Dwindling resources have made governments to adopt prudent management of resources by formulating and executing policies that enhance service delivery. The expectation is hinged upon the premise that officers charged with policy formulation and implementations have the requisite skills, knowledge and attitudes for realisation of policy agenda and aspirations. However, well intentioned government initiatives are impeded by officers’ individual limitations such as level of education, exposure to management training, and administrative experience among others. This study sought to investigate individual factors (age, level of education, administrative experience and exposure to management training) that influence implementation of performance contracts among principals, Deans, Performance contract coordinators and HoDs in Primary Teacher Training colleges (TTCs) in Eastern and Central Kenya. In addition, the study sought to establish the benefits and challenges in implementation of performance contracts. The target population of the study was administrative personnel (eight Principals, eight Performance Contracting Coordinators, sixteen Deans and 80 Heads of Department, (48 academic and 42 non academic) who are all actively involved in implementation of performance contracts. Eight principals were purposively sampled to respond to interview schedules while 16 Deans and 24 HODs responded to questionnaires. Sample means, frequencies and percentages were used. The findings indicated that administrative experience of the administrative personnel (principals, performance contracting coordinators, Deans and heads of department) and their level of training in performance contracting influenced implementation of performance contracts to a very large extent (M= 1.8 and 1.69, Sd= 0.83 and 0.95 respectively). Age and level of education were rated as influencing implementation of performance contracts to a large extent (M=2.65 and 2.0 respectively). Administrative experience and level of training in performance contracting were deemed as key factors.
Introduction

Mbua and Sarisar (2013) cite Lane (1987) who defined a contract as a binding agreement between two or more parties for performing or refraining from performing some special act(s) in exchange for lawful consideration. They further cite OECD (1991) that defines performance contract as a range of management instruments used to define responsibility and expectations between parties to achieve mutually agreed results. In the context of performance contracting in the work place, it refers to an agreement between an employee and an employer or immediate supervisor on what can done, timelines, deliverables and the resources required for the performance of the task at hand. According to Domberger (1998) in Letangule and Letting (2012), performance contracting is a branch of management science referred to as management control systems, referring to contractual agreement to execute a service according to agreed upon terms and within a specified period, with a stipulated use of resources and performance standards. Domberger (1998) further avers that performance contracting is one element of broader public sector reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness while reducing costs. In line with government policy and performance contracting guidelines, college principals must be willing to anchor their performance contracts on their strategic plans, state the organisation’s strategic objectives, select performance indicators and growth oriented targets, submit quarterly and annual reports, monitor and evaluate performance as well as avail evidence of achievement for purposes of evaluation and develop an incentive/sanction system (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

According to Skirbekk (2003), personal characteristics of employees such as age, level of education, administrative experience and level of training also influence implementation to some extent. Skirbekk (2003) however asserts that studies conducted on the relationship between age, education and level of performance remain inconclusive. Proposition however exists that the level of education and work experience (which to a large extent is determined by age), increases performance level. Lepak and smell (2009) observe that an individual’s educational attainment is part of an institution’s human capital and a core asset in determining and enhancing an employee’s productivity. Maurer and Rafuse (2001) quote Schmidt (1986), who concurs but adds that that job knowledge is equally an important predictor of job performance. He contends that experience may strengthen the relationship between education level and job performance, as it provides tact and practical knowledge less frequently provided by formal education. He concludes that any age related mental or physical declines may be offset by greater expertise that goes with greater experience.

Maurer and Rafuse (2001) and Sagimo (2002) argue that as rapid changes take place in technology and legislation demanding new skills of workers at mid life and beyond, it is important that older workers (and younger ones) continue to be involved in learning and developing their skills at work. They however contend that most research so far indicates that the age of a person by itself has little meaning in explaining performance. Schmidt (1986) in Maurer and Rafuse (2001) explains that overall performance of younger and older workers may actually be equivalent but for different reasons; that is younger workers are relying more on their raw ability and older workers are relying more on their accumulated knowledge.

Kiruthu (2008) underscores the importance of technical expertise as a key determinant of successful implementation of performance contracts since the ability of employees to perform well is grounded in good training and experience. This is in line with Sessional paper No.1 (2005), in which the Government of Kenya underscores the importance of regularly reviewing training programmes to match core functions and policy directives. Indeed, organisation capacity is one of the performance indicators in the dynamic/qualitative criteria category of the performance contract (PCSC, 2005).

Kobia and Mohammed (2006) observe that the early years of implementation of performance contracts are difficult both for the staff and management, but a degree of tolerance from management may sustain the momentum. It is against this background that this study was carried out to determine the institutional factors influencing implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges in the Central and Eastern Provinces of Kenya.

Statement of the problem

In 2003, the Government of Kenya directed the introduction of Results Based Management (RBM) and performance contracting in the public service (PCSC, 2009), for all Permanent Secretaries and Chief Executive Officers of state corporations, as a means of achieving effectiveness in service delivery. All government ministries signed performance contracts in 2005/2006 (DPM, 2005), and the same
were mainstreamed in the tertiary education sector including Primary Teacher Training Colleges in 2008. This was done amidst stakeholders’ resistance including teachers, principals and the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), probably due to lack of adequate information, consequent feeling of incompetence and unpreparedness, and the much expected fear of change among other factors.

Mwiria (Daily Nation, 7th March, 2003), in his comments about the performance of educational managers articulated the need to narrow the gap between the good and poor performers. The thrust of his argument was that the quality of management to a large extent determines the performance of educational institutions. It is however worth noting that good performance is dependent upon availability of necessary inputs in terms of resources and necessary training.

Most of the empirical literature reviewed by the researchers (Kiruthu 2008, Kerretts, 2008, Kobia & Mohammed, 2006)) on performance contracting in Kenya is however based on state corporations with extremely limited focus on educational institutions. It is against this background therefore that this study undertook to review the institutional factors influencing implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Eastern and Central Kenya, as a way of bridging the gap in the educational sector regarding factors that influence the implementation of performance contracts.

**Research objectives and questions**

The objectives of this study were:

i) To determine the extent to which administrators’ age, level of education, administrative experience and level of training in performance contracting influence implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges.

ii) To establish the benefits of performance contracting as perceived by Primary Teachers’ Training College principals, Deans and Heads of Departments

iii) To analyse the ratings of principals, Deans and Heads of Departments on the challenges facing Primary Teachers’ Training Colleges in performance contract implementation in their institutions
Research methodology

The research design adopted in this study was descriptive survey. Since this study was mainly concerned with collecting data on views of the respondents on their experiences in the implementation of performance contracts, survey method was deemed suitable in achieving the objectives of the study. The target population for the study was administrative personnel at all levels including all the eight Principals, eight Performance Contracting Coordinators, sixteen Deans and 80 Heads of Department (48 academic and 42 non academic) who are all actively involved in implementation of performance contracts.

Sample size and sampling procedure

Since performance contracting is a management tool requiring specific skill and knowledge, purposive (judgmental) sampling was used in this study. The focus of the study was all the eight colleges in the Central and Eastern Provinces of Kenya (Ministry of Education, 2010). The application of this technique identified a total of 58 respondents consisting of eight principals, eight performance contracting coordinators, sixteen Deans, Heads of Department (sixteen academic and eight non-academic) and two government officials involved administratively in the implementation of performance contracts (one from the Ministry of Education, Basic, and the other from the Performance Contract Secretariat committee).

Research Instruments

The study employed questionnaire and interview schedule to collect data. Two sets of questionnaires were used; one for principals and performance contracting coordinators and the other for Deans and HODs. The questionnaire for principals and performance contracting coordinators was divided into four parts namely; part A designed to obtain general demographic and background data of respondents and part B, C and D designed to gather data on respondents experiences in the implementation of performance contracts. The questionnaire for Deans and HODs was divided into three parts. Part A solicited demographic data of respondents while part B and C gathered data on respondents experiences in implementation of performance contracts. In this study, oral interviews were also held with two senior government officials involved in implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teachers Training College, one from the Ministry of Education (Basic) and the other from The Performance Contracting Secretariat, to find out their opinion on implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teachers Training Colleges.

Research findings and discussion

Fifty Six questionnaires were administered to respondents out of which 54 respondents returned usable questionnaires, achieving 96.4 percent return rate. The interview schedule with two government officials was also successful. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. Major findings are discussed in this section question by question and corroborated by information obtained from documents and literature reviewed. To realize the objectives of the study and answer the research questions, responses from respondents were organized and analyzed. Responses measured on Likert scale were analyzed using mean scores ($M$) and standard deviations ($Sd$). The higher scores for the means indicate lower levels of each dimension. A mean score greater than 4 ($M \geq 4$) is considered to imply to no extent at all. A mean score greater than 3.5 but less than 4 implies to a small extent while those with mean scores greater than 3.0 but less than 3.5 imply to some extent. A mean score greater than 2 but less than 3.0 implies to a large extent while a mean score less than 2 is considered to imply to a very large extent. A standard deviation greater than 1.5 implies that there was a significant variance in the way the factor was considered. This is interpreted to mean that there was lack of agreement/consensus on the responses, while a standard deviation less than 1.5 would imply there was consensus as answers did not differ substantially from one respondent to another.

Research question one sought to determine the extent to which implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges is influenced by age, level of education, administrative experience and level of training of administrators in performance contracting. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they think certain personal characteristics of administrators generally influence in the implementation of performance contracts. Their responses are tabulated in Table 1.
Table 1: Influence of personal characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Characteristics</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative experience</td>
<td>1.80</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of training in Performance contracting</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>2.04</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicate that administrative experience of the principals, performance contracting coordinators, Deans and heads of department, and their level of training in performance contracting, influences implementation of performance contracts to a very large extent ($M = 1.8$ and $1.69$, $SD = 0.83$ and $0.95$ respectively). The other factors (age and level of education) were cited as influencing implementation of performance contracts to a large extent ($M = 2.65$ and $2.0$ respectively). The data reveals that the most critical factors considered influential in the implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges and with high consensus were administrative experience and level of training in performance contracting. Overall, there was high consensus that personal characteristics of administrators influence implementation of performance contracts to a large extent ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 0.98$).

Benefits and prospects of performance contracting in Primary Teacher Training Colleges

Respondents were asked to rate their perceptions of the performance contracting in certain areas. Their responses are presented in the Table 2:

Table 2: Performance rating of various services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructural development</td>
<td>2.13</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial management</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer satisfaction</td>
<td>2.31</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The data shows that performance in all areas was rated as good ($M = 2.13-2.31$ and $SD = 0.86-2.31$) meaning that implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges has to some extent contributed to good academic achievement, infrastructural growth, good financial management and customer satisfaction. This implies successful implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges to some extent, disagreeing with earlier findings of Shirley (1998), who contends that although the logic of performance contracts is persuasive, the reality has been disappointing. Based on how performance contracts are implemented however, results can vary from one institution or country to another. It is worth noting that variation of responses for financial
management is rather high ($d=2.31$). This variation possibly arises because employees naturally judge financial management according to how the managers respond to their individual and departmental demands for funding rather than how scarce resources are used to meet prioritized goals.

To assess the future prospects of performance contracting in Primary Teacher Training Colleges, principals and performance contracting coordinators were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed with certain statements using the key below.
The responses of the principals, Deans and HoDs are summarized in table 3.

### Table 3: Future prospects of performance contracting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance contracts are an effective tool for improving performance in the college</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a result of performance contracting, the college has developed a reasonable sense of direction</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further improvements are necessary to enhance effectiveness of performance contracts in the college</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance contracts are necessary if colleges are to operate effectively</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Findings indicate that the respondents strongly agreed that performance contracts are an effective tool for improving performance in the colleges, colleges have developed a reasonable sense of direction as a result of performance contracting, and performance contracts are necessary if colleges have to operate effectively. \((M=1.20-1.67 \text{ and } SD=0.49-0.90)\). They also agreed that further improvements are necessary to enhance effectiveness of performance contracts in the colleges \((M=1.20,SD=0.41)\) in line with the views of government officials interviewed. The government officials suggested greater government support in terms of funding, more sensitization and effective cascading of information to lower levels of the administrative hierarchy, improved feedback mechanisms, and a proper reward and sanction system to motivate administrators and check on laxity, as ways through which performance contracting in Primary Teacher Training Colleges could be made more effective. These findings imply that performance contracting has improved performance in Primary Teacher Training Colleges but there is still room for improvement to make the implementation process even more effective.

The respondents were asked to rate the challenges facing performance contract implementation in their institutions using the scale:

1. Very great challenge
2. Great challenge
3. Moderate challenge
4. Small challenge
5. Not a challenge

Their responses are summarized in Table 4:

### Table 4: Primary Teachers Training Colleges’ challenges in performance contracting

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resistance to change</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of commitment by staff</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interference by BOG</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting performance targets</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate information and training</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of funds</td>
<td>1.20</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shortage of facilities</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the table, respondents cited shortage of funds as a very great challenge \((M=1.20,SD=0.41)\). Challenges rated as great challenge were resistance to change (implying fear of the unknown and feeling of inadequacy), lack of commitment by staff, meeting performance targets, lack of adequate
information and training, shortage of facilities and lack of motivation. Mean scores vary between 2.07 and 2.44 and standard deviation 0.56-1.37, meaning there is good consensus on each challenge. Interference by BOG was cited as not a challenge (M=4.47, Sd=0.92). This is possibly because BOGs being part of college management cannot sabotage a process they have endorsed by signing performance contracts. In their comments; respondents also cited the high cost of International Standards Organisation (ISO) Certification and baseline surveys, as well as increased workload as challenges hampering the implementation of performance contracts. There was a general concern that as professional teachers, lecturers have normal duties and responsibilities over and above which performance contracting activities have been loaded, some of which are non-academic and therefore fall outside the institutions’ core mandates.

The above analysis reveals that administrators in Primary Teacher Training Colleges experience challenges as they endeavour to implement performance contracts (and there is high consensus on this as evidenced by low standard deviations). These findings corroborate the studies of Shirley (1998), Othieno (2006), Mburai (2008) and Kiruthu (2008) on the challenges facing performance contract implementation in parastatals and other public organisations, and demonstrate the need for all stakeholders to seek ways of addressing them for effective implementation of performance contracts.

The findings show that staff sensitization is being used to address the challenges to a very large extent. (M=1.67, Sd=0.82). Other strategies being used to a large extent are working closely with the performance contracting secretariat committee (both internal and external), developing strong monitoring and evaluation systems, and intensification of income generating activities (M=2.07-2.73 and Sd=1.10-1.22). Introduction of new approaches such as Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) to fast track implementation of some targets is used only to some extent (M=3.47, Sd=1.36) possibly due to lack of adequate information on its application. There is high consensus on these strategies as standard deviation ranges from 0.82-1.36). These findings concur with those of Shirley (1999) and Kiruthu (2008). There is however need for the government and other stakeholders to supplement these efforts by ensuring that Primary Teacher Training Colleges are well funded for smooth implementation of performance contracts.

**Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that:

i) Effective implementation of performance contracts in Primary Teacher Training Colleges is largely influenced by administrative experience and level of training of administrators in performance contracting.

ii) Training and administrative experience are important prerequisites for the implementation of performance contracts, if the colleges are to meet their strategic goals and objectives and keep pace with social and political changes that continuously demand new ways of doing business. However, age and level of education though not the most statistically significant in this study may not be ignored.

**Recommendations of the study**

Based on the conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made.

i) This study has established that training of administrators in Primary Teacher Training Colleges is an important prerequisite for the successful implementation of performance contracts. The study therefore recommends that both government and college managements develop elaborate, sound, continuous and well funded training and development programmes. The programmes should be based on a comprehensive

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**Table 5: Strategies for meeting challenges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff sensitization</td>
<td>1.67</td>
<td>0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working closely with the Performance Contracting Secretariat Committee</td>
<td>2.07</td>
<td>1.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Rapid Result Initiative to fast track some targets</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intensifying income generating activities</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
training needs assessment so that administrators are updated and equipped with relevant operational skills, knowledge and attitudes that enable them cope with emerging trends and issues in performance management. Such programmes are also likely to cushion staff against inefficiencies arising out of shortage of skills, facilitate performance improvement and ensure no gaps exist in the smooth implementation of performance contracts.

ii) This study has established that performance contracting is an effective tool for improving the performance of the colleges. There is therefore need for the colleges to device ways of sustaining this process including development of meaningful and effective incentive systems including training and other non financial incentives. This will generate and sustain morale in the colleges for improved results and promote the development of a positive performance culture.

iii) Research findings have established that administrators in Primary Teacher Training Colleges face certain challenges in the implementation of performance contracts. Challenges inhibit achievement of predetermined targets and constrain delivery of services. The study recommends that all stakeholders make concerted effort to address these challenges in order to remove any obstacles likely to derail the implementation process.

Suggestions for further research

This study focused on top management of Teachers Training Colleges, that is principals, Academic Deans and Deans of students, Coordinators of Performance Contracting and Heads of Departments. It is therefore recommended that:

i) A broader study be undertaken to determine the factors influencing implementation of performance contracting among tutors and support staff in Teachers’ Training Colleges since they were not part of this study and their perceptions could be different

ii) The same study can be undertaken on a broader scale and using different instruments which explore aspects using mixed methods

iii) The study can be undertaken in public universities and be compared with what is happening in the private sector

References


