of them to succeed, no matter whom they are', implying that teachers' expectations on their success is rather irrational. This opinion was also emphasized by teachers that expectations are often matched with actions.

**Table 2: Proportion of students supporting the statements in Efficient and Inefficient schools**

| | Statements/Items | Efficient (N=64) | Inefficient (N=127) | F-Statistics. (LOS |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Positive School Climate | My parents are aware and support the school's discipline rules | 0.891 | 0.465 | 3.71** |
| | School conduct rules are fair and I always obey the rules | | 0.276 | |
| | My school building is clean and I am proud of the way it looks | 0.875 | | |
| Safe and Orderly Environment | Teachers and students respect and trust each other at my school | 0.938 | | |
| | Students are not absent from school very often | 0.844 | | |
| | School gives rewards to students and teachers for the good things they do | | 0.456 | |
| | I feel safe at school | | 0.803 | |
| Expectations for Achievement | My teachers expect me to do my best | 0.984 | 0.661 | 3.02* |
| | My teachers expect all students to succeed, no matter who they are | 0.969 | 0.457 | 4.20** |
| | My teachers expect me to learn as much as I can | 0.953 | 0.866 | 2.49 |
| | I am interested in English and Mathematics | | 0.472 | |
| Monitoring of Student Progress | My teachers keep track of how I am doing in my school work | 0.906 | 0.535 | 3.03* |
| | My teachers encourage me in my school work | 0.891 | 0.732 | 2.97 |
| | My teachers share information with my parents about my academic progress | 0.859 | 0.528 | 6.84** |
| | My English and mathematics classes are good | | 0.268 | |
| Home-School Relations | My parents are active in school events or activities | 0.875 | 0.260 | 3.87* |
| | My parents always give me financial and material support at school | 0.953 | 0.874 | 2.24 |
| | My parents know what is going on in the school | | 0.669 | |
| | The relationship between my parents and teachers is good | | 0.654 | |

**By author based on field data**

There was high held views on teachers keeping track of students' school work as well as sharing information on academic progress in efficient schools that their counterparts. There are also views from both kinds of schools where majority of students perceive that teachers encourage them to participate in school work. However, in inefficient schools, few (26.8%) of students reveal that English and mathematics classes are good for them, probably due to lack of interest as noted previously, inappropriate curriculum content or learning abilities.

Students' views from successful schools indicate that majority (87.5%) of them perceive their parents actively participate in school activities as opposed to 26.0% of them among less able schools. 'Parents giving financial support' at school was a view highly supported by students from both categories of schools. Among inefficient, majority (66.9%) of students perceives their parents have knowledge of what is going on around school and also largely perceive that the relationship between their parents and teachers is good (65.4%). However, this study was not able to establish the kind of relationship that exists and to what extent the relationship is cordial.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

### Discussion

Instructional leadership can be referred to as the way school administrators can guide and promote the school mission and goals as well as allowing participatory approach to prevail in decision making and implementation (Scheerens and Bosker, 1997). The views expressed under this theme characterize exemplary and caring leadership exhibited in efficient schools as compared to opportunism identified in less performing schools. In efficient schools, the head teachers place emphasis on consensus and unity of purpose in the schools' management team, and there is always shared vision including commitment to quality work. Professional conduct was accorded to staff whereas attention was given to learners, more so those with low

cognitive abilities, implying that head teacher should not only be active, but should have detailed knowledge of the workings of the school. The culture of open discussion on matters of management concern and constructive criticism among teachers in successful schools was tolerated as compared to manipulative syndrome in less able schools, where teachers felt uneasy to exchange ideas and give challenging opinions as such actions were somewhat considered illegal.

Decision making is joint process in which not only the school leader opinions affect final results or take effect but rather teachers' opinions as well. The views expressed could be characterized as participative in successful schools as compared to submissive in failing ones, where teachers' felt that somebody would dictate from above. School success comes through staff sharing ideas, observing each other and giving feedback, learning from each other as well as working together to improve school program. Though most teachers try to maintain and enhance professionalism, they are often disappointed over little influence to effect decisions. Noteworthy, improved transparency and shared authority are attributes to be emphasized. Moreover, teachers' opportunities to influence 'change' in school development should be further emphasized by school leadership by acknowledging the fact that running a school single handedly can be rather difficult or impossible. In effect, teachers should feel free to articulate their views on school matters especially where students' and teachers' interests are involved.

It was evident that successful schools are more likely to be calm rather than chaotic places. Positive behavior reinforcement and recognition to students showing exceptional accomplishments and appropriate behavior approaches is evident mainly in successful schools. In effect, there is need to emphasize and maintain a task-oriented orderly climate in schools as well as emphasizing self-control among students as a source of positive ethos. A school becomes more effective as it becomes more orderly, a pre-requisite for effective learning. It has quite emerged that for effective monitoring of school activities, opinions by both top management and teachers should be tolerated even in situations of sharp differences. Views expressed from efficient schools can be described as results oriented relative to inefficient counterparts. Monitoring of student progress was less prioritized activity in less successful schools in that academic assessment of students occurs less often with less follow-up tasks.

Improving school effectiveness may require support from outside agencies such as school communities as well as parents through using regular and sustainable established contacts and networks (Kirjavainen, 2008; Purkey & Smith, 1983). It was evident that efficient schools were regularly in contact with parents as key school stakeholders. Views expressed by interviewees from successful schools reveal sense of ownership and co-existence as compared to loose-relations (in inefficient schools) between teachers and parents/community. In the former, teachers are comfortable communicating with parents to discuss the successes and challenges facing the students as well as school administration. On the contrary, parents-teacher relationship in inefficient schools is rather weak. This in part is blamed on parents most of whom give less attention to not only their children during schooling, but also less support to school activities. This situation is further complicated when schools are resource constrained and parents are reluctant to materially support their students to stay at school. The introduction of Universal Secondary Education (USE) policy in 2007 partly meant to lessen the economic burden on part of parents, and their role in support of school activities and programs was not strongly emphasized and enforced. This policy in effect positions parents in weak end

of school stakeholder-ship while overburdening the teachers culminating into school management challenges.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the relationship between school management and its effectiveness has been established using qualitative measures as demonstrated through thematic analysis. Of significance is this study analyzed the views of teachers and students from schools with differing efficiency distribution. The results indicate schools' efficiency status was reflected in leadership and management styles. Leadership style exhibited in efficient schools imply both teachers and students were relevant. In similar sense, the students' views on teachers were trustful and were confident about their abilities. This kind of administrative practice could be emphasized in failing schools. In efficient schools, the head teacher and teachers' roles were clear and performed with minimal interruptions from either party implying every teacher was responsible for his/her actions, as compared to inefficient schools where some teachers were hesitant to participate in decision making largely because they feared taking responsibility for their decisions and actions. Tense relations in failing schools are unnecessary as teachers may divert focus from core responsibilities.

The parents-teacher relationship in inefficient is rather loose and seen as an obstacle to children achievement. Therefore, parents' involvement in school activities should be emphasized if not made compulsory so that both parties should share the burden and pride of school costs and achievements. Given the complex nature of the school faced with societal transformation and educational change. There is need for school managers to consider school as learning organization, to continue learning, keeping up to-date with advances in understanding best practices. This effort can provide knowledge of the features of the learning school that stresses the need for learning. Moreover, it was quite evident that school success does not only depend on structures, teaching patterns but also encompasses understanding of life and actions that reflect its broader goal and strategic objectives, that are regarded as hallmarks for successful school management and instruction.

It is noteworthy to point out research gaps as this will guide future research effort on similar or related topics. There have been efforts to establish the correlates of school effectiveness considering the technical efficiency levels, from both the educators and learners point of view. Not significant effort was made to directly obtain parents views on similar themes, due to practical reasons related to funding and time constraints, but rather information on parents' attitudes and actions on the research theme were obtained indirectly from teachers and students. Coleman (1994) rightly noted that, parental involvement in child schooling is crucial and should not be ignored. Therefore, obtaining the parents' views on this subject would go long way to not only establish significance of parental support to school activities but also school performance as a whole. However, future investigations to include parents and community is recommended and encouraged.

## APPENDIX I

### Measuring School Technical Efficiencies

School technical efficiencies were estimated using DEA, a method used to transform inputs into outputs more exactly via an output oriented BCC (Banker, Charnes, and Cooper) model as developed by Banker, Charnes and Cooper (1984). Schools as Decision Making Units (DMUs) are expected to make the best use of available mix to achieve the highest level of outputs. Inputs considered in this estimation were teacher-student ratio, classroom-student ratio, physical facility index and proportion of certified teachers while outputs were matriculation

scores in Biology, Reading and Mathematics subjects respectively. Assume each DMU uses M inputs to produce S outputs. For the jth DMU, the input and output vectors can be represented as Xj and Yj respectively, with M*N input matrix, X, and S*N output matrix Y representing the data of all N DMUs. For each DMU, a measure of the ratio of all weighted outputs over all weighted inputs is calculated following mathematical programming problem:

$$\max_{\theta,\lambda} \theta$$

$$subject\ to:$$

$$\theta \sum_{r=1}^{s} y_{r0} - \sum_{r=1}^{s} \lambda_r y_{rj} \le 0 \qquad j = 1,2,\ldots\ldots,n \ \&\ i = 1,2,\ldots\ldots,m$$

$$\sum_{i=1}^{m} \lambda_i x_{ij} - \sum_{i=1}^{m} x_{io} \le 0$$

$$\sum_{j=1}^{n} \lambda_j = 1$$

$$\le 1$$

$$\ge 1$$

$$\lambda \ge 0 \ \&\ r = 1,2,\ldots\ldots,s$$

where yrj and xij (are >=0) are the known outputs and inputs of the jth DMU, and the optimal solution thus obtained θ*=1/ θ, is regarded as the efficient score for particular DMU, which score satisfies 0 ≤ θ* ≤ 1, with a value 1 indicating that the DMU is technically efficient and so lies on the frontier. λj are constants associated with the DMU relative to its peers.

## APPENDIX II

Analysis of effectiveness using qualitative approach follows the previous study where I estimated technical efficiency using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) technique (see Appendix I). The DEA analysis divided the schools into efficient (efficient score=1) and inefficient (score<1) as presented in Table A1.

**Table A1: Efficiency scores of the case schools**

| Case schools | CRS | VRS | Location | Owner-Ship | Case schools | CRS | VRS | Location | Owner-ship |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| West 1 | 0.955 | 1.000 | Rural | Public | East 2 | 1.000 | 1.000 | Rural | Public |
| West 2 | 0.871 | 0.954 | Rural | Private | East 3 | 0.681 | 0.875 | Rural | Public |
| West 3 | 0.651 | 0.804 | Rural | Public | East 4 | 0.684 | 0.695 | Urban | Public |
| West 4 | 0.704 | 0.788 | Urban | Public | East 5 | 0.446 | 0.579 | Rural | Private |
| West 5 | 0.721 | 0.841 | Rural | Public | Central 1 | 0.900 | 1.000 | Rural | Private |
| Kampala 1 | 0.637 | 0.767 | Urban | Private | Central 2 | 0.696 | 0.820 | Rural | Public |
| Kampala 2 | 1.000 | 1.000 | Urban | Public | Central 3 | 0.912 | 1.000 | Rural | Public |
| Kampala 3 | 1.000 | 1.000 | Urban | Public | Central 4 | 0.588 | 0.759 | Urban | Public |
| Kampala 4 | 0.410 | 0.551 | Rural | Public | Central 5 | 0.473 | 0.651 | Rural | Public |
| Kampala 5 | 0.384 | 0.536 | Urban | Private | North 1 | 0.499 | 0.708 | Rural | Public |
| Kampala 6 | 1.000 | 1.000 | Urban | Public | North 2 | 0.479 | 0.694 | Rural | Public |
| East 1 | 0.763 | 0.955 | Urban | Private | North 3 | 1.000 | 1.000 | Rural | Private |

**By author based on field data**

## References

Coleman, P. (1994): Learning About School: What Parents need to know and how they can find out. Institute for Research on Public Policy, Montreal, Quebec.

Creemers, B. P. M. (1994): The Effective Classroom. London: Cassell.

Dodd, A. (2006): "Investigating the Effective Use of Resources in Secondary Schools", Research Report to DfES. Research Report No 779. Hedra plc, London

Kirjavainen, T. & Loikkanen, H.A. (1998): "Efficiency Differences of Finnish Senior Secondary Schools: An application of DEA and Tobit analysis", Economics of Education Review, 17 (4), 377-394.

Kiryavainen, T. (2008): "Understanding Efficiency Difference of Schools: Practitioners' Views on Students, Staff Relations, School Management and the Curriculum", VATT Discussion Papers 450, Helsinki: Government Institute of Economic Research.

Levine, D.U. & Lezotte, L.W. (1990): Unusually Effective Schools: A Review and Analysis of Research and Practice. Madison, WI: National Center for Effective Research and Development.

Mortimore, P. (1993): "School Effectiveness and the Management of Effectiveness Learning and Teaching", School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 4(4), 290-310.

Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D. & Ecob, R. (1988): School Matters: The Junior Years. Somerset: Open Books (Reprinted in 1995 by Paul Chapman: London).

Muijs, D. & Reynolds, D. (2010): Effective Teaching: Research and Practice. London: Paul Chapman.

Portela, M.C. and Camanho, A. S. (2007): "Performance Assessment of Portuguese Secondary Schools", Working paper, Economics 07/2007. Universidade Catolica Portuguesa (porto).
http://dspace.feg.porto.ucp.pt:8080/dspace/

Purkey, S.C. & Smith, M.S. (1983): "Effective Schools: A Review", The Elementary School Journal, 83, 427-452.

Reynolds, D. (2010): Failure Free Education? The Past, Present and Future of School Effectiveness and School Improvement. London: Routledge.

Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P. & Ouston, J. (1979): Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Sammons, P., Hillman, J. & Mortimore, P. (1995): Key Characteristics of Effective Schools: A Review of School Effectiveness Research. London: OFSTED.

Sammons, P., Thomas, S., Mortimore, P., Walker, A., Cairns, R. & Bausor, J. (1998): "Understanding Differences in Academic Effectiveness: Practitioners' Views", School Effectiveness and School Improvement, 9, 286-309.

Scheerens, J. (1990): "School Effectiveness Research and the Development of Process Indicators of School Functioning", School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Vol.1, 61-80.

Scheerens, J. (1992): Effective Schooling: Research, Theory and Practice. London: Cassell.

Scheerens, J. & Bosker, R. (1997): The Foundations of Educational Effectiveness. Oxford/New York/ Tokyo, Pergamon.

Wokadala, J. (2011): "Evaluating technical efficiencies of lower secondary schools in Uganda: A non-parametric approach", African Educational Research Journal, Number 2 (2011), pp. 36-54.

Wokadala, J. (2012): "Exploring technical efficiencies of Rural and Urban Lower Secondary Schools in Uganda", Journal of Educational Planning and Administration, Vol.26 (2), April 2012, pp. 343-364