

Effects of Human Resource Factors on Student Performance in Bungoma North Sub-County Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The implementation of free primary education in Kenya gave rise to many challenges that the government had not anticipated which affects the quality of education as opposed to improving it. The teacher-pupil ratio remains too high in public schools (Too, 2004). The study sought to establish the effect of teacher capacity development on student performance in Bungoma North Sub-County. The study used descriptive research design. The target population involved principals and teachers as its respondents. The study will focused on teacher training, motivation, promotion and appraisal with regard to student performance. The study mainly targeted all principals and teachers in secondary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. The study used simple random sampling technique to select 15 schools from the 36 secondary schools in the sub-county. Thereafter, 15 principals from the sampled schools were purposively sampled. Lastly, 75 teachers were randomly sampled and selected; 5 from each of the 15 sampled schools. This population was targeted since they are directly affected by teacher capacity development as well as students' academic performance. The study used questionnaire for data collection and data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. From the findings, it was established that the teacher: pupil ratio is very high (1:120) which negatively affect the quality of education. The study found out that taking higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning were the most significant

aspect of staff development. The study also established that teacher's experience affect the academic performance to a great extent. The study further established that teachers' preparedness influence the academic performance in their school to a great extent. There is a "strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practices'. The study also established that the personal character and attitude of teachers did not influence the student performance. From the findings the study concludes that, the majority of schools have a high teacher: pupil ratio of 1:120 which negatively affect the quality of education to a great extent. With regard to staff development, the study concludes that taking higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning is the most significant aspect to be explored to enhance academic performance. The study recommended that the government should recruit teachers proportional to the number of enrolled students to safeguard the quality of education offered in public schools. In addition, teachers and principals should undergo further training to help them cope with the increased enrollment after the implementation of FPE. The study recommends that government and other stakeholders should explore into investing in facilitating higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning for teachers to enhance academic performance. Since it was found that teachers' preparedness influence the academic performance in school to a great extent, the study recommended that the ministry of education should review the curriculum being used in teacher training institutions with a view of making it more student friendly.

1.0 Statement of the problem

Despite education being one of the key pillars of economic development of any nation, most of the developing countries, Kenya included, have limited financial and human capital investments in education. The Kenyan education sector is currently characterized by many strikes as teachers fight for better terms of employment. This has had adverse effect on academic performance of the pupils, denying them better opportunities in future in the highly competitive job market. The low remuneration for teachers, has consequently denied them opportunities to advance their skills through staff development (training) (Too, 2005).

The implementation of free primary education (FPE) in Kenya has had equal measures of benefits and challenges. One of the major challenges of FPE is the high increase in teacher pupil ratio which as a result has compromised the quality of education offered in public schools (Too, 2005). After realizing that the quality of education offered in the public schools was deteriorating, some parents transferred their children to private schools where the quality remained high. The decline in the quality of education in Africa has been attributed to the HR factors like high teacher-pupil ration, poor teachers' remuneration (staffing) and lack of staff development opportunities among others (World Bank, *Ibid*). Thus it is important to investigate the interplay between HR factors and student academic performance in Kenya.

The government emphasis on examination results, as an index of school efficiency, is an indication of the existing policy and philosophy gap in education. There is need for paradigm shift in government planning and policy formulation to accommodate the HR factors that influence academic performance (Omari, 2006). Whereas the education managers know of the

benefits of staff development, they have made very little efforts to avail staff development opportunities to the teacher. Despite all the laid down strategies by the education stakeholders to ensure students perform well in examinations, many students still continue to perform dimly. The mean score of Bungoma North Sub-County in 2014 for instance was 3.46. This continued poor performance is therefore a likely indication that not all possible avenues of improvement have been explored. The relationship that exists between human resource factors and student academic performance has not been established through an empirical study in Kenya.

2.0 Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on two theories, the theory of Human Resource Management as espoused by DeCenzo, Robbins and Owens (1987) and Education Production Function Theory by Dewy, Husted and Kenny (2000). Human Resource Management Theory postulates that proper management of staff invariably translates into enhanced productivity or effectiveness on their part. The key concepts housed by this theory are acquisition, development, motivation and maintenance of staff. Staff development however, involves well-planned activities intended to enhance teachers' productivity through the job training programs. Staff development activities are also well-documented motivators. Given the thrust of this theory, the researcher posits that well developed teachers are better prepared to cope with current and emerging instructional challenges compared to their less developed colleagues (Ngechu, 2004).

Education Production Function Theory advocates that people need to understand the production of knowledge in order to evaluate the policies surrounding education for example student performance. Dewy et.al believed that firms willing to pay skilled workers more, would measure skill by years of education and experience. The theory held that Teacher Test Scores correlated positively with Student Test Scores (Usdan. 2001). This theory is applicable to the study in that student's performance was a function of teacher's quality which is a function of their capacity development. Thus Curriculum Implementation in schools goes hand in hand with teachers' input (Republic of Kenya, 2005b).

2.1 Empirical framework

2.1.1 Student Academic Performance

Performance is considered to be a function of ability and motivation, thus: academic performance = (ability) (motivation). Academic performance of education is evaluated based on examinations given and attainments of students in such examinations. Ability in turn depends on education, experience and training and its improvement is a slow and long process. Examinations have been accepted by educationists and other stakeholders as an important aspect of any education system (Mbatia, 2004). The importance placed on examination has seen stakeholders come up with strategies aimed at improving students' performance in examinations (Juma, 2011).

2.1.2 Staff development

After independence, Kenya experienced an unprecedented upsurge in the demand for staff development, formal teachers' education included, was registered in Kenya (MoE, 2007).

Generally speaking, staff development programs entails designing training programs or activities intended to enhance employees' productivity, in this case, teachers. Noteworthy indeed is the fact that staff development programs (SDP) in Kenyan schools have been correlated to teachers' effectiveness by a host of government policy documents (Government of Kenya, 2008) and scholarly works of education researchers notably (Seashore & Leithwood, 2010). Clotfelter (2006) also found out that effective teacher management practices including staff development programs related positively with pupil academic achievement. Staff development programs aimed at improving teachers' knowledge on human resource management will therefore impact on pupils' academic achievement. Staff development is essential for enhancing teachers' effectiveness in their profession. Staff development programs improve instructional leadership and prowess of teachers which determines teachers' effectiveness. The mastery of content area facilitates effective teaching and therefore enhances student academic achievement (Downes, 2003). However, Kenya education system being examination oriented (Orora, 1988), many teachers perceive staff development programs as an instrument for enhancing their effectiveness in instructional duties. In management studies, staff development is an essential personnel function for managers, and principals included. The most popular staff development programs included taking high education and training, participating in workshops, seminars and education conferences and taking in-service courses (GoK, 2008).

2.1.3 Staff Motivation

Motivation is about the moving employees toward doing the job and achieving the goal through rewards. Motivation is the key of a successful organization to maintain the continuity of the work in a powerful manner and help organizations to survive (Duflo & Esther, 2005). Motivation is finding a need inside the employees and help to achieve it in a smooth process. Motivating the staff leads to broaden their skill to meet the organizational demands. Each Principal should have the responsibility to work with the staff to find out their individual needs and put them side by side to the organization needs. In addition, motivated employees are needed and required in our rapidly changing workplaces and markets. They will help organizations survive by performing the job and work required with their full latent; hence employees will be more productive (Peretomode, 2007). The need of achievement always results in a desire to do extra effort to have something done better, and have the desire for success. The Principals should motivate the employees to get things done through them without asking them what to do. Extrinsic motivation on the other hand, results from the attainment of externally administered rewards including pay, materials, possessions, prestige, and positive evaluations among others. So, without motivation nothing exclusive will ever occur which will lead the organization to get a high performance rate, high productivity and hence high profit.

2.1.4 School Management

Management is a process that involves planning, organizing and staffing, controlling and problem solving. Effective principals usually concentrate on planning, coordinating and facilitating the work without overlooking interpersonal relations with the staff, students

and the subordinates. Principals, regardless of the student populations they serve, are held accountable for student achievement in their schools. Schools with higher levels of transformational leadership had higher collective teacher efficacy, greater teacher commitment to school mission, school community, and school-community partnerships, and higher student achievement. Increasing the transformational leadership practices in schools makes a small but practically important contribution to overall student achievement. More effective principals are often set high performance goals for their schools and act as linking pins with other group and with higher management. Edmonds (1979) in his study of exceptional urban elementary schools pointed out that the principals' management practices were crucial to school success because they influence the behavior of subordinates and leaders and initiate programs, set policies, obtain materials and fiscal resources and provide motivation.

Principals are responsible for introducing useful changes aimed at improving the quality of schools instructional programmes. Studies on exemplary schools have described effective principals as task oriented action oriented, well organized, skilled in work, and delegation in getting things done Achoka, Odebero, Maiyo & Ndiku, (2007). Andrews study as reported by Brandt (1987) found that high performing schools were characterized by high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress, a positive learning and goal clarity. Effective principals exert pressure on teachers and students for high academic achievement.

Holding principals accountable may be defensible if a principal can be found to have an indirect influence on achievement by creating the organizational conditions through which improved teaching and learning occurs. For example, Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) found that principals contributed to reading achievement through the creation of a positive instructional climate

(high teacher expectations, student opportunity to learn, clear mission, and grouping for instruction).

2.1.5 Staffing

Ployhart, Schneider and Schmidt (2006) define staffing as the process involved in finding, assessing, placing and evaluating individuals at work. In the secondary schools where this study is focused staffing involves the process of recruitment, selection, placement, monitoring, development and retention of suitable teachers (Abaya, 2011). The enrollment in public schools have increased from 5.8 million in 2002 to about 10.2 million in 2013 following the introduction of free primary education and by 2012 it stood at 9.5 million. The number of teachers remained unchanged in these schools at about 240,000 and could even be less because of natural attrition (Murnane, 2004). According to Boy (2006) over enrolment has caused poor performance in public schools in Kenya. The reality of teachers trying to teach over 120 students has become too common in public schools and has raised concern about academic standards and therefore questions the effectiveness of public schools. This therefore affects their performance (Too, 2005). The problem of high student teacher ratio is not unique to Kenya. In secondary education however the effect is felt in the curriculum based teacher

deployment where schools do not have adequate teachers in some subjects while there is overstaffing in other subjects. The challenge is seen where the principals do not have adequate teachers and hence have to employ the teachers. Parents on the other hand are not able to meet the demands of paying the teachers hence teaching and learning in the schools is affected (MoE, 2007).

2.1.6 Teachers' Classroom management

Classroom management has been identified as a major influence on teacher performance, a key source of teachers' job-related stress, and, in general, an essential prerequisite for student learning (Kremer, 2003). Dembele & Miaro, (2003) found that there was a "strong relationship between teachers' educational beliefs and their planning, instructional decisions, and classroom practices" and that "educational beliefs of pre-service teachers play a pivotal role in their acquisition and interpretation of knowledge and subsequent teaching behaviour". If teacher education programs are to be effective at increasing teachers' capability for integrating technology, then decisions about the structure and content of those courses need to be based upon an understanding of the factors which contribute to successful technology integration. An appreciation of those factors should permit their development to be traced and the design of courses to be adjusted to achieve the desired outcomes (Hanif, 2002).

Teachers' feelings of preparedness are one important indicator of the extent to which they are prepared to meet the challenges that characterize their profession. Teachers' feelings of preparedness may also provide insight into the extent to which opportunities for continued learning prepare them to teach. For example, teachers who recently participated in formal professional development activities or in collaborative activities actually feel more prepared for various classroom requirements than their peers. Moreover, teachers' feeling of preparedness increased significantly with the number of hours spent in professional development activities.

3.0 Research Design

This study employs a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive study is concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between variables (Bryman & Bell, 2003). Descriptive research design is a valid method for researching specific subjects and as a precursor to quantitative studies. The design was deemed suitable since it helped to describe the state of affairs as they exist without manipulation of variables which was the aim of the study.

3.1 Target Population

The target population for the study comprised of all 36 secondary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. Mugenda & Mugenda (2003) explain that the target population should have some observable characteristics, to which the researcher intends to generalize the results of the study. This population is targeted since they are directly affected by human resource factors as well as student academic performance (data taken from the D.E.O's office Bungoma North Sub-County).

3.2 Sampling Frame

The study will involve 90 respondents whereby 15 will be principals and 75 teachers. The sampling frame is indicated in table 3.1.

Respondent Category	Frequency	Percent
Teachers	75	80.0
Principals	15	20.0
Total	90	100.0

Table 3.1 Sampling Frame

3.2 Sample and Sampling Techniques

According to Orodho (2012), sampling is the process of collecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristics found in the entire group. Kothari (2004), suggest that 10 percent of the accessible population would be enough for descriptive surveys. The study used simple random sampling technique to select 15 schools out of 36 secondary schools in the sub-county and then used purposive sampling to select 15 principals to participate in the study. Simple random sampling was used to select five permanent and long serving teachers from each school. This is because they have been in school long enough to understand the school operations. The sample size of the study was 15 principals and 75 teachers.

4.0 Research findings

The main objective of the study was to establish effects of human resource factors on student academic performance in Bungoma North Sub-County Kenya. Five specific objectives were guided the study.

4.1 Demographic Information

The study sought to establish the teachers' and principals' gender. From the findings, the study established that the majority of teachers were males as shown by 69.3%, while females were 30.7%. From the findings, the study also established that male gender was dominant among principals as indicated by 73.3% while females represented 26.7%.

Table 4.1 Distribution of participants by gender

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Male	52	69.3	11	73.3
Female	11	30.7	4	26.7
Total	75	100	15	100

Data presented in table 4.2 shows that majority of teachers 40 (53.4%) involved in the study had stayed in their work stations for a period of over five years. This category of teachers had good knowledge about the school operations and gave reliable information about use of

alternative modes of human resource factors used in their schools. The results also showed that 13 (17.3%) of teachers involved in the study had worked in their schools for a period of 0-2 years. In addition, the results show that 22 (.3%) of respondents had stayed in their schools for a period of 3-4years.

Table 4.2: Number of years in current School (N=90)

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 – 2 years	13	17.3	2	13.3
3 – 4 years	22	29.3	6	40
5 and over	40	53.4	7	46.7
Total	75	100	15	100

The teachers were also asked to state their age bracket. On the age of the teachers, the study found that the majority of the teachers (40%) were between 30-40 years, 26.7% were aged between 20-30 years while 20% indicated that they were 40-50 years. The head teachers were also asked to state their age bracket. The study found that the majority of the head teachers (50%) were over 40-50 years while 30% of the head teachers were aged 30-40 years.

Table 4.3 Distribution of respondents by age

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
20 – 30 years	4	26.7	0	0
30 – 40 years	6	40	3	30
40 – 50 years	3	20	5	50
50 – 60 years	2	13.3	2	20
Total	15	100	10	100

Table 4.4 indicates that majority 75(83.3%) of the respondents involved in the study were teachers as compared to 13 (16.7%) of the respondents who were principals. This was owed to the proportionate representation of their numbers or populations in the studied schools. This was so because in a school setting there is always one principal as compared to the number of teachers which is normally higher.

Table 4.4 Distribution of participants by category

Category	Frequency	%
Principals	15	16.7
Teachers	75	83.3
Total	90	100.0

Table 4.5 Highest academic qualification for teachers and head teachers

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
B.Ed	4	26.7	3	30
Diploma	8	53.3	7	70
MED	3	20	0	0
Total	15	100	10	100

The study also sought to establish the highest level of education of the teachers and head teachers. According to the findings, the majority of teachers were diploma holders as shown by 53.3% of the teachers, 26.7% had B.Ed while 20% had a MED. On the other hand, the majority of the head teachers (70%) were diploma holders while 30% were graduates. This information shows that the respondents were knowledgeable enough and could give valid and reliable information based on their high level of education.

4.2.1 Effect of staff development on the Student Performance

The study also sought to determine the effect of staff development that influences the student performance in KCSE. According to the responses given, majority of the respondents reported that taking higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning were the most significant aspect of staff development as shown by mean scores of 4.6084, 4.5652 and 4.3836 respectively. The respondents further indicated that participating in workshops; seminars and education conferences and induction were important facets of staff development as shown by mean scores of 4.0634, 3.1503 and 3.1323 respectively.

Table 4.6 Teachers response on the effect of staff development on the student performance

	Mean	Std Dev
Taking higher education and training	4.6084	0.76760
Induction	3.5327	1.49930
Refresher courses	4.4652	0.98916
On-the-job-learning	4.3836	0.84372
Participating in workshops	4.0634	1.39836
Seminars and education conferences	3.9501	1.39742

4.2.2 Effect of Staff Motivation on the Student Performance

The respondents who participated in this study were further asked to state if they are motivated either through monetary or non monetary rewards. Table 4.1 shows the responses.

Table 4.1 Motivation through monetary and non-monetary rewards

Type of reward	No. of respondents	Percentage
Monetary	80	88.9%
Non-monetary	10	11.1%

It is evident in Table 4.1 that 88.9% of the respondents felt that they were more motivated with monetary items than non-monetary items. Only 11.1% felt that they could be motivated by non-monetary items. This could be attributed to the fact that most of the respondents felt that, the monetary rewards could easily change their status as compared to the non monetary rewards.

4.2.3 Effect of Staffing on the Student Performance

From the findings, majority (80%) of the teachers indicated that average teacher-student ratio was 80-120 while 14.7% indicated it to be 60-80. Majority of the principals (46.7%) indicated that the average teacher-student ratio was 80-120 while 33.3% said that it was 60-80. The findings are in line with those of World Bank, (2006) that a number of African countries have seen very large increases in enrollment following the elimination of school fees. Yet this progress creates its own new challenges. One of the challenges is that the process has raised teacher-student ratios (World Bank, 2006).

Table 4.6 Teachers and head teachers’ response on average teacher-pupil ratio

	Teachers		Principals	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1-40	0	0	0	0
41-60	4	5.3	3	20
60-80	11	14.7	5	33.3
80-120	60	80	7	46.7
Total	75	100	15	100

4.2.4 Effect of School Administration on the Student Performance

Responses on Principals’ Practices of supervision

Results shows that 8 out of 15 principals who translated to 60% of the respondents supervised their teachers and students frequently while the other 4 out of 10 principals constituting 40% supervised their teachers and students always. This can be attributed to the fact that it would almost be impossible for a principal to accept to not doing his/her work. Majority of the principals 7 out of 15 that is 70% representation of the respondents were of the opinion that supervision improves students’ performance in KCSE. Only 1 out 15 principals was of the opinion that supervision did not improve students’ academic performance.

Responses on Principals’ Practices of Motivation

From the responses 5 out of 10 that is 30% of the principals recognized their students’ efforts always while only 4 out of 15 principals translating to 20% recognized their student’s efforts frequently. All the 15 principals reported that they interacted with their teachers and students always. The principals also believed that motivation improves schools’ performance. These practices of motivation seemed to have contributed to improved results in the schools. This is supported by Wamukuru, Kamau & Ochola (2006), who argued that a principal who

demonstrates a high level of concern for people and for the product has a better report with teachers and students which leads to improved academic performance in the school.

Table 4.7 Effect of training on teachers' effectiveness as reflected in student performance

	Mean	Std Dev
Principals' Practices of Motivation	3.6327	.90118
Principals' Practices of supervision	3.6327	1.14323
Principals' Practices of communication	3.7755	1.07962

4.2.5 Effect of Teachers' Classroom management

The teachers' preparedness determines their ability to meet the classroom challenges that characterize their profession. It also provides insight into the extent to which opportunities for continued learning prepare them to teach. Classroom management has been identified as a major influence on teacher performance, a key source of teachers' job-related stress (Hanif, 2002). Thus the teachers' preparedness is a significant HR factor that influences student's academic performance.

5.0 Conclusion

5.2.1 Staff Development

The findings that higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning were the most significant aspect of staff development are indicative of the fact that teacher development was strategic option which if exploited would enhance the quality of education in public schools. It also illustrates that staff development gives teachers opportunity to learn new methods and techniques which are vital in their ever evolving teaching career. The findings are collaborated by those of Orora (1988), who indicated that Kenya education system being examination oriented, many teachers perceive staff development programmes as an instrument for enhancing their effectiveness in instructional duties (Orora, 1988). The study concludes that taking higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning is the most significant aspect to be explored to enhance student academic performance.

5.2.2 Staff Motivation

From the study a majority of the respondents felt that monetary reward was truly a motivator. It can therefore be concluded that for the employees to be motivated, they ought to be given monetary rewards. However some also noted that monetary rewards were only exciting for a short period of time after which it would not be felt again. Therefore the management should be keen to have good scheme for rewarding, like on good performance by some employees and not across the board.

5.2.3 School Management

The study concludes that in high performing schools, the principals supervised teachers and students better than the principals in the low performing schools. The principals in the high performing schools further motivated both teachers and students and they practiced effective communication better than their counterparts in the low scoring schools. The study overly

concludes that there is need for principals to be physically present in schools to supervise and monitor what is happening in the institutions.

5.2.4 Teacher Staffing

From the findings the study concludes that, the majority of schools have a high teacher: pupil ratio of 60-120 pupils in each class which negatively affect the way teachers deliver in their teaching profession to a great extent. The over enrolment of students in schools is the reason for poor performance in the school. The study concludes that more teachers must be recruited in schools to cater for the increased enrollment after the implementation of FPE.

5.2.5 Teachers' Classroom Management

The study also concludes that teachers' preparedness influence the academic performance in their school to a great extent. On how well teachers and principals as individuals are prepared with compelling classroom demands, the research concludes that teachers and principals were well prepared to maintain order and discipline in the classroom, implement new methods of teaching, use student performance assessment techniques and implement state or district curriculum and performance standards.

5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that government and other stakeholders should explore ways of investing in facilitating higher education and training, refresher courses and on-the-job-learning for teachers to enhance student academic performance.

The study recommends that school principals should come up with methods of motivating students and the staff to encourage them to work hard towards improving the students' academic performance. This is because motivation boosts the teachers and students morale to work towards achieving the schools 'set goals.

Since the study found that the majority of schools have a high teacher- student ratio which has a negative effect on student academic performance, the study recommends that the government recruits teachers proportionate to the number of enrolled students to safeguard the quality of education offered in public schools. To reinforce recruitment, teachers and principals should undergo further training to help them cope with the increased enrollment.

The study recommends that principals and the quality assurance teams should reinforce inspection in schools in order monitor and assess curriculum delivery that could further enhance performance.

Since it was found that teachers' preparedness influence the academic performance in school to a great extent, the study recommend that the ministry of education should review the curriculum being used in teacher training institutions with a view of making it more student friendly.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

Since this study explored the human resource factors on student academic performance in Bungoma North Sub- County, Kenya, the study recommends that similar study should be done in other Sub- Counties in Kenya for comparison purposes and to allow for generalization of findings on the HR factors influencing student academic performance in Kenya. In addition studies should be done on the HR factors influencing student academic performance in primary schools and tertiary institutions because different levels of educational institution have different strategic approaches and thus allow for comparison.

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