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Influence of management skills on sustainability of donor-funded primary schools in Kiambaa Constituency, Kiambu County, Kenya: The case of white cottage schools and the bridge international academies

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ABSTRACT

Although donor funding has helped to boost the education sector, questions have arisen regarding the sustainability of donor-funded schools. The objective of this study was to investigate the influence of management skills on the sustainability of donor-funded schools in Kiambaa Constituency, Kiambu County, Kenya. Resource Dependency Theory and Agency Theory guided the study. The study employed the descriptive survey design and targeted the population of 122 stakeholders of the White Cottage Schools and the Bridge International Academies comprising 100 parents, 2 managers, and 20 teachers. The systematic sampling method was used to select a sample of 50 parents and 10 teachers while both managers were included in the study sample making a sample size of 62 respondents. Quantitative data were collected from parents using questionnaires, while qualitative data was obtained from the teachers and managers using interview guides. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and the chi-square test, while qualitative data were analyzed using the thematic content analysis technique. Results showed that more than half of the parents believe that their children's schools would not operate optimally without donor funds. Results further showed that the sustainability of donor-funded primary schools was significantly associated with managerial skills, including creativity, flexibility, and networking. The study concluded that managerial skills are a significant determinant of donor-funded schools' sustainability. The study recommends that school managers improve their creativity, flexibility, and networking skills.

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Introduction

Donor funding plays a major role in financing development activities throughout the globe. In 2020, the Financial Tracking Service receives donor funding reports amounting to USD 112 billion (Chikoko & Mthembu, 2020). The education sector is among the major recipients of donor funds. Donor support for education was estimated USD 14.6 billion representing about 13% of total development assistance. Most of the development assistance comes from foreign government with the United States of America (USA) being the largest donors. European countries such as the United Kingdom (UK), France, Germany and Netherlands are also major traditional donors. New donors have also emerged from the Middle East such as Saudi Arabia that offers funding assistance through the Saudi Fund for Development (Schaferhoff & Burnett, 2021). Official organizations such as World Bank provided assistance estimated at USD 2.6 billion towards education while private foundations gave an estimated USD 1 billion. About 30% of the donor funds were directed to low-income countries, 34% were directed to lower middle income countries while 21% were channelled to upper middle income countries.

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In 1949, the USA president, Harry Truman, launched the "Development Aid for Underdeveloped Areas" policy (Abeselom, 2018). The goal of policy was to help people in poor countries. Other nations followed suit as marked by creation of state-funded international development organization such as United Kingdom (UK)'s Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UKAID, Japan International Development Cooperation, SNV Netherlands Development Organization, and the French Development Agency (Horner, 2020). The developed nations created these agencies with the aim of providing development assistance to developed countries. Although the role of donor funds in improving access and quality of education around the globe cannot be underrated, there are concerns regarding the sustainability of this model of financing education and educational institutions. Sustainability beyond donor funding can be defined as the ability of an organisation to meet its own needs even when donor support has been withdrawn (Ilesanmi & Afolabi, 2022).

In Kenya, donor funding play a critical role in the development of various sectors of the economy. The NGOs Co-Ordination Board (2019) estimates that in the 2017/18 financial years, donors channelled Kshs. 172.2 billion towards running of various non-government projects and programmes around the country. The bulk of the money was spent on health, education, and relief in that order. Education programmes and projects were financed to the tune of Kshs. 9.4 billion. Kiambu County came second in terms of the number of projects/ programmes funded with 396 out of a total of 1,252 programmes. Even in public education sector, donor support still play a significant role. In the 2020/21, the Ministry of Education received a grant worth USD11 million from the World Bank to support delivery of online content, teachers' training, and monitoring and evaluation (Global Partnership for Education, 2021). It also received USD88.4 million to support the improvement of early grade mathematics and another USD 9.7 million to support the implementation of policies and action for reinforcing equity and efficiency in learning outcomes.

There are concerns that the huge dependence on donor funding in the education sectors threatens the sustainability of education institutions and programmes in the country. Sustainability guidelines for schools in Kenya go beyond the normal legislative requirements to encourage and incentivise individual schools to do everything possible to attain sustainability in terms of funding and financial resources (Wanjiku, 2018). The government through the Ministry of Education recommends that every school should have other means of sustaining their operations without donor funding. However, some Kenyan schools are largely dependent on donor funding. Few, if any, have local funds or other means of sustaining their operations in case donor support is withdrawn (Chepchirchir, 2018). Wanjiku (2018) points out that sustainability concerns in the education sector can only be addressed if donor funding is designed in a way that make recipients institutions or programmes capable of sustaining operations in the absence of donor funds. Such design can only be realized when there is a full understanding of factors that determine the sustainability of donor funded education institutions and programmes. Unfortunately, there is scarcity of research concerning determinants of sustainability beyond donor funding, particularly in donor-funded schools within Kiambu County. It is in this light that the study sought to investigate the influence of managerial skills on the sustainability of donor-funded primary schools in Kiambaa Constituency of Kiambu County.

Literature Review

Theoretical Review

This paper reviews several theories that relate to the contents of this dissertation. The theories are sustainability theory and agency theory.

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource Dependency Theory (RDT) was first proposed by Pfeffer and Salancik in 2003 to provide a framework for examining how an organization relate with its external environment to obtain resources that it needs to survive (Arhin et al., 2018). Although such relationships are advantageous, they may create dependencies that have adverse impact on the organization. It is the responsibility of managers to device strategies for managing these dependencies to guarantee resource stability and organizational autonomy. The theory further posits that the impact of an organization's relationship with external actors dependent on two factors: resource criticality and concentration. Resource criticality is a measure of the organization's ability to function in the absence of a given resource (Pfeffer & Salancik, 2003). If an organization cannot function in the absence the resource, then the resource is critical and this makes the organization highly dependent on the supplier of this resource.

On the other hand, concentration refers to the availability of alternative sources for a given resource (Arhin et al., 2018). If an organization can get a particular critical resource from multiple sources, then its dependency on one given source is minimized. However, the level of dependency increases when the organization only has one source of the resource that is critical to its operation (Brown & Pappous, 2017). This theory is relevant to the current study because it provides a framework for understanding the sustainability of donor-funded schools beyond donor funding. Since funds are critical to the operations of a school, the donor-funded schools tend to become highly dependent on the donors, which reduce their sustainability.

The theory suggests that the best way to reduce dependency on donor is to increase the alternative sources of funds (Sutton et al., 2021). Establishing diverse sources of funds ensures that schools have stable flow of funds leading to more sustainable operations. Another strategy that schools can use to manage dependency is to establish alliances with other stakeholders. Collaboration with other stakeholders may give donor-funded schools access to addition funds and information (Sherer et al., 2019). The third strategy

than donor-funded schools can use to reduce dependence on donors is cutting costs. Cost cutting strategies may target different areas such as minimizing energy use, producing some of the inputs such as food stuffs internally, and downsizing the staff.

Agency Theory

The Agency theory is a product of Alchian and Demsetz (1972). Jensen and Meckling (1976) improved it a few years later. In essence, the agency theory considers the relationship between an individual, in this case referred to as the principal and another entity commonly referred to as an agent. According to Jensen and Meckling (1976), the purpose of this relationship is the delegation of authority and power to the agent by the principal where he or she can make certain decisions. In this study, the donor can be viewed as the principal while the managers of the donor-funded primary schools in this case could be referred to as the agent. The donor decides the amount of funds that the organisation receives. In turn, the donor requires the organisation to achieve certain goals and parameters that are set at the beginning of the project (Lacruz et al., 2019). It is these goals that the donor regularly reviews to see what outcomes have been achieved. It is apparent that the agency theory is at play in considering the donor-organisation relationships between the management of primary schools and the funding organisations.

The organisation acts as the agents of the donors since they are working at the behest of the entities that are providing the funding (Chepkemoi & Kisimbii, 2021). Often, the recipient organisation has little say in the day-to-day decisions pertaining to the project. The principal shall always remain the principal, and the agent maintains a level of subservience. It is therefore difficult to separate the donor and the organisation despite the two entities being completely different. The preferences that the organisation may hold are often set aside or ignored (Lacruz et al., 2019). This is because the principal, in this case, the donor uses funds to manipulate and influence the community organisation in decision making and planning.

The organisations therefore have little choice but to do as they are told. According to Chepkemoi and Kisimbii (2021), self-interest of the principal is paramount in all the operations of donor-funded organizations. Since it is difficult to trust the agent to do everything as agreed upon, the principal has to put in place certain measures and parameters that will ensure that the agent does not act on his or her own self. This is where donor agreements come. The community organisations are required to adhere to a certain set of stipulations and requirements, which ultimately aligns them to the donor's wishes and needs at their own expense. Ultimately, it is the Community Based Organisations that, other than being disenfranchised, end up with a culture of being wholly dependent on donor funds and donor-based projects without considering local sources of funding and their own income-generating initiatives (Lacruz et al., 2019).

Furthermore, donor funding is erratic and likely to be withdrawn at any moment, which leaves the Community Based Organisations vulnerable to liquidity problems. This further asserts the agency theory because the Community Based Organisations are slowly but surely relegated to agent status as opposed to being principals themselves or stakeholders in a joint initiative.

Empirical Review

In order for sustainability beyond donor funding to be evaluated, it is necessary to carry out sustainability analysis. This is the process of identifying and analysing either the various critical factors that are likely to affect negatively or positively the likelihood of delivering sustainable benefits (Lungo et al., 2017). It is closely related to risk analysis, although sustainability analysis can be regarded as an extension of risk analysis (Okun, 2009). Key indicators of sustainability beyond donor funding include a strategic plan for sustainability, partnership with the local community, additional sources of funding apart from donor funds and professional development of the organisation's staff to handle operations.

In evaluating the factors influencing the sustainability of donor-funded projects in arid and semi-arid areas in Kenya, Okun (2009) established that most donor funded projects in Marsabit collapsed after donor funding was withdrawn. Critical factors accounting for this were management systems adopted by the project and the existing donor policies. The study recommended that strategic planning was necessary for ensuring that the stakeholders are prepared well to effectively manage the project after donor funding. Although the findings of this study could be applied to the current study, they are limited by the fact that the current study considers a school system, which is slightly different from the community projects studied by Okun (2009).

A similar study by Gachui (2017) analysed the effect of donor funding on the success of community water projects in Embu County. It established a positive and significant correlation between all the independent variables of the study (donor grants, training and development and stakeholder involvement) and the success of community development projects. Since similar variables have been adopted for the current study (management skills and stakeholder participation), it is instructive that the findings of Gachui's study should prove relevant to the current study, albeit on a limited scale. Gachui (2017) focused on community development projects with a particular emphasis on water projects. The current study, however considers a school project, which is slightly different, compared community water projects.

Influence of Management Skills on Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

In this study, the term management refers to the interlocking functions of creating corporate policy and organising, planning, controlling and directing an organisation's resources in order to achieve the objectives of that policy (Lloyd & Aho, 2020). Management has a key role in the resource mobilisation process. The leadership of the schools has to be in control of the fundraising

process by coming up with strategies and policies that best suit the schools. Similar organisations need a prudent and forward-thinking management that will enable them to thrive and reach greater heights. In strategic management, the main concept is to understand the challenges the organisation has to deal with in relation to the opportunities that exist. By considering its strengths and weaknesses, an organisation can come up with a plan that is best placed to be implemented based on the prevailing circumstances.

In a non-profit organisation, setting the role of management in resource mobilisation is critical. According to Bryce (2017), this is because the board members of non-profits such as schools are the main drivers of the organisation. Much like the managements of corporations, the board is required to map out the agenda for the organisation for years to come. One common weakness of such organisations, particularly in Kenya, is that the board members are not active when it comes to seeking resources for the organisation's activities.

Bryce (2017) further posited that board members and other people in management of the organisation may need to be proactive without necessarily asking for money from all and sundry. Board members have the ability to spur growth especially in the smaller organisations because they can steer the functions and resource mobilisation efforts. The board can bring a sense of responsibility towards it, and utilise their skills, expertise, experience and goodwill to benefit the organisation in the end. Unfortunately, there is paucity of research regarding how managerial skills shape the sustainability beyond donor funding, particularly of donor-funded schools. The proposed seeks to address this gap by answering the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the influence of managerial creativity on sustainability of donor-funded primary schools in Kiambaa Constituency?

RQ2: What is the influence of managerial flexibility on sustainability of donor-funded primary schools in Kiambaa Constituency?

RQ3: What is the influence of managerial networking skills on sustainability of donor-funded primary schools in Kiambaa Constituency?

Research and Methodology

The study employed a descriptive survey design. In this study, the descriptive survey design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to investigate the effect of management skills, stakeholder participation and donor policies as determinants of sustainability beyond donor funding despite having minimal capability to influence these variables.

Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Technique

The study targeted 506 stakeholders within the White Cottage Schools and the Bridge International Academies in Kiambaa Constituency comprising of parents, teachers, and managers. These individuals were targeted because they are well versed with the operations of the schools and thus could provide an informed opinion about their sustainability and associated factors.

All the four managers of the schools were included in the study sample and thus there was no sampling for this category of respondents. The systematic sampling method was used to select 12 teachers and 89 parents. These figures constitute 20% of the target population. Table 1 presents a summary of sampling plan.

Table 1: Sampling Plan

Respondents Category	Population	Sampling Proportion	Sample Size
Managers	4	100%	4
Teachers	61	20%	12
Parents	441	20%	88
Total	506	21%	104

Source: *Researcher (2022)*

According to Bryman (2016), the systematic sampling is a probability sampling technique that involves selecting every n^{th} person from the sampling frame. This method creates a highly representative sample because it gives all members of the population an equal chance of being selected. In this study, the systematic sampling method entailed selecting every 5^{th} person in the list of teachers and parents until the desired sample sizes are attained. Equal number of managers, teachers, and parents will be selected from the two schools.

Data Collection Tools

The study used two data collection instruments: structured questionnaires for parents and interview guide for managers and teachers. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data from the parents. A questionnaire was preferred because it enabled collection of data from a large population in a short time (Teddlie, & Yu, 2007). It also minimized personal contact between the researcher and respondents, which was a vital requirement due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The questionnaire was structured and was administered by the researcher to elicit responses from the parents.

The dependent variable of the study was sustainability of the schools beyond donor funding. Sustainability was measured in terms of the number of alternative sources of funds that the schools have, forms of alternative funding, and ability of the schools to operate

in absence of donors. The study presumed that these indicators of sustainability are determined by the management skills of the schools' administrators. The study focused on three management skills namely creativity, flexibility, and networking. It assumed that these are the essential skills that school administrators ought to have in order to make their institutions sustainable.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections with the first section containing questions related to the demographic information of the respondents. The second section queried the sustainability of the schools while the last section contained questions related to the independent variable of the study.

Interview guides were used to collect qualitative in-depth data from the teachers and managers of the white cottage schools. Interviews were considered appropriate for collecting data from these respondents because the study presumed that they are privy to in-depth information regarding the managerial practices, stakeholders' participation, and donor policy. Consequently, interviewing them enabled the study to obtain in-depth data. The interview guide was semi-structured meaning that it comprised a set of uniform questions for the two managers. However, the researchers had the freedom to ask follow-up questions that varied from one interviewee to another depending on their responses to the uniform questions.

Data Analysis

Data collected using questionnaires was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Descriptive statistics was used to summarise quantitative data on sustainability of the schools, management skills, stakeholder participation, and donor policy. Inferential statistics was used to examine the influence of the independent variables on the sustainability of the schools. The chi-square test was used for the inferential analysis. The analysis was done using the SPSS software. The results of data analysis are presented in tables. The thematic content analysis technique was used to analyse qualitative data that was collected using the interview guides. Results are presented using illustrative quotes.

Data Analysis, Presentation and Interpretation

Out of the 104 individuals from whom the study had targeted to collected data, 89 managed to complete the study by either filling a questionnaire or participating in an interview. This figure translates to a response rate of 85.6%. This rate is higher than the average response rate for surveys that target organizations, which Fulton (2015) found to be 60%. According to Booker et al. (2021), a high response rate enhances the reliability and validity of research by ensuring the study sample provides an accurate representation of the target population. The high response rate can be attributed to the use of face-to-face method of administering questionnaires that allowed the researcher to create a rapport with the respondents and enhance the confidence in the research process.

Respondents Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of the respondents was analysed with the view of establishing the representativeness of the sample. In particular, the study analysed the respondents' gender, age, highest education level, and length of stay at the school. Table 2 summarizes this information.

Table 2: Respondents Demographic Profile

Demographic Trait	Categories	Managers	Teachers	Parents
Response rate	Response rate	100%	91.7%	85.6%
Gender	Male	75.0%	36.4%	41.6%
	Female	25.0%	63.6%	58.4%
Age	Below 20	0	0	0
	20-29	0	18.2%	6.7%
	30-39	25.0%	63.6%	31.5%
	40-49	50.0%	18.2%	34.8%
	50-59	25.0%	0	22.5%
	60 and above	0	0	4.5%
Number of years at the school	Mean	5.4 years	6.3 years	4.3 years
	Minimum	3 years	1 years	1 years
	Maximum	9 years	12 years	8 years
Highest Education Level	Primary or below	0%	0%	23%
	Secondary	0%	0%	51%
	Tertiary	100.0%	100.0%	26%

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Table 2 exemplifies that males made up the majority of the school managers at 75% with female constituting 25%. These findings suggest that the majority of individuals involved in the management of donor-funded schools are males. On the other hand, female made up the bulk of the teachers at 63.6% as well as the parents sample at 58.4%. These findings imply that women make-up the majority of the population of teachers in donor-funded schools. The findings also connote that there are more women than playing the guardianship role for children in donor-funded primary schools.

Half of the managers were in the 40-49 years bracket while another 25% were in the 40-50 years age brackets while the majority of teachers (63.6%) were in the 30-39 years bracket. On the other hand, parents were widely spread across different age brackets with 34.8% being in the 40-49 years brackets, 31.5% being in the 30-39 years bracket and 22.5% being in the 50-59 years brackets. These findings imply that most managers in donor-funded schools are middle-aged persons and thus are likely to have a wealth of experience in the management of education institution. On the hand, most teachers within the schools are young adults mostly in their thirties and thus do not have a wealth of experience in the education sector. Parents within the school are of diverse age and therefore their experiences in education management matters in likely to vary.

Results in Table 2 further show that managers had stayed in the school for an average of 5.4 years while teachers had an average length of stay of 6.3 years. These results suggest that managers' turnover in donor-funded schools is higher than the turnover of teachers. The average length of stay for parents was 4.3 years suggesting that most had been parents in the schools for about 4 years. The average of stay for these three important stakeholders is less than 10 years suggesting that there is a high turnover among these stakeholders. According to Preite (2015), high turnover among stakeholders in education institution has a negative influence on their sustainability as it hampers institutional memory and lead to loss of knowledge and skills acquired through experience.

Regarding education, all managers and teachers had tertiary education level. The education level of teachers and managers is likely to have a positive impact on the sustainability of donor-funded schools. On the parents were widely dispersed across the three education levels with slightly more than half (51%) having the secondary level of education and 26% having tertiary education. The fact more three-quarter of the parents have a minimum of the secondary education is also bound to have a positive implication on the sustainability of the schools.

Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

Sustainability of schools beyond donor funding was the dependent variable of the study. It was assessed by asking parents to indicate whether their school had other sources of revenues apart from the donor funding. The parents' views are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Parents based on whether School has Alternative Revenues

School has alternative sources of revenues	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	77.0
No	17	23.0
Total	74	100.0

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Results in Table 3 illustrates that the majority of the parents (77%) affirmed that their school had alternative sources of revenues. This finding suggests that the majority of the donor-funded schools in Kiambaa Constituency have alternative sources of revenues. This position was reinforced by qualitative data collected from teachers and school managers where most affirmed that their schools have alternative sources of funding. From the qualitative, the biggest alternative source of revenues in these schools is the fee paid by parents. Other sources of funding that were mentioned during the interview include leasing of school assets such as school buses and farming. One of the managers added that his schools also obtain financing from bank whether they need to undertake a capital project. Parents were also asked to indicate the alternative sources of revenues for their schools that they are aware of. Figure 1 summarizes their replies.

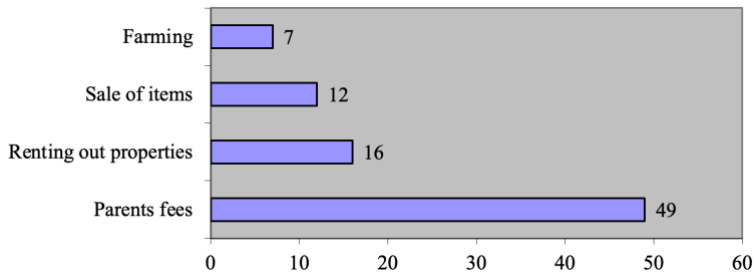


Figure 1: Sources of Revenue identified by Parents; *Source: Field Data (2022)*

Figure 1 shows that 49 parents constituting 66.2% of the total sample of parents identified fees paid by parents as one of the alternative sources of revenues in their school. This finding suggests that most donor-funded schools also charge some fee on parents who enrol their children. The finding is consistent with Nderitu and Ngunju (2014), who observed that fees paid by parents made-up 50% of the total revenues collected by Rev. Muhoho School for the deaf in Nyeri County. Another 16 parents comprising 21.6 of the sampled

parents identified renting out of school properties such as the school bus as another alternative source of revenue in the school. This finding is congruent with Okpa (2019) who found that renting of school physical property provided primary schools in Nigeria income to supplement the funds provided by the government.

Twelve parents equivalent to 16.2% of the sampled parents reported that their schools generate addition revenue through sale of items such as uniform and stationery to pupils. Lastly 7 parents (9.5% of the sample) reported that their school earns extra revenues from farming activities, which was surprising given that Kiambaa has a climate that favours agriculture and ready market for agriculture produces. The study expected that more schools would be utilizing farming as a strategy for generating revenues. Finally, parents were asked to give their opinion on whether their school would continue to operate optimally if funding from donors is withdrawn. Table 4 summarized their views.

Table 4: Parents view on School Operations in the absence of Donor Funds

School would operate optimally	Frequency	Percent
Yes	31	41.9
No	43	58.1
Total	74	100.0

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Table 4 shows that 43 parents accounting for 58.1% of all sampled parents held the view that their school would not operate optimally if donor funds are withdrawn. This finding implies that the majority of parents in the donor-funded schools believe that the schools are heavily reliant on donor funds and thus would find it difficult to sustain smooth operation in the absence of these funds. This position is affirmed by qualitative data where most teachers and managers acknowledged that donor fund made-up a significant portion of their revenues and therefore it withdrawal would have a major impact on school operations.

I believe that the schools will still be able to operate even in the absence of donor funds because the school also charges fees from parents. The schools also has other partners who sponsor different projects (Interviewee 5, 2022)

The findings are congruent with Gachui (2017) who observed that most donor projects in Kenya find it difficult to sustain operations after the exit of donors due to the absence of alternative sources of finances.

Management Skills and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

Management skill was the first independent variable of the study. The study interrogated three skills that it presumed to be important to the sustainability of the schools beyond donor funding. The three skills were: creativity, flexibility, and networking.

Creativity and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

Creativity is a high order thinking skill that enables a person to generate novel ideas that are of value (Rabanos, 2021). It is an important competence for modern-day managers. This study was particularly interested with managers' ability to generate new ideas for generating revenues for the school. This ability was assessed by requesting parents to rate their school manager's ability to develop innovative ways for raising funds for the school. Table 5 summarizes the parents' ratings.

Table 5: Parents rating of their School Manager's Creativity

Manager ability to Innovate	Frequency	Percent
Below average	15	20.3
Average	38	51.4
Above average	21	28.3
Total	**74**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Results in Table 5 show that the majority of the parents (51.4%) gave an average rating to their school manager's ability to innovate ways of raising funds. About 28% felt that their school managers' ability to innovate fund raising strategies was above average while 20.3% felt that the ability was below average. These findings imply that from the parents' perspectives, most donor funded schools have managers with average levels of creativity. This conclusion is supported by qualitative findings where managers and teachers enumerated some of the strategies that they had put in place to make the school more reliant. Most of the interviewees listed the usual revenue generations strategies that are common in many schools such as renting school property, charging fees from parents, and selling items. One of the teachers from the White Cottage schools narrated that:

One of the initiatives that the school management has taken to make the school self-reliant is the leasing of school bus to the local community. The school also has a firm where it engages in vegetable and poultry farming and sells the produce to the community (Teacher 3, 2022).

Another teacher from the Bridge International Academies recounted that:

Our schools management has developed an innovative system of generating revenue from parents. Parents are charged as low as Kshs. 500 to make it affordable to parent. Charging lower fee has enables the schools to attract large number of pupils thereby capitalize on the economies of scale (Teacher 8, 2022).

The accounts by the two interviewees signify the different models that the two schools under study use to attain sustainability. On one hand, the White Cottage schools tend to venture into income generating activities while the Bridge International Academies tend to rely more on fees from parents. Another form of creativity that the interview captured from the Bridge International Academy is the use low cost materials and standardized design in building schools so as to reduce costs.

Bridge innovativeness can be seen from the onset of the schools. The founders created a real estate division that was responsible for identifying and purchasing land. Low cost building materials that comprised of iron sheets around wooden frames and concrete floors were used, which lowered the cost of building a classroom to around Kshs. 200,000. The top management also ensured that the building materials were procured in large volume, which significantly reduced their costs (Manager 4, 2022).

The rating of managerial creativity on Table 5 were cross-tabulated with the data on parents' views on whether their school would continue to operate optimally if funding from donors is withdrawn in order to test whether there is a relationship between creativity and sustainability beyond donor funding. The cross-tabulation results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Cross-Tabulation of Creativity and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

		School able to operate optimally in absence of donor funds		
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	**Total** **N (%)**
Rating of managers' ability to innovate fundraising strategies	Below average	11 (73.3)	4 (26.7)	15(100)
	Average	25 (65.8)	13 (34.2)	38 (100)
	Above average	7 (33.3)	14 (66.7)	21 (100)
	Total	**43 (58.1)**	**31 (41.9)**	**74 (100)**
Pearson Chi-square (X^2 = 27.642, df=2, p=.004)				

Source: Field Data (2022)

Results in Table 6 illustrates that in the below average category, majority of the parents (73.3%) felt that their school would not operate optimally in the absence of donor funding. In the average creativity category, the majority of the parents also felt that their school would not operate optimally after withdrawal of donor but the proportion declines to 65.8%. In the above average creativity category, about two-thirds of the parents (66.7%) felt that their school would operate optimally even in the absence of donor funds. These findings indicate that parents who gave the manager an above average rating on creativity were more likely to hold the view that their schools can operate in the absence of donor funds. This implies that there is a positive association between managerial creativity and sustainability of schools beyond donor funding. The chi-square test shows that this association is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance (X^2 = 27.642, df=2, p=.004). The findings lead to conclusion that managerial creativity has a statistically significant influence on the sustainability of schools beyond donor funding. This deduction is consistent with the study by Huda (2018), who found that creativity had a significantly positive effect on the quality of decision-making in public junior high schools in Regency and Tangerang City of Indonesia.

Flexibility and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

Flexibility refers to the management's ability to embrace changes and reform rapidly and continuously in response to changes in the organization's environment and needs (Atena, 2018). A flexible management team is able to respond to a plethora of problems that an organization encounters. This ability was assessed by requesting parents to rate their school manager's willingness to accept and respond to changes. Table 7 presents the parents' ratings.

Table 7: Parents rating of their School Manager's Flexibility

Willingness to accept change	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Below average	18	24.3
Average	40	54.1
Above average	16	21.6
Total	**74**	**100.0**

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Table 7 illustrates that the majority of the parents (54.1%) rated the flexibility of their school manager as average. About 24% felt that their school manager was below average on flexibility while 21.6% felt that their school manager was above average. This finding suggests that most donor funded primary schools in the study area are characterized by average flexibility within its managerial team. The finding is reinforced by qualitative findings collected during the interview where most interviewees stated

initiatives that their schools had taken to become more self-reliant. Some of the initiatives include developing alternative sources of revenues and cost-cutting measures in various areas such energy use and water. One of the managers from the White Cottage schools had this two say:

The school has dug a borehole in order to reduce the cost of purchasing water, use the water for agriculture, and also sell the water to adjacent communities. This helped the school to raise additional revenues and thus reducing dependence on donors (Manager 1, 2022).

This except implies that the White Cottage schools are willing to change their revenue model in order to make their operation sustainable. It is evident that the school's management is flexible in terms of exploring alternative sources of revenues. Within the Bidge International Academies, the issue of flexibility was capture under the theme of managerial autonomy:

Bridge International Academies have a decentralized management system where managers in each school are given the autonomy to explore local solutions to challenges experienced in their schools. This has given us the flexibility to explore different solutions. So, if you move from one Bridge school to another, you will find different programmes being implemented because each school has its unique challenges (Interviewee 3, 2022).

The data on manager's flexibility was cross-tabulated with the data on sustainability beyond donor funding in order to test the significance of the relationship between the two variables. Table 8 presents the findings.

Table 8: Cross-Tabulation of Flexibility and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

		School able to operate optimally in absence of donor funds		
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	**Total** **N (%)**
Rating of school manager's flexibility	Below average	15 (83.3)	3 (16.7)	18(100)
	Average	23 (57.5)	17 (42.5)	40 (100)
	Above average	5 (31.2)	11 (68.8)	16 (100)
	Total	**43 (58.1)**	**31 (41.9)**	**74 (100)**
Pearson Chi-square (X^2 = 32.285, df=2, p=.000)				

Source: Field Data (2022)

As Table 8 illustrates, the majority of parents (83.3%) who gave their school managers the below average rating on flexibility believed that their school would not operate optimally in the absence of donor funds. Only 16.7% of parents in this category had the confidence that their school would operate optimally after withdrawal of donor funds. In the category of parents who rated their manager's flexibility as average, 57.5% held that their school would not operate optimally in the absence of donor funds while 42.5% believed otherwise. In the category of parents who gave their manager the above average rating on flexibility, the majority (68.8%) were confident that their school would maintain optimal operation in the absence of donor funds with 31.2% expressing a contrary opinion.

There is a pattern in the distribution of parents in the six cross-tabulation categories. It is evident that the proportion of parents who believe that their school would operate optimally is increasing as the rating of manager's flexibility increases. This pattern implies that there is a positive association between manager flexibility and sustainability of schools beyond donor funding. The chi-square test gave a p-value that was less than 0.01 level of significance (X^2 = 32.285, df=2, p=.000). This implies that the relationship between managerial flexibility and sustainability beyond donor funding is statistically significant at the 0.01 level of significance. This finding is consistent with Kypengren (2017), who found that managerial flexibility enhances the sustainability of donor funded organizations by facilitating reallocation of funds in response to changing needs.

Networking and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

Networking is the ability to forge alliances with other people or institutions on mutual interest (Klerk, 2010). It is the capability to build appropriate relationships and connections. Managers should have the capacity to develop strategic relationship that enables them to identify opportunities and challenges and get support. The networking skills were assessed by asking parents to rate the capacity of their school manager to establish good social ties that can help the school acquire more resources. Table 9 summarizes the parents' views.

Table 9: Parents rating of Manager's Networking Skills

Capacity to establish social ties	Frequency	Percent
Below average	22	29.7
Average	38	51.4
Above average	14	18.9
Total	**74**	**100.0**

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 9 exemplifies that 51.4% of the parents rated their manager's networking skills as average, 29.7% gave the below average rating while 18.9% gave the above average rating. These findings imply that most of the donor-funded schools in the study area have managers with average networking skills. However, the qualitative data from the interview with teachers indicated that managers networking skills across the school differ. Teachers at the White Cottage Schools felt that their managers lack expansive networks that are of value to the school. On the other hand, teachers at the Bridge International Academies described their school managers as having excellent networking schools and being good with people while others felt that their manager lack expansive networks that are of value to the school.

The management of Bridge International has managed to identify and loop-in investors that share its vision. One of the investors is International Finance Corporation, which injected over USD 10 million into the school as seed money. The management also got the support of organizations like Novastar, Rethink Education, PanAfrican Investment, and Bill and Melinda Foundation (Teacher 9, 2022)

Hoque and Parker (2014) also observed that managers in non-profit organizations have different interpersonal and networking skills that determine their success in collaborating with other entities such as the government and the private sector. The parents rating of managers networking skills were cross-tabulated with data on sustainability beyond donor funding. Table 10 presents the results.

Table 10: Cross-Tabulation of Networking and Sustainability beyond Donor Funding

		School able to operate optimally in absence of donor funds		
		No N (%)	Yes N (%)	**Total** **N (%)**
Rating of school manager's networking capacity	Below average	17 (77.3)	5 (22.7)	22(100)
	Average	22 (57.9)	16 (42.1)	38 (100)
	Above average	4 (28.6)	10 (71.4)	14 (100)
	Total	**43 (58.1)**	**31 (41.9)**	**74 (100)**
Pearson Chi-square (X^2 = 31.485, df=2, p=.000)				

Source: *Field Data (2022)*

Results in Table 10 shows that among parents who rated their manager networking skills as below average, 77.3 believed that their schools cannot operate optimally without donor funding with only 22.7% holding a contrary view. The proportion of parents who felt that their school would not operate optimally when donors pull out declined to 57.9% in the category of parents who rated their managers networking skills as average. Meanwhile the proportion of those who held a positive outlook increased to 42.1%. In the category of parents who felt that their manager's networking skills were above average, 71.4% had a positive outlook regarding how their school would fare in the absence of donor funds with only 28.6% giving a negative prediction. It is evident that parents who give their school manager a higher rating on networking skills are more likely to have a positive outlook regarding the schools capacity to sustain operation in the absence of donor funds. These findings imply that there is a positive association between manager's networking skills and the sustainability of school beyond donor funding. The chi-square test gave a p-value that is less than the 0.01 level of significance (X^2 = 31.485, df=2, p=.000) suggesting that manager's networking skills have a statistically significant influence on the sustainability of schools beyond donor funding. The finding is congruent with Briere et al. (2015) who found that networking was an essential skill for managers in international NGOs as it enables them to establish relationship with partners that are fundamental to the success of projects.

Conclusions

Quantitative results showed that the management in most of the schools has average level of creativity, flexibility, and networking skills. This position was reinforced by qualitative data that highlighted a number of elements that showcase the creativity, flexibility, and networking ability of the schools' management. The chi-square test established that the three sets of skills have a statistically significant and positive influence on the sustainability of donor funded primary schools. Based on the findings, the study concludes that managerial skills have positive and statistically significant influence on the sustainability of donor-funded schools in Kiambaa Constituency. In particular, schools that have a management team that is creative, flexible, and has networking skills are more likely to be sustainable than those whose management lack these skills

This study is of help to various stakeholders including policy makers and researchers in the same field because they will learn ways in which schools can sustain themselves without support from donors. The study has contributed to the present knowledge on the factors influencing the sustainability beyond donor funding of both private and public schools in Kenya. Its results should be serviceable to education stakeholders and policymakers, assisting them in understanding areas of concern in dealing with reduced donor funding for schools. The outcomes are also beneficial to policy formulators in the Ministry of Education (MOE) and other government development agencies. The policymakers can apply the findings of the study to address the core determinants of sustainability beyond donor funding of schools in Kenya. The study is also of value to researchers in the field of organisation development, as it has enriched existing theories and empirical literatures

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study recommends that managers in the donor funded institution should work toward improving their creativity, flexibility, and networking skills. These are skills that can be learned through formal training or informally through experience. The Ministry of Education should include creativity, flexibility, and networking among the skill taught in teachers' training curriculum as well as in training programmes targeting school administrators.

Several factors may have limited the quality of this study. One factor is the sensitivity of the information sought by the study, which may have made respondents apprehensive about sharing all the facts while others may have hidden some of the information. The study was also constrained by the use a questionnaire in collecting data. The data was largely self-reported with the potential for exaggeration.

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