

Effect of Teachers Working Conditions on Academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Kuresoi South Sub County, Nakuru County, Kenya

¹*Naftal M. Nyang'ara., ²Cherono Anne

¹School of Education, Laikipia University, P.O. Box 1100-20300, Nyahururu- Kenya

²Student, School of Education, Mt. Kenya University, P.O Box 17273-20100, Nakuru- Kenya

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Many primary schools face “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. Working and living conditions **affect** teacher morale and motivation and thus their performance. The key factors are workload, classroom conditions, management support and distance at work, housing and travel affect Teacher morale and motivation. The high cost of travel contributes to teacher absenteeism and lateness in schools while very large class sizes are the norm for most teachers in countries such as Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of teacher working conditions on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kuresoi South Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. To achieve this objective, the study adopted an ex-post facto research design. The target population of the study was 91 public primary schools, 91 head teachers, and 784 primary school TSC teachers in Kuresoi South Sub County, Kenya. Simple random sampling was employed in the selection of the study sample in which 273 participants were randomly selected from a target population of 875. The 273 participants were drawn from the 91 schools and this provided for at least 2 teachers in every school, and the Head teacher. The main tool for data collection was the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was processed by editing, classifying, and coding before being analyzed by the computer using **Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS)** version 24.0. Descriptive statistics used encompassed measures of distribution in **the** form of frequencies and percentages, measures of central tendencies represented by the means, and measures of dispersion in **the** form of standard deviations. Inferential statistics took the form of Spearman rank correlation and multiple regressions. The results indicated that teacher working conditions had a positive and significant influence on academic performance. The study concluded that **the** working conditions of teachers in Kuresoi South Sub County **were** not good. The study therefore concluded that poor or bad teacher working conditions had negative academic performance of pupils. This was supported by a positive and significant relationship between teacher working conditions and academic performance. The study recommended that the school should provide lunch and tea to teachers, provide houses to teachers, and provide teaching/learning resources as well as adequate infrastructural facilities. Overall, it is recommended that good teacher working conditions should be emphasized as doing so brings about improved academic performance.

Keywords: Teachers working conditions, Academic Performance, Pupil

INTRODUCTION

Efficient and effective achievement of school performance or outcome goals in primary school settings depends on **the** provision of quality education, which is determined by the quality of both its inputs and output (Okumbe, 2001). It henceforth calls for quality teaching and learning, a reality upheld by Dornyei (2001) who focused on the achievement of successful schooling to a great extent **relying** on the quality of **the** teaching force. With quality teaching provided by teachers, teacher's performance will be measured through pupils' performance

(Adair, 2009). In primary schools, many variables contribute to better pupil performance and one of **these** is the motivation of teachers. Session paper no.1 of 2005 and Kenya Education Sector Support Programme. (KESSP) identified a teacher as one of the most important inputs to the education system. It is therefore very critical to have efficient management and utilization of this resource for quality of learning outcomes in the education system.

Teaching is a demanding job that needs to be remunerated well to attract and retain teachers in the profession (Olando, 2003). This will help prevent teachers from running to other greener pastures. Olando further urges that for any efficient work to take place there is **a** need for favorable conditions. Thus, an individual should be provided with an enabling environment to perform and produce the desired results. Okemwa (2003) notes that teachers working in rural centers are more disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts due to the **underdevelopment** in their schools.

Working and living conditions **affect** teacher morale and motivation and thus their performance. The key factors are workload, classroom conditions, management support, and distance at work, housing, and travel affect Teacher morale and motivation. The high cost of travel contributes to teacher absenteeism and lateness in schools while very large class sizes are the norm for most teachers in countries such as India and Pakistan according to Bannell and Akyeampong (2007). According to **a** study by Bannell and Akyeampong (2007), in Sub-Saharan Africa and **South Asia**, 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.

In Kuresoi South Sub-County, the results for the years 2018 to 2023, pupils’ performance in **The** Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examination has been below average with **an** accumulated mean standard score of 244.06 marks out of 500 marks (Kuresoi Sub-County Education Office, 2023). Results of KCPE 2023 showed that out of the 91 schools in Kuresoi South Sub County, only 24 schools got a mean standard score of 250 marks, meaning that 74% of the public primary schools in Kuresoi scored below average. This issue of declining academic performance has generated much interest among stakeholders in the education sector in Nakuru County. It is alleged that this poor performance is due to teacher working conditions. Though there are **several** of factors contributing to this low performance, there is a dearth of research seeking to link teacher working conditions **to** students’ academic performance. This study therefore sought to establish the effect of teacher working conditions on the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kuresoi South Sub County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by **the** Attribution theory. Heider (1958) was the first to propose a psychological theory of attribution, but Weiner and colleagues (Jones et al, 1972; Weiner, 1986) developed a theoretical framework that has become a major research paradigm of social psychology. Attribution theory is concerned with how individuals interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior. An important assumption of attribution theory is that people will interpret their environment in such a way as to maintain a positive self-image.

According to attribution theory, the explanations that people tend to make to explain success or failure can be analyzed in terms of three sets of characteristics: First, the cause of the success or failure may be internal or external. That is, we may succeed or fail because of factors that we believe have their origin within us or because of factors that originate in our environment (Weiner, 1986). Second, the cause of the success or failure may be either stable or unstable. If we believe the cause is stable, then the outcome is likely to be the same if we perform the same behavior on another occasion. If it is unstable, the outcome is likely to be different on another occasion. Third, the cause of the success or failure may be either controllable or uncontrollable (Jones et al, 1972). A controllable factor is one **that** we believe we can alter if we wish to do so. An uncontrollable factor is one that we do not believe we can easily alter.

The attribution theory can be used to explain the effect of teacher working conditions on academic performance in public primary schools in Kuresoi North Sub County by examining the factors that originate in teachers’

environments.

METHODS

The study adopted an **ex post** facto research design. The target population of the study was 91 public primary schools, 91 head teachers and 784 primary school TSC teachers in Kuresoi South Sub County, Kenya. The researcher applied the recommendations of Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who stated that **the** sample size for descriptive studies should be between 10 percent to 30 percent of the population. Simple random sampling was employed in the selection of the study sample in which 273 participants were randomly selected from a target population of 875. The 273 participants were drawn from the 91 schools, and this provided for at least 2 teachers in every school, and the Head teacher. The main tool for data collection was the questionnaire. The data from the questionnaire was processed by editing, classifying and coding before being analyzed by the computer using **the** Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24.0. Descriptive statistics used encompassed measures of distribution in **the** form of frequencies and percentages, measures of central tendencies represented by the means, and measures of dispersion in **the** form of standard deviations. Inferential statistics took the form of Spearman rank correlation and multiple regressions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A descriptive analysis was run on the six statements in the questionnaire aimed at establishing the effect of teachers working conditions on **the** academic performance of pupils in primary schools. The results are presented in Table 1

Table 1, Effect of teachers working conditions on academic performance

Statements	SA%	A%	U%	D%	SD%	Mean
The school provides lunch and tea to teachers	0	77.8	11.1	11.1	0	3.67
Employer gives out clear job descriptions to the teachers	0	11.1	55.6	33.3	0	2.78
The school provides houses for teachers	0	11.1	22.2	55.6	11.1	2.33
The school provides teaching /learning resources	0	55.6	11.1	22.2	11.1	3.11
The school is located within an accessible locality.	0	22.2	44.4	22.2	11.1	2.78
The school provides adequate infrastructural facilities.	11.1	11.1	55.6	11.1	11.1	3.00

Results in Table 1 reveal that about 78% of the teachers agreed that the school provides lunch and tea to teachers while 11% of them disagreed **with** the statement. As to whether employer gives out clear job descriptions to teachers, about 56% of the teachers were undecided while a third of them were against the statement. It was disagreed by (about 56%) of the teachers that the school provides houses to teachers, however, 22 percent of the teachers partially agreed that the school provides houses to teachers while 11% agreed. **Regarding** whether schools provide teaching /learning resources, about 56% of the teachers agreed **with** the statement while a third of them disagreed and strongly disagreed **with** the statement. It was also evidenced that the teachers partially agreed that the school is located within an accessible locality while a third of them strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. Similarly, the majority (about 56%) of the respondents partially agreed that schools provide adequate infrastructural facilities, 11% of the respondents disagreed with the statement while another 11% agreed **with** the statement.

Looking at Table 1, most of the respondents either disagreed or partially agreed with the statement relating to

teacher working conditions. This meant that teachers’ working conditions in **the** Kuresoi South sub-county **were** not good and this may have contributed to the poor academic performance of pupils in the Sub County.

The findings agree with that of Mukabane (2016) who examined teacher motivation and academic performance in science subject in primary schools in Butere Sub-County, Kenya, and found that **the** teaching environment had unfavorable conditions **that** demoralized teachers and that school inspection was not done regularly. It was also established that Teacher workload and the relationship between teachers and parents–influenced the performance of the learners. The findings also agree with that of Nyagaya (2015) who studied the factors influencing teacher level of job satisfaction in public primary schools in Kayole Division, Nairobi, and found out that **the** majority of the teachers were not satisfied with their jobs due to heavy **workload** in terms of **several** lessons taught per week while others were not satisfied with the conditions of the classrooms. The findings further agree with that of Nyongesa (2007) who **concurred** that general working conditions such as a clean **workplace**, adequate equipment, proper housing, and infrastructure can also lead to **an** acceptable level of job satisfaction and thus improvement in the academic achievement of students.

Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and academic performance in public primary schools. The result of the correlation analysis is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2, Correlation Analysis between Teachers Working Conditions and Academic Performance

		Teachers working conditions	Academic Performance
Teachers working conditions	Pearson Correlation	1	.495**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	210	210
Academic Performance	Pearson Correlation	.495**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	210	210
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

The correlation analysis to determine the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and **the** academic performance of pupils in public primary schools shows there is a moderate positive relationship between teachers working conditions, and academic performance as indicated by correlation of 0.495. The p-Value of 0.001 is less than the acceptable significance level (α), hence it can be concluded that there is a relationship between teachers’ working conditions and **the** academic performance.

Regression analysis was conducted to empirically determine whether teachers working conditions influenced academic performance of pupils in public primary schools.

Table 3, Model Summary-Teachers Working Conditions and Academic Performance

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.495 ^a	.245	.226	.55098
a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers working conditions				

Regression results in Table 3 indicate the goodness of fit for the regression between **the** academic performance and teachers’ working conditions was satisfactory in the linear regression. An R squared of 0.245 indicates that 24.5% of the variances in academic performance of pupils in public primary schools in Kuresoi South Sub County are explained by the variances in teachers’ working conditions in the linear model. The correlation coefficient of 49.5% indicates that the combined effect of the predictor variables **has** a positive correlation with **the** academic

performance.

The overall model significance is presented in Table 4

Table 4, ANOVA on Teachers Working Conditions and Academic Performance

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	3.840	1	3.840	12.651	.001 ^b
	Residual	11.839	209	.304		
	Total	15.679	210			
a. Dependent Variable: Academic performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers working conditions						

The result shows that teacher working conditions are statistically significant in explaining the academic performance in public primary schools in Kuresoi South Sub County. An F statistic of 12.651 indicated that the overall model was significant. This was supported by a probability value of (0.001). The reported probability of (0.001) is less than the conventional probability of (0.05) hence significant. The probability of (0.001) indicated that there was a very low probability that the statement “overall model was insignificant”.

Table 5 displays the regression coefficients of the independent variable (Teachers working conditions).

Table 5, Regression Coefficient-Teachers Working Conditions and Academic Performance

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.019	.462		4.367	.000
	Student Enrolment	.562	.158	.495	3.557	.001
a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance						

Table 5 displays the regression coefficients of the independent variable (teachers’ working conditions). The results reveal that teachers working conditions is statistically significant in explaining the academic performance in public primary schools in Kuresoi South Sub-County. This is supported by (b=0.562, P value=0.001) which explains a unit an increase in teachers’ working conditions would lead to an increase in the academic performance of pupils in public primary schools by a factor of 0.562.

The finding is in agreement with that of Odeh, Oguche, Angelina and Ivagher (2015) who studied the influence of school environment on the academic achievement of students in secondary schools in the zone “a” senatorial district of Benue state, Nigeria and found out that school climate, discipline and physical facilities have significant influence on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Zone ‘A’ Senatorial District of Benue State.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It was concluded that the working conditions of teachers in Kuresoi South Sub County were not good. The study revealed that the employer does not give out clear job descriptions to the teachers, the school does not provide

houses to teachers, the school is not located within an accessible locality, and the school does not provide adequate infrastructural facilities. The study therefore concluded that poor or bad teacher working conditions had negative academic performance of pupils. This was supported by a positive and significant relationship between teacher working conditions and academic performance. The study recommended that the school should provide lunch and tea to teachers, provide houses to teachers, and provide teaching/learning resources as well as adequate infrastructural facilities. Overall, it is recommended that good teacher working conditions should be emphasized as doing so brings about improved academic performance.

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