

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' WORKING CONDITIONS AND STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC DAY SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYANDO SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT: *The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between teachers' working conditions and students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County. This was in the light of the concern that most public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub County had been posting poor grades between 2011 and 2015. The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population was all public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County. A sample of fourteen schools, which comprised 50% of the total population, was used in the study. Stratified random sampling was used to allow full participation of the schools. Four teachers were randomly sampled in each sampled school to fill the questionnaire, which was the data collection instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to present the results of the study. This involved tabulating, graphing and describing data. Linear regression was used to taste the hypothesis. The study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between teachers' working conditions and students' academic performance. It was further revealed that poor working conditions and inadequate teaching and learning materials were the major de-motivators of teachers towards good students' academic performance. Therefore, the study recommended that the government distributes teaching and learning materials equitably to schools to support good performance in all schools in Kenya.*

KEYWORDS: Teachers Working Conditions, Students' Academic Achievement

INTRODUCTION

Academic performance is the extent to which a student, a teacher, or an institution has achieved their educational goals measured by examination or continuous assessment test through the grading system which ranges from grades A to E (Ward, Stoker & Muray-Ward, 2011). Education plays a very important role in the economic development of a country as it is aimed at supplying the economy with human capital that can convert effectively and efficiently other resources into output of high value. It is perceived as the corner stone of economic and social development and a principle means of providing for the welfare of individuals (Orodho, 2004).

Educational organizations are established to help society enhance knowledge, attitudes and skills (Okumbe, 1998). According to Okumbe (1998), schools as organizations, have two goals namely performance or outcome goals and organizational maintenance goals. Schools pursue performance goals by attempting to be top performers in national examinations. Organization maintenance goals are activities which sustain it and ensure its survival. These include high academic and discipline standards, good performance in co-curricular activities and public image.

In secondary schools set-ups, efficient and effective achievement of the two goals, (performance or outcome goals) which entails provision of quality education are determined by the quality of both its inputs and output (Okumbe, 1998). It hence calls for quality teaching and learning, a fact supported by Dornyei (2001) who stressed that the achievement of successful schooling largely depends on the quality of teaching force. At the centre of quality teaching are teachers and students who are supposed to jointly achieve the goals. Quality teaching is measured by teachers' performance through students' performance in national examinations (Adair, 2009). A desired outcome by the students can occur with the help of the teacher. This means that poor working conditions for teachers could affect their performance as well as the students' performance.

In most Public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub County, most of the essential services such as housing, hospital and other social amenities are not found near the school teachers have to look for them far away. This affects teacher's efficiency since Teachers spend a lot of time looking for the essential services which could have been used in classroom assisting the learners

According to Akyeampong and Bennell (2007), schools in Nigeria were fast decaying and the "rot" in the system ranges from shortage of teaching and learning resources to lack of effective leadership and proper motivation of Teachers. He pointed out that Teachers in Nigeria were unhappy, frustrated, uninspired and unmotivated. The school environment was dotted with dilapidated buildings, equipped with out-dated laboratory facilities and equipment. Teachers at times had to work under the most unsafe and unhealthy conditions. This translated into students' poor performance in external examinations, their involvement in examination malpractice, cultism and other negative dispositions.

As opposed to Nigeria, where buildings are old and dilapidated facilities, in Nyando Sub-County most of the Public day schools lack learning facilities such as well-equipped laboratory, library, furniture and even other stationary required for day to day teaching and learning in the classrooms. Teachers strain with the inadequate facilities to see the students through the system in most cases the result is below the average (Odhiambo, 2010). Therefore, it was crucial to investigate the extent to which teachers' working conditions affected students' academic performance.

Working Conditions and Academic Performance

In developing countries, Voluntary Services Organization (VSO) (2002) reports that the teaching profession is marked by high teacher turnover, attrition, low self-concept and unstandardized measures of professionalism. Teaching incentives are limited and there are limited linkages between Teachers' performance, compensation and development. A study by Spear (2000) in United Kingdom (UK) on "Teachers' motivation and job satisfaction" revealed that Teachers' motivation and job satisfaction were low due to work overload, poor pay and low perception of Teachers by the society. Findings by Sylvia and Hutchinson (1985) from their study carried in developed countries on "Factors influencing teachers motivation and job satisfaction" confirmed the presence of low teachers' motivation and job satisfaction which were attributed to intrinsic factors such as pay incentives were ineffective in increasing the motivation.

These studies done in developed countries attribute low motivation of teachers to poor pay, work overload and low perception. But the developed countries have the financial capacity to

employ more teachers and offer better pay hence low motivation cannot be attributed to payment and work overload parse. Therefore, these findings cannot be generalized to developing countries which suffer from financial, among other, constricts.

Another study by Williams (1998) observed that, in some of the developed countries, there was high teachers' attrition by way of leaving the profession due to low motivation. According to study by Bannell and Akyeampong (2007), in the sub-Saharan Africa and South-Asia, on "The status of teachers motivation in primary schools", many primary schools faced "a teacher motivation crisis" as a result of low accountability, ineffective policy environment and management, low pay, low vocational and occupational status, poor working and living conditions.

Extrinsic incentives, such as merit pay are effectiveness among Nigerian teachers (Ubom & Joshua, 2001). The extrinsic factors evolve from the working environment while the actual satisfiers are intrinsic and encourage a greater effectiveness by designing and developing teachers higher level needs. The issues of motivation of teachers in education and the impact on academic performance are considered as an important aspect of effective learning. However, a learner's reaction to education determines the extent to which he or she will go in education.

In Kenya, teachers' working conditions are not any better; there is poor housing and provision of teaching and learning materials and equipment to the teachers is sometimes not prioritized (Nyantika, 2007). According to a study carried out by Nyatika (2007), on the factors leading to poor performance in KCSE in Magombo Zone of Nyamira Sub-County, lack of rewards for teachers and students to boost their morale and clan politics were to blame for poor KCSE performance. Public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County, most of which were stated in the wake of Constituency Development Fund, have benefited a lot from the initiative in terms of infrastructure. However, the learning facilities are still not adequate with the government subsidies to fund such needs like in any other public secondary school arriving into the schools accounts relatively late (Odhiambo, 2010). It is against this background that a study was conducted to investigate the relationship between teachers' working conditions and students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County, Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

In Kenya, examinations are generally acceptable as valid measures of achievement and thus leading to over reliance on scores and transition rates as core measures of achievement (Maiyo & Ashioya, 2009). The performance of Public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County has been below average from 2011 to 2015, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Schools Academic Performance in Nyando Sub-County, 2011-2015

SCHOOL	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Apondo	-	-	3.444	5.000	4.750
Arombo	4.200	3.225	3.658	4.111	4.407
Awasi Boys	4.641	4.706	4.152	5.000	4.000
Awasi Girls	-	3.515	3.170	3.800	4.130
Ayucha	4.298	4.608	4.193	5.000	4.277
Ayueyo	4.941	5.194	3.883	4.234	3.563
Kanyagwal	4.046	3.653	4.333	4.195	4.591
Karanda	-	-	3.978	4.850	5.109
Kobura Girls	4.500	5.500	3.665	4.045	4.042
Konim	4.350	3.939	4.235	3.710	3.820
Kowuor	-	-	2.791	2.969	3.992
Nyakanana	4.046	3.307	3.102	3.500	3.383
Odienea	-	2.721	3.242	4.000	3.600
Ogwedhi	3.676	2.721	3.658	3.174	3.842
Okanja	3.676	4.725	3.400	4.120	3.740
Ongeche	4.469	4.167	5.100	4.302	5.400
Oren	4.720	4.090	3.950	3.450	4.410
Pala	5.900	4.930	4.526	5.552	5.404
Wanganga	3.000	3.309	3.409	3.636	3.087

Source: DEO's Office, Nyando (2015)

The dismal performance in public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County is a real problem because a larger percentage of the students come from this area. If the problem is not addressed, the area is likely to lag behind in terms of social, economic and political development. With the result being posted, just a few students are joining middle level colleges and universities; hence the area is likely to suffer lack of technocrats in the near future. This also amounts to wastage not only to the parents who have invested their money in education of their children but also the government which spend billions of its budgets on education.

Teachers play a crucial role in the academic performance of the students; factors affecting teachers in the performance of their duties affect performance of students. Studies have been done by Odhiambo (2010), Yala and Wanjohi (2011) to address factors influencing performance. Many factors affect teachers' performance which culminates in poor results in national examinations. These factors poor pay to teachers and school environmental conditions. Nevertheless, the reviewed studies did not address the problem of poor performance in relation to teacher motivation, which is also a product of working conditions. Therefore, the study assessed the relationship between teachers' motivation and students' academic performance in public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County. Based on the study, this paper examines the influence of teachers' working conditions on the performance of learners.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a correlation survey design, which enabled the researcher to establish the relationship between the variables and students' academic performance in Public day secondary schools in Nyando Sub County. The target population for the study was all Public day

secondary schools in Nyando Sub-County. These comprised 28 public Day secondary schools with a total of 446 teachers and 28 principals; a total of 483 respondents (Nyando DEO's Office, 2015). Stratified random sampling was used to categorize schools for the study. The schools were categorized into three (3) categories: single sex boys, single sex girls and mixed public day secondary schools. Out of 28 schools, 20 were sampled. All the single sex schools took part in the study because they were few while the mixed schools were sampled randomly giving each school equal chance to participate in the study. The study targeted at least one teacher from each academic department in the schools while, in big school with many members, the ratio increased depending with the size of the school and members of the department. However, during the research the researcher managed to collect data from 14 schools.

The researcher relied on self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaire was divided into three parts. Part one contained demographic information, part two contained information on factors influencing teacher's performance this was solicited by Likert scale items questions and part three contained information on suggestions on how teachers working conditions could be improved for better academic results. Data from the field was collected, sorted, coded and recorded. Data collected by use of the questionnaire was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS). Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data obtained. The results of data analysis were presented using cross tabulation tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Linear regression was used to test the hypothesis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Working conditions are some of the extrinsic factors relating to the work environment which cause job satisfaction and dissatisfaction (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959). To establish how working conditions relates to students' academic performance, the teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with some statement on extrinsic factors on working conditions which influence the performance of teachers and, subsequently, the performance of students in examinations. The scores were measured using a Likert scale of: Strongly Agree (5); Agree (4); Undecided (3); Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1). The results of the study were as presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Teachers' Responses on Working Conditions in their Schools

Factors	SA%	A%	U%	SD%	D%
The school provides lunch and tea to Teachers	62.3	37.7	-	-	-
Employer gives out clear job description to the teachers	-	-	10.1	66.7	23.2
The school provides houses to Teachers	-	2.9	-	37.7	59.4
The school provides teaching /learning resources	-	59.4	1.4	-	39.1
The academic performance of students is good	-	-	11.6	42.0	
The school is located within easy reach by teachers	-	56.5	-	10.1	33.3
The students are selected with high KCPE marks	-	-	-	43.5	56.5
The school provides adequate infrastructural facilities	-	-	23.2	13.0	63.8

From Table 2, teachers agreed that, the school provided lunch and tea, Majority strongly disagreed that employer gave out clear job description to the teachers (66.7%); and that the school provides houses to teachers (59.4%); the disagreement on provision of teaching and learning resources by the schools scored (59.4%); the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed that the academic performance of students was good (42%, 46.6%) respectively and this was attributed to poor entry behaviour which scored 100% on agreement that it was not good; the provision of infrastructure was also not adequate at (63.8%) disagreement. However, the respondents agree that most of the schools were located within easy reach (56.5%) i.e. however far, a good number of roads serving the schools were passible even during rainy seasons compared to the past and this means that accessing the schools is relatively easy.

Hypothesis Test Results

The study hypothesized that there is no relationship between teachers working conditions and students' academic performance. To test the hypothesis, a linear regression was computed at 95% confidence level. The decision rule was that, if the P-value (sig) is greater than the level of significance do not reject the null hypothesis. The results were as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients Table for Working Conditions

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.455	2.964		-.153	.879
	Twc	3.968	.540	.855	7.345	.000

From the test of the hypothesis on the relationship between teachers working condition and students' academic performance, the p-value was 0.000 which was less than the level of significance 0.05. Therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. The implication was that there is strong relationship between teachers working condition and students' academic performance, meaning if working condition is improved, students' academic performance will improve.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Investigation on working condition revealed that most schools were not offering conducive working conditions in terms of provision of houses, adequate infrastructural facilities, teaching and learning resources. On opportunities for professional development, the research found out that the employer is doing very little to improve the teachers professional development. A large percentage of teachers agreed that the methods used by the employer on promotion were unfair and this demotivate them. Based on the findings and conclusion, it was recommended that the BOM and TSC should improve the extrinsic motivation factors in schools. This entails improving the working conditions and supervision of the teachers. On their part, schools should also strive to provide houses, health facilities and meals to improve the working conditions of teachers and subsequently enhance students' performance.

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