Influence of Teacher Trainings Organized By Quality Assurance and Standards Officers on Students' Academic Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Gucha Sub-County, Kenya

David Ogega[1], Mount Kenya University

George Ogochi[2], Mount Kenya University

Abstract

The priority of learning institutions is to ensure equitable access and improvement in quality and efficiency at all levels of education. The ultimate goal is to develop an all-inclusive and quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans. However, developing standards in education and maintaining the desired quality remains a major challenge across education systems throughout the world. This study sought to conduit the existing gap of knowledge on the Influence of QAS Practices on academic performance in public school in Gucha Sub - County, Kenya. The researcher adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population for this study was 62 head teachers and 1376 teachers in public secondary schools. In addition, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) of Gucha Sub-County was also targeted in the study. The total sample size consisting of head teachers, teachers and the QASO was 313 persons. Data collection tools comprised of questionnaires, interview and observation schedule. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented in frequency tables, graphs and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed through reporting themes and quotations that emerged. The themes emerging from qualitative data were identified to augment the primary data. The findings of the study established that teacher trainings**,** school curriculum inspection, physical facilities inspection and stakeholder perception positively and significantly influence academic performance of students. The study recommended that the Government should organize regular in service training and workshops as they mentor teacher who in return will contribute positively to academic performance of the students. The government should invest in the physical facilities as the study has shown that they contribute positively to the performance of the student. Stakeholders should be sensitized on the activities of QASO's and why they do inspection so as they can have a positive attitude toward the exercise.

Key words: quality, standards, assurance, training, inspection.

Background to the Study

Students' academic performance is an aspect of education that has been and still is of great concern to parents, school managers, educational researchers and policy makers in both developing and developed nations. It is also of great concern across all levels of education in a number of countries (Principe, 2005). Education is widely regarded as a basic human right, a key to enlightenment, and a source of wealth and power (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Gravestock and Gregor-Greenleaf (2008) states that the explanations for good or poor student's academic performance have been quite exhaustive yet controversy still exists among scholars as to what contribute singly or jointly to students' poor performance.

According to Temponi (2005), good performance in school calls for constant inspection/evaluation of curriculum delivery. MacBeath and McGlynn (2004) observe that both the schools and the inspectors should inspect/evaluate schools on the delivery of the curriculum in order to achieve good results. Both internal and external evaluations have complementary roles to play.

Standards-based education is still the core idea guiding education policy and education reform. Shepard (2010) provided that the intentions of standards based education to focus greater attention on student learning, to ensure the participation and success of all students, and to provide guidance for educational improvement are in the best interest of the country. We know enough to create a new generation of policies, tests, and curricula that will focus greater attention on learning and will reduce the amount of effort spent preparing students for tests that do not adequately reflect the conceptual goals of instruction.

Quality assurance in education is the efficient management, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the resource inputs and transformation process (teaching and learning) to produce quality outputs (students) that meet set standards and expectations of the society. Raouf (2008) opines that quality assurance in education is the process of ensuring continuous improvement in all aspects of education business in an institution of learning to satisfy the needs and expectations of the institution‘s customers (society). A critical look at the definitions shows that quality assurance in education encompasses systematic management, monitoring and evaluation procedures adopted to measure the performance of school administrators (principals), teachers and students against educational objectives to ensure best practices in resource inputs, utilization and curriculum management by the principals to produce students that achieve the set educational goals in secondary schools.

The overall policy of the government of Kenya is to achieve education for all. The priority is to ensure equitable access and improvement in quality and efficiency at all levels of education. The ultimate goal is to develop an all inclusive and quality education that is accessible and relevant to all Kenyans. This is guided by the understanding that good education can contribute significantly to economic growth, improved employment prospects and income generating opportunities. The government policy also entails allowing a broad based participation in the provision of education with all stakeholders taking responsibility for planning and implementation. In tandem with this policy is the decentralization of decision making and resource management at lower level structures of the ministry. The Constitution of Kenya (2010) provides for two levels of government: the central government and 47 county governments which are distinct yet interdependent. Education policies are formulated by the National Education Board and executed by the County Education Boards. Developing standards in education and maintaining the desired quality remains a major

challenge across education systems throughout the world. Quality in education is perceived as the degree to which education can be said to be of high standard, satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living (UNESCO, 2000). During the World Education Forum held in Dakar in 2000, participants committed themselves to improving the quality of all aspects of education. The delegates concluded that quality is at the heart of education and is one of the key goals in achievement of Education for All (EFA). The role and character of standards and quality assurance varies from country to country. The purpose of quality assurance should be to identify strengths and weaknesses at schools and wider institutional level so that a school may maintain effective school management systems, improve the quality of education provided and raise the educational standards achieved by pupils (RoK, 2012). Despite these glaring similarities, quality assurance managers in the education sector have not fully integrated filly the practice of quality in academic to uplift the performance of the students. This paper therefore, seeks to conduit the existing gap of knowledge on the influence of teacher trainings organized by quality assurance and standards officers on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Gucha Sub-County, Kenya.

Literature Review

The study was based on the Effective Schools Theory by Lezotte (2001). According to Lezotte (2001), an effective school is measured in terms of student achievement and demonstrates evidence of quality and equity. After a series of studies, Lezotte (2001) came up with seven correlates of effective schools – among them are strong instructional leadership, clear and focused mission, safe and orderly schools, climate of high expectations for success, frequent monitoring of student progress, positive home – school relations, and opportunity to learn/time on task.

According to Lezotte (2001), strong instructional leaders are proactive and seek help in building team leadership and a culture conducive to learning and professional growth. In the effective school, the work of QASO's is to ensure that the principal and others act as instructional leaders and effectively and persistently communicate and model the mission of the school to staff, parents, and students. Having a clear and focused mission means everyone knows where they are going and why. A clear focus assists in aligning programs and activities for school improvement. Lezotte (2001) feels that to effectively determine a specific focus, school leadership and stakeholders should use a collaborative process to target a few school goals and then build consensus around them.

Lezotte (2001) states that, in a climate of high expectations, the mantra "all students can learn" must be followed by instructional practices and teacher behaviour that demonstrate that teachers believe in the students, believe in their own efficacy to teach students to high standards, and will persist in teaching them. He further says that frequent monitoring of

teaching and learning requires paying attention both to student learning results and to the effectiveness of school and classroom procedures. Learning is monitored by tracking a variety of assessment results such as test scores, student developed products, performances, and other evidence of learning. Teaching is monitored by teachers themselves through self-reflection and by QASOs for program and teacher evaluation. Assessment results are used for planning instruction for individual students as well as for school-wide decision making and planning. QASOs are expected to guide schools to meet such goals.

The theory was relevant to this study in that the correlates of effective schools require supportive work environments, with manageable teacher-pupil ratios, well trained teachers; good handling of the curriculum and adequate physical and material resources; which lie within the functions of QASO's and are critical to students' academic performance.
According to Oyewole (2009) adequate attention must be given to the teaching delivery of the academic staff (teachers) in order to maintain standards and quality assurance in school. The Jomtien Conference on education (1990) focused on access to quality education for all. This position was reaffirmed in the Dakar Forum in 2000 when over 150 countries committed themselves to the achievement of six (6) goals now popularly known as Education For All (EFA) Goals. One of the six goals is specifically focused on quality of education (MOE News letter, 2005). This goal aimed at improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. This necessitated various countries to come up with mechanisms to fulfill the aspect of quality. Finland through its Bergen report (2005) had a similar idea but decentralized the practice. The Finnish system of evaluation and quality assurance has remained decentralized based on voluntary participation by the institutions and focused on quality enhancement rather than control- fitness for purpose.

Kenya has also made strides in quality improvement as stated in Sessional paper No.1 of 2005, which explains that the provision of education and training to all Kenyans is fundamental to the success of the government's overall development strategy. This has been elaborated further in the Vision 2030 with three strong pillars namely; political, social and economic (Republic of Kenya, 2010). Since independence, the government has addressed several challenges through commissions, working parties and task forces in order to change the quality of education in the country as per Sessional paper No.1 of (2005). This led to the reforms, which resulted, into the re-structuring of the Ministry curving out a directorate of

quality assurance and standards encompassing quality audit, quality assurance and quality development. The National Education Sector Support Programme 2014-2018 (NESSP) envisages a devolved and effective quality assurance which will be under the proposed Education Standards and Quality Assurance Council (Republic of Kenya, 2005).

According to UNESCO Global monitoring report (2004) attempts should be made in order to improve on the quality of education by traditionally embodying accountability measures where an outside body intervenes in the school or classroom area. Examples of these external interventions include school inspection (UNESCO, 2005a, 2005b). Just like inspectorate, the Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards (DQAS) has a vision and mission statement to guide the QASOs in their operations. According to MOEST (2000) its vision is, "to provide quality assurance to all education stakeholders in all education institutions, while the mission is to establish, maintain and improve education standards" Republic of Kenya, 2000).

Methodology

Descriptive survey design was used in this study. This design enabled the researchers to collect information, opinions and attitudes of different groups targeted. This design is also considered appropriate for non-experimental studies because it provides a detailed description of existing phenomena, with the intent of employing data to justify the current situation (Brook, 2013; Orodho, 2012). The target population for this study was 62 head teachers and 1376 teachers in public secondary schools. In addition, the Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) of Gucha Sub-County was also targeted in the study. The total sample size consisting of head teachers, teachers and the QASO was 313 persons. Data collection tools comprised of questionnaires, interview and observation schedule. Quantitative data was analyzed and presented in frequency tables, graphs and charts. Qualitative data was analyzed through reporting themes and quotations that emerged. The themes emerging from qualitative data were identified to augment the primary data.

Findings

Questionnaire response rate

The questionnaire response rate is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

Type of school	Schools	Head teachers	Teachers	QASO	Total
	F	F	F	F	
Mixed boarding schools	3	3	41	1	

single sex boarding schools	4	4	51		
mixed day schools	10	10	151		
single sex day schools	2	2	31		
Total		**19**	**280**	**1**	**300**

Research Data (2019)

The questionnaire return rate was 300 (95.8%). This shows that the respondents were willing to participate in the study.

Respondents' demographic data

Respondents' demographic data is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Gender of the respondent

Gender	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Male	*61*	*58*
Female	*44*	*42*
Total	*105*	*100*

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results in table 2 shows that 61(58%) of the respondents were male while 44(42%) were female.

Age of the respondent

Age of the respondent is presented in table 3.

Table 2: Age of the respondent

Age	*Frequency*	*Percent*
18-29	33	***31***
30-39years	29	***28***
40-49 years	22	***21***
Above 50 years	21	***20***

Source: Research Data (2019)

The result in table 3 shows that 33(31%) of the respondents were between the age of 18-29 years, 29(28%) were between the age of 30-39 years, 29(28%) were between the age of 40-49 years and 21(20%) above the age of 50 years. This implies that 59% of the respondents were youth of the ages below 40 years.

Level of education of the respondent

The respondents were asked to indicate their highest educational level and the results are shown in the table 4.

Table 3: Level of education of the respondents

Level of education	*Frequency*	*Percent*
Primary	00	***00***
Secondary	22	***21***
College	59	***56***
University	24	***23***
Total	105	***100***

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results in table 4 shows that 22(21%) of the respondents had secondary education, majority 59(56%) had college education, 24(23%) had university education.

Influence of teacher trainings on students' academic performance

Influence of teacher trainings on students' academic performance was key the study. Results to this aspect are presented in table 5.

Table 4: Influence of teacher trainings on students' academic performance

Professional development	**Mean**	**Std. dev**

service training workshops	4.001	.947
School-based professional support including mentoring.	4.212	1.231
When a teacher goes through professional development properly students' academic performance improves.	4.123	.767

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results in table 5 above show that the respondents agree that service training workshops (mean 4.001), school-based professional support including mentoring(mean 4.212) and that when a teacher goes through professional development properly students' academic performance improves (mean of4.123). The smaller standard deviation respective to the mean values implies that the mean is the right model that represents the data and there is no significant difference between the sample mean and the population mean.

Correlation between ongoing *teacher trainings* variables and academic performance of primary school pupil is shown in table 6.

Table 5: Correlation between ongoing teacher trainings variables and academic performance of primary school pupil

teacher trainings		**Academic performance**
service training workshops	Spearman correlation coefficient	.322**
	Significance	.046
	N	300
School-based professional support including mentoring.	Spearman correlation coefficient	.339**
	Significance	.046
	N	300

Source: Research Data (2019)

The results in the table 6 above show that service training workshops and school-based professional support including mentoring positively significantly influence academic performance of the learner at (r=.322**, p<.05 significant level) and (r=.339**,p<.05

significant level) respectively. Taking the coefficient of determinant R, service training workshops and school-based professional support including mentoring contributes 10.4%, and 11.5% variability to academic performance of the students respectively when other factors are held constant.

To establish the total contribution of **teacher trainings**, these variables were merged and correlated to academic performance of the student as shown in the table 7 below.

Table 6: Correlation between ongoing teacher trainings and academic performance of primary school pupil

		Academic performance
Teacher trainings	Spearman correlation coefficient	.444**
	Significance	.044
	N	300

Source: Research Data (2019)

The table 7 above show that **teacher trainings** positively and significantly influence academic performance of pupils at r=.444**, p=.05 significant level. Calculating the coefficient of determinant, **teacher trainings** contributes 19.7% variability to academic performance of the students.

The study showed that the respondents agreed that service training workshops, school-based professional support including mentoring and that when a teacher goes through professional development properly students' academic performance improves.

The inferential analysis revealed that **teacher trainings** positively and significantly influence academic performance of pupils at r=.444**, p=.05 significant level. Calculating the coefficient of determinant, **teacher trainings** contributes 19.7% variability to academic performance of the pupils.

Quantity of education depends on the teaching force. Professional training in special education may enable some teachers to identify and teach pupils with intellectual disabilities more effectively than teachers who have not received such training.

The findings of the study are in agreement with the education commission Report of Kamunge (1988) which recommended that regular teachers be trained in remedial teaching methology to enable them effectively to identify and teach children with mild intellectual disabilities. In support of this, Miskoff (2001), in his study, concluded that early intervention of such pupils have the potential to make them woman that is indistinguishable from their peers by the time, they are in secondary schools. This suggests that, early identification of pupils with slow learning abilities is a prerequisite to intervention, which leads to prevention before complication thereby enhancing their learning process. Since effective teaching deals with the needs, interests and abilities of pupils as individuals, it requires teachers' dedication regardless of the challenges they face while assisting such pupils in regular classrooms (Bala, 2004). However, teaches may not have the skills and knowledge to identify and assist pupils with mild intellectual disabilities. While this is likely to be the case, it can also be attributed to mutual lack of understanding or even lack of professional training or respect .this implies that teachers should be continually sensitized on the importance of being sensitized to individual learner's educational needs. This may be achieved through in –service training courses or school based programs in special needs Education (SNE). The current study intended to establish the influence of teacher's professional qualifications and views concerning pupils with mild intellectual disabilities on intervention strategies to be used to assist them in public primary schools in Masaba North Sub County. Ysseldyke (1993), points out that the influence of specific intervention strategies depends on the entry level of the pupils. Boos and Vaugh, (2002) say that some certain strategies are most effective when a child knows how to perform a task but needs to be more skilled in its execution. It is therefore very essential for the teacher entrusted with the task of instructing pupils to have an insight to various ways in which they can adjust instruction to meet individual pupil's needs. This can be done by adjusting lesson to meet pupils needs, provision of many instructional options, motivation, individual attention , restoration and development of self-confidence , development of good work, Habits, Elastic curriculum , remedial instruction, special methods of teaching.

Conclusion

The inferential (correlation) analysis revealed that **teacher trainings** positively and significantly influence academic performance of contributing 19.7% variability to academic performance of the students when other factors are held constant.

Recommendation

- The Government should organize regular in service training and workshops as they mentor teacher who in return will contribute positively to academic performance of the students.

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