Effect of a Comprehensive Learning Environment on Pupils' Learning Outcomes in Public Primary Schools in Kakamega County, Kenya

Murunga Caroleen Saya, Achoka Judith, Nganyi Jason.

Masinde Muliro University, Department of Education, P.O. Box P.O Box 190 - 50100, Kakamega. Kenya

DOI: https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0603

Received: 16 September 2025; Accepted: 21 September 2025; Published: 06 November 2025

ABSTRACT

The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) in Kenya launched the Performance Contract (PC) policy to improve teacher performance in the year 2012. The goal of PC was to enhance the quality of education offered to learners through strengthening supervision and continuously monitoring teacher performance at the institutional level. Teacher PC is monitored through regular teacher appraisals of their effectiveness, guided by predetermined PC set targets from the Teacher Professional and Development (TPAD) tool. Despite PC having been in place over last twelve years, its effect on pupil learning outcomes in Kakamega County Public primary schools is still not clear. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of teacher achievement in the comprehensive learning environment PC target on pupils' learning outcomes in public primary schools in Kakamega County in Kenya. The three learning outcomes examined were academic achievement, pupil retention and pupil completion rates. The comprehensive learning environment aims to create Child or Learner Friendly Environments. A Correlation research design with a mixed methods approach was used in the study. Eighty-two (82) schools were selected from 13 Sub Counties of Kakamega County using a multistage random sampling. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data on target achievement and learning outcomes from Head teachers and teachers in the selected schools for the period 2018 to 2023. Five Key informants involved in PC appraisals (2 Curriculum Support Officers, 2 Sub County TSC Directors and the County TSC Director) were purposefully selected and interviewed. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using Pearsons's correlation and Multiple linear regression. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically. The associations between comprehensive learning target achievement and pupil learning outcomes were KCPE performance (r=.0.295; P= 0. 0.540); retention rates (r= 0. 630; p=0.180) and completion rates (r=0.326; p=0. 528). These associations were weak and statistically insignificant across all the learning outcomes examined. The results for the linear regression were also statistically insignificant (P>0.05). The Key informants revealed that the process of PC appraisal was not taken seriously and had been seen as a routine procedure by teachers. The main hurdle in achieving the Comprehensive Learning Environment in schools was limited resources. The study concluded that Teachers' achievement in the Comprehensive Learning Environment target had no effect on learning outcomes of pupils in public primary schools in Kakamega County. The study recommends that the government should provide adequate resources for effective implementation of the Comprehensive Learning Environment in Public primary schools. There is need for further research to explore the effect of teacher achievement in Comprehensive Learning Environment on other learning outcomes such as communication skills, creativity, problem-solving and critical thinking skills.

Keywords: Target achievement, comprehensive learning Environment, Performance contracts, Learning Outcomes

INTRODUCTION

Background

Performance Contracting (PC) is a component of a broader set of public sector management tools designed to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of delivering services. PC is a management tool used to measure

performance against predetermined targets and objectives (Nyongesa and Van der Westhuizen,2023). Once the targets are set, employees direct their efforts toward achieving the targets (Okech,2017). PC in the teaching profession, as in other service sectors, was introduced as a strategy to improve teacher performance in the delivery of quality education. However, there have been conflicting reports on the effectiveness of PC in improving the quality of education (Camileri,2021; Darling Hammond et al., 2020).

The efficiency of teachers in service delivery has been and is still largely measured through teacher appraisals. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) launched Performance Contracting for teachers in Kenya in the year 2012. The concept of PC in the teaching service in Kenya is a new having started a decade ago. Long before PC was formally introduced in the civil service, teacher appraisals were already in place. Teacher appraisals were done through inspection where school inspectors would periodically evaluate schools and teachers (Odhiambo, et al,2023). A confidential report would be sent to the TSC by the head teacher of the school, along with the teacher's appraisal. Teachers were not given specific PC targets at the time. Although the use of PCs was hailed as an effective and promising strategy to improve teacher performance, teachers' unions reacted negatively, preferring the previous methods of teacher supervision (Kagema and Irungu, 2018).

The current PC for teachers was initiated in response to several reports indicating failure of the Ministry of Education to meet some of the targets outlined in the Kenya Education Sector Support Project- KESSP 2005-2010 report (GOK, 2012). The KESSP (2005-2010) assessment report revealed several problems affecting the teaching service, including poor governance, poor learning outcomes, a lack of teacher professionalism, gaps in service delivery and unacceptable levels of teacher absenteeism (GOK, 2012). PC was then introduced as a solution to the problems in the service delivery by teachers.

The framework for PC in the teaching service is anchored in Section 11 (c) and (f) of the Teachers Service Commission Act (2012), which make provisions for monitoring teacher conduct and performance in public learning institutions (GOK, 2012). Unlike previous school inspections, performance targets and evaluation standards are established in a participatory and democratic manner between the supervisor and the teacher. In the year 2016, TSC introduced the 'Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool to evaluate teacher performance in primary and secondary schools. On the TPAD tool, teachers are evaluated on five set performance targets of professional knowledge and practice, comprehensive learning environment, professional development, teacher conduct and professionalism and participation in professional learning community (TSC, 2017). The assumption was that meeting the targets would translate into good teacher performance and, subsequently, quality education for learners. Although PCs have been used by teachers over the past twelve years, the impact of PCs on learning outcomes has not been explored. There are still reports of teacher indiscipline and absenteeism, poor academic performance, learner dropout and learner indiscipline (Table 1 and Table 2). Such aspects professionalism and teacher conduct) have a major impact on student learning outcomes and were supposed to have been minimized by PC.

Table1: Learning Outcomes of Kakamega County Public Primary Schools over the Period 2018-2023

Year	**2018**	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Mean score (out of 500 Marks)	248	249.6	264	255.7	261.2	257.8
Pupil Retention rates (%)	75.2	81.4	83.6	81.4	83.3	82.7
Pupil Completion rates (%)	82.6	84.5	81.4	84.6	83.2	84.1

Source: Kakamega County Education Office (2023)

Table 2: Number of Primary School Teacher Discipline Cases Reported Over the Period 2018-2023 in Kakamega County

Discipline Case	**Year**					
	2018	**2019**	**2020**	**2021**	**2022**	**2023**
Desertion of duty	32	30	10	6	26	29

Absenteeism	15	13	6	-		21
Alcohol abuse	15	18	-	18	18	16
Insubordination	23	18	-	11	12	24
Sexual Molestation of learners	59	64	7	23	46	49
Others	13	9	-	10	-	13
Totals	**157**	**152**	**23**	**68**	**129**	**152**

Source: Kakamega County TSC Unit (2023)

The comprehensive learning environment PC target is evaluated using the criteria of teacher's ability to create child friendly school/class environment, ability to ensure safety of learners, and ability to manage learners conduct and behavior (TSC,2017). The three learning outcomes that were examined include Academic achievement, pupil school completion rates and pupil retention rates.

Statement of the problem

The education sector in Kenyan is guided by policies aimed at improving learning outcomes. These policies include the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) framework (2017), the National Curriculum Policy (2019), and the Basic Education Act (2013) The teachers' Performance Contract (PC) policy is a government strategy to enhance education quality and teacher performance. It was launched in 2012 following reports from the Kenya Education Sector Support Project (KESSP). This policy, supported by the TSC Act (2012) and the Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) tool (2016), aims to review teaching standards, evaluate performance, and promote professional development., evaluate performance, and promote professional development. Further plans include the National Education Sector Strategic Plan (NESSP) (2018-2022), which seeks to improve learning outcomes, access, affordability, and service delivery, focusing on enhancing teaching quality and teacher management. Despite these efforts, challenges persist, particularly concerning learning outcomes.

In Kakamega County, pupil learning outcomes have shown stagnation or slight fluctuation in recent years. For example, the mean Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) scores in public primary schools in Kakamega County have remained around 250, reaching 251.27 in 2018 and 250.04 in 2023. Similarly, pupil retention and completion rates have remained at approximately 88% and 91%, respectively. The impact of PC on learning outcomes in Kakamega County is unclear, and performance in the education sector has declined. Teacher Performance Contracts involve evaluating teachers across five areas: professional knowledge, learning environment, professional development, conduct and professionalism, and participation in professional learning communities. This study is important as it provides valuable insights to the TSC by examining the actual effectiveness of PC on pupils' learning outcomes. The study aimed to identify existing gaps in the comprehensive learning environment target achievement and learning outcomes.

Research Objective

The objective of this study was to establish the effect of teachers' achievement in the comprehensive learning environment PC target on pupils' learning outcomes in public primary schools in Kakamega County.

Research Question

What is the effect of Teachers' achievement in the comprehensive learning environment PC target on pupils' learning outcomes?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Performance contracting is an application of various theoretical bodies of knowledge to improve organizational

performance. As a result, many theories from different disciplines have been advanced to support and explain the performance contracting paradigm. The study was guided by the New Public Management (NPM) theory. According to Hood (2012), NPM is a series of themes relating to reforming the public sector's organization and procedures to make it more competitive and efficient in resource use and service delivery. The NPM is associated with the various reforms initiated in the public sector to improve accountability and maximize the use of scarce resources in the provision of public goods and services. There is agreement among scholars who have studied performance contracting that PC is one of the reforms that have been initiated under NPM, whose main focus is making the government more efficient by using less to produce more (Mutahaba, 2011).

In the context of the current study, TSC has created a New Public Management movement of PC to make the teaching service more efficient. Though many theories have been used to explain performance management, the researcher is convinced that the NPM mentioned above adequately covers the concepts in teacher performance contracting. Performance contracting practices and innovations are routine activities used by institutions to achieve set Visions, Missions, objectives, and targets. In the case of this study, teacher achievement of set targets and students' learning outcomes are all

Empirical Literature review

A Comprehensive learning environment (CLE) is an educational setting that prioritizes the well-being, safety, and holistic development of children. It involves creating a supportive, inclusive, and engaging atmosphere where children feel valued, respected, and motivated to learn. Key elements include appropriate physical infrastructure, child-centered teaching methods, an inclusive curriculum, and policies that protect children's rights and promote non-discrimination. Such environments nurture cognitive, emotional, social, and physical growth, encouraging creativity, critical thinking, and life skills development (Cobanoglu et al,2019).

The CLE positively influences learning outcomes by stimulating children's natural curiosity and engagement, fostering a sense of belonging, and providing conditions conducive to active and cooperative learning. A child-friendly environment reduces barriers such as fear, discrimination, and disengagement, enhancing students' psychosocial well-being, motivation, and academic performance (Boruett et al, 2021). Physical attributes like flexible, well-ventilated spaces and access to supportive learning materials aid concentration and participation. Pedagogical approaches that promote dialogue, mutual respect, and inclusive teaching increase student satisfaction and deepen learning experiences. One of the key items to note is that the TSC TPAD tool does not consider all the aspects describe for a child friendly learning environment. The clear definition of a CLE also differs across different cultures (Xiao et al, 2023).

The CLE was an initiative by the Basic Education Act (2013) in Kenya to address quality issues in education (Nthenge,2017). However, a careful examination shows that the Ministry of Education was ill-prepared to implement child-friendly schools through the Teachers Service Commission. Creating a child-friendly school or classroom environment is essential for fostering positive learning outcomes among learners, pupils in primary schools. This process involves the teacher’s ability to plan and implement activities that promote respect, equity, inclusion, and moral values. Each of these elements plays a critical role in shaping the educational experience and influencing pupil engagement, motivation, and overall pupil performance. However, like the many other schools in the developing nations, schools in Kenya, and more so in Kakamega County suffer poor classroom conditions and lack of learning materials, Institutional challenges including funding delays and high enrollment and Limited teacher training and community involvement. All these factors are caused by limited resources.

Although there is evidence supporting the link between CLE and pupil learning outcomes elsewhere (Xiao et al, 2023) to be strong, there are several challenges in Kenya, and more so in Kakamega County. The major challenge is resource constraints, including human resource constraints. Implementing and maintaining CLE requires significant financial, human, and infrastructural resources. In low-income countries or underfunded schools, creating such environments may be impractical or unsustainable (Amadi and Nwogu, 2023). In many low-income or under-resourced schools, creating a child-friendly learning environment is challenging due to a lack of funding for infrastructure, training, and materials. Already, the situation in Kakamega County, as in many other counties, is one of teacher shortage leading to understaffing (TSC, 2019).

Additionally, even within CLEs, disparities can persist. For example, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds may still face barriers to accessing resources or support, undermining the inclusivity goals of CLEs (Duoblienė,2023). This is also true for Kakamega County, where the poverty index is high. Some pupils may come to school without having had basic commodities like food. This, even with the best comprehensive learning environment, will affect pupil learning outcomes and is beyond the issue of target achievement by teachers.

Moreover, while CFS aim to support teachers, the demands of creating and managing such environments can lead to increased workload and burnout, particularly in teacher under-staffed areas like those of Kakamega County settings (Skaalvik, 2020). But even then, other than high workloads, teachers in many public schools in Kakamega County may not have the training or resources to implement child-friendly practices effectively, particularly in diverse or challenging classroom settings. Additionally, what is considered child-friendly may vary across cultures, and a lack of context-specific understanding may limit the effectiveness of certain practices. CFS often emphasize flexibility and personalization, which can conflict with standardized testing and rigid curricula. The society still values performance in National Examinations. This pressure on performance in standardized examinations such as KCPE may limit their effectiveness in systems that prioritize measurable outcomes (Hollweck and Lofthouse, 2021). Although efforts to create Child-Friendly Schools (CFS) are ongoing, the effect of the Child Friendly Schools environment created in Kakamega County on pupil learning outcomes remains unclear.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Kakamega County in Western Kenya. Kakamega County has a total of 899 public primary schools and 10,145 public primary school teachers employed by TSC (Kakamega County TSC Unit, 2019)**.** The study adopted a correlation research design with a mixed methods approach. This design and approach were preferred because the nature of the study that required both quantitative and qualitative data sources to appropriately get the results and establish the associations between target achievement and learning outcomes. Using multistage sampling, 82 schools were randomly selected from Kakamega County. The headteachers of the selected schools were approached and interviewed on achievement in the professional knowledge and practice PC target and the KCPE mean scores over the last six years (2018-2023). One teacher from each of the selected schools was also randomly selected and interviewed on the PC process. Another 4 key informants who included 2 Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs), 2 TSC Sub County Directors and the Kakamega County TSC Director were also selected purposefully for the study. These Officers are involved in the implementation of the teacher PC policy through regular appraisals of teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires and Key informant interview guides. The data Collection tools were pretested in the neighboring Lugari SuCounty and attained a reliability coefficient of 0.820. Quantitative data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics and Bivariate analysis (Pearson correlation) with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software program Version 27. The qualitative data collected was analyzed thematically using the N-Vivo version 14 computer software. The results of the study are presented in narratives, tables and figures. This research study was approved by the Department of Education administration and Planning of Masinde Muliro University and the researcher also obtained a research permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Sociodemographic factors of the Head teachers

The sociodemographic characteristics of the head teachers are summarized in Table 3

Table 3: Sociodemographic characteristics of Headteachers

	Variable	Count	Frequency
Type of school	Day	81	98.8%
	Boarding	1	1.2%

	Total	**82**	**100%**
Sex of Head teacher	Male	61	74.4%
	Female	21	25.6%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Age category	30-40 Years	8	9.8%
	41-50years	41	50.0%
	Above 50 years	33	40.2%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Experience as Head teacher	1-5 years	21	25.6%
	6-10 years	34	41.5%
	11-15 years	21	25.6%
	Above 16 years	6	7.3%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Category of school	Mixed	81	98.8
	Girls	1	1.2
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Period which school has done KCPE examination	5-9years	1	1.2%
	10-14 years	17	20.7%
	15-20 years	63	57.7%
	Above 20 years	1	1.2%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Understaffing level	3-5 Teachers	54	65.9%
	More than 5 teachers	28	34.1%
	Total	**82**	**100%**

It was observed from Table 4.1 that majority (81) 98.8% of the public primary schools in the study were day schools**.** Most (61)74.4% of the head teachers were male. The age of the head teachers ranged from 36 years to 59 years with a mean of 47.84 years and a standard deviation of ±5.821. A majority (61) 74.3% of the head teachers had more than five years' experience as head teachers. A majority (81) 98.8% of the public schools sampled were mixed primary schools (the learners were both boys and girls) with a majority (81) 98.8% of the schools having done KCPE examinations for a period of over 10 years.

The number of male teaching staff in the schools ranged from 6 to 16 with a mean of 10. The number of female teaching staff in the schools ranged from 5 to 13 with a mean at 8 female teachers. The total number of TSC teaching staff per school ranged from 14 to 27 with a mean at 18 teachers per school. Most (54) 65.9% of the schools were understaffed, lacking up to 5 teachers as per the Curriculum Based Establishment (CBE).

Sociodemographic factors of teachers

The sociodemographic characteristics of the teachers are summarized in Table 4

Table 4: Sociodemographic characteristics of teachers

	Variable	Count	Frequency
Type of school	Day	81	98.8%
	Boarding	1	1.2%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Sex of the teacher	Male	50	61%
	Female	32	39%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Age category	30-40 Years	8	9.8%
	41-50years	41	50.0%
	Above 50 years	33	40.2%
	Total	**82**	**100%**
Experience as a teacher	1-5 years	6	7.3%
	6-10 years	19	23.2%
	11-15 years	9	10.9%
	Above 16 years	48	58.5%
	Total	**82**	**100%**

It was observed from Table 4 that most (50) 61% of the teachers were male. The age of the teachers ranged from 28 years to 56 years with a mean of 42.65 years and a standard deviation of ±8.298. The teachers experience ranged from 4 years to 32 years with a mean of 16 years. More than half (48) 58.5% of the teachers had more than 16 years of experience in the teaching service.

Sociodemographic characteristics of the Key informants

Five Key informants participated in the study. They included the Kakamega County TSC director, One Sub-County TSC Director and two Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs). The age range of the Key informants ranged from 41years to 54 years. All the Key informants had over 6 years' experience in their duties of teacher management. They were selected for the study because of their knowledge and experience on the requirements of teachers PC and also because they are involved in regular teacher PC appraisals. Data from the Key informants has been triangulated with quantitative data from the headteachers and teachers to arrive at the findings of this study.

Mean Scores of comprehensive learning environment and learning outcomes (2018-2023)

The mean scores of annual achievements in comprehensive learning environment and, the learning outcomes of academic achievement, completion rates and retention rates over the six-year period (2018-2023) were first computed. The results are summarized in the Table 5.

Table 5: Mean scores of comprehensive learning environment PC target, the learning outcomes (2018-2023)

	Mean scores			
Year	**Comprehensive learning environment PC target**	**KCPE scores**	**Retention Rates**	**Completion rates**
2018	**72.78**	263.87	75.20	82.60

2019	**73.61**	272.62	81.40	84.50
2020	**76.78**	275.58	83.60	81.40
2021	**75.93**	281.09	81.40	84.60
2022	**74.79**	283.83	83.30	83.20
2023	**73.59**	288.70	82.70	84.10

From Table 5, it was observed that only the variable of KCPE scores among the learning outcomes increased steadily from 2018 to 2023 while the other learning outcomes kept varying.

Comprehensive learning environment PC target scores achievement effect on learning outcomes

In the Comprehensive Learning Environment target, the lowest annual score was in the year 2018 (65%) while the year 2020 had the highest score (89%). Further analysis was carried out to establish if the means of the Comprehensive Learning Environment target achievement scores were significantly different using ANOVA. The means of scores achieved by teachers in Comprehensive Learning Environment target were significantly different ($F=10.426$, p-value <0.001). More than half (53.7%) of the comprehensive learning environment target scores achieved by teachers were in the category of poor. Moreover, the association between Headteacher age category and achievement in the comprehensive learning environment target scores is not statistically significant ($P>0.05$). The association between Headteacher years of service and achievement in the comprehensive learning environment target scores is not statistically significant ($P>0.05$). There was no statistically significant association between total number of teachers in school and achievement in the PC comprehensive learning environment target scores. There was no statistically significant association between understaffing and achievement in the PC comprehensive learning environment target scores. Key informants' opinion was that it was difficult to attain an optimum comprehensive learning environment in schools; it was also difficult to evaluate some aspects of the comprehensive learning environment. The major constraints to achieving high scores in this target were time, heavy workloads and financial constraints

The study used Pearsons's correlation to establish the association between the Comprehensive learning environment PC target scores achievement and academic achievement. The results are summarized in Table 6.

Table 6: Association between Comprehensive learning environment PC target scores achievement and academic achievement

	Comprehensive learning environment PC	**KCPE Performance**
Pearson Correlation	1	.295
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.540
N	6	6

There was a weak positive correlation between teachers' comprehensive learning target achievement and KCPE performance ($r = 0.295$), this relationship is not statistically significant ($p = 0.540$).

Multiple linear regression between Comprehensive Learning environment and KCPE performance was conducted. The results are as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.295	0.087	-0.131	7.78

Table 7 shows that the regression model was not statistically significant, F (1,4) = 0.707, p = .540, and explained only 8.7% of the variance in KCPE performance (R^2 = .087; Adjusted R^2 = -0.131).

The coefficient for CLE target achievement was not significant (β = .295, p = .540). This indicates that while a positive relationship exists, it is weak and lacks statistical significance, suggesting that other factors outside CLE target scores may more strongly influence learners' KCPE outcomes.

Comprehensive learning environment PC and pupil retention rates

Table 8: Association between Comprehensive learning environment PC target scores achievement and pupil retention rates

	Comprehensive learning environment PC	**Retention rates**
Pearson Correlation	1	.630
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.180
N	6	6

There is a moderate positive relationship between teachers' comprehensive learning target achievement and pupil retention rates; however, this relationship lacks statistical significance p= 0.180.

Multiple linear regression between the Comprehensive Learning environment and retention rates was conducted. The results are as shown in Table 9.

Table 9: Model Summary

Model	**R**	**R Square**	**Adjusted R Square**	**Std. Error of the Estimate**
1	0.630	0.397	0.247	2.942

From Table 9, it was observed that a moderate positive relationship, with R = .630 and R^2 = .397, suggesting that 39.7% of the variability in retention rates could be explained by CLE scores. However, the model was not statistically significant, F(1,4) = 4.216, p = .180, and the CLE score was not a significant predictor (β = .630, p = .180). These results imply that while there is a moderate relationship between CLE target achievement and pupil retention, other factors (such as staffing levels, school resources, or home environment) may play a more critical role in influencing retention outcomes.

Comprehensive learning environment PC and Pupil Completion rates

The study sought to establish the association between a Comprehensive learning environment and school completion rates. The results are presented in Table10

Table 10: Comprehensive learning environment PC and Pupil Completion rates

	Comprehensive learning environment PC	**Completion rates**
Pearson Correlation	1	.326
Sig. (2-tailed)	-	.528
N	6	6

There was some degree of association between teachers achieving their comprehensive learning targets and pupil completion rates; however, it is not strong enough to imply causation. The high p-value (0.528) indicates that

this observed relationship is not statistically significant

Multiple linear regression between the Comprehensive Learning environment and pupils' completion rates was conducted. The results are as shown in Table 11.

Table 11: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.326	0.106	-0.110	1.89

The results of Table 11 showed a weak positive association ($R = .326$, $R^2 = .106$), with CLE scores explaining only 10.6% of the variance in completion rates. The model was not statistically significant, $F(1,4) = 0.994$, $p = .528$, and the CLE target score was not a significant predictor ($\beta = .326$, $p = .528$).

These findings indicate that CLE target achievement alone does not meaningfully predict school completion rates. The teachers interviewed in the study supported this view.As suggested in the qualitative data, challenges such as large class sizes, understaffing, and limited capacity to evaluate holistic learner needs may explain this weak relationship.

The key informants and teachers interviewed in this study explained that it was difficult to attain an optimum comprehensive learning environment in schools due to many factors. The County Director of TSC had this to say:

'Attaining a comprehensive learning environment in the primary schools in Kakamega county is a big challenge because of understaffing. With the current shortages of teachers, the teachers are overworked and may not fulfil the different aspects of the comprehensive learning environment. Some aspects like the psychological care of learners are difficult to attain in such circumstances'- (TSC County Director,2023).

The Curriculum Support Officers and some Head teachers said it was difficult to evaluate some aspects of the comprehensive learning environment. One Curriculum Support officer said this:

'It may not be possible to evaluate the holistic approach to learning as aspired by the TPAD tool. Some aspects, such as pupils' emotional well-being, are missing from the evaluation tool. Some aspects would require that all teachers be trained to help pupils learn well' (Curriculum Support Officer, 2023). Head teachers supported this observation'.

This study sought to establish the effect of Teachers' achievement in Comprehensive learning environment PC target on pupils' learning outcomes. A comprehensive learning environment refers to a holistic approach to classroom conditions that support the physical, emotional, and intellectual development of students. This objective sought to establish the association between teachers' achievement of a comprehensive learning environment and the subsequent effect on pupil learning outcomes.

From the results of the study, the association between teachers' achievement in Comprehensive Learning Environment performance contract targets and pupils' learning outcomes, the study found no significant correlations with key indicators of learning outcomes. The findings indicated a Pearson correlation coefficient of r=0.295 for KCPE examination performance, r=0.630 for retention rates, and r=0.326 for completion rates, none of which were statistically significant.

The absence of a significant correlation between teachers' achievements in comprehensive learning environment targets and pupils' KCPE examination performance suggests that other factors may play a more critical role in influencing academic achievement. These findings differ from findings of a study by Kamoet and Mbirithi (2024) in which they found that the learning environment improved the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations (KCSE) performance in Mombasa County in Kenya. However, Kamoet and Mbirithi study looked

at a small part of the learning environment, the classroom environment. The findings of this study corroborate with findings from related studies that emphasize the complexity of educational success. For example, research has shown that while teacher qualifications and training are important, the direct impact on student achievement can be moderated by classroom dynamics, teaching methods, and student engagement levels.

The correlation of r=0.630 for retention rates, despite being higher than other correlations, still did not reach significance. This indicates that while there is some relationship, it is not strong enough to assert a definitive association. Studies have highlighted that pupil retention is influenced by various factors beyond teacher provision of a comprehensive learning environment, including home environment and school resources (Wanjiku et al,2024). There is a strong association between a comprehensive learning environment and pupil retention rates in schools. Elements such as pupil engagement (cognitive, emotional, behavioural), teacher-pupil relationships, peer interactions, physical classroom design, and support for emotional well-being all contribute significantly to whether students choose to remain enrolled or drop out. A study by Qvortrup and Lykkegaard (2022) focusing on the learning environment found that supportive and engaging classroom settings foster greater student participation and commitment, which are essential for retention and completion rates. Qvortrup and Lykkegaard (2022) research concluded that effective teaching practices, such as interactive and student-centered approaches, contribute to higher levels of student engagement and satisfaction. These practices not only improve academic performance but also encourage students to stay enrolled and to complete their studies. Besides, the success of teachers in achieving Comprehensive Learning Environment and professional competency targets also depends on strong school leadership, which may not always be present in the schools in Kakamega County. Leadership, both at the school and the community is necessary to provide resources to support the teachers to attain the Comprehensive Learning Environment..

While research suggests a strong link between comprehensive learning environments, and pupil learning outcomes, there are several challenges that may hinder the attainment of the desired learning outcomes. Teachers in the current study often face time limitations and insufficient resources to fully implement effective teaching strategies or create comprehensive learning environment. In the current study, teachers in most primary schools were handling more than 60 learners in a class. Almost all the teachers had heavy teaching loads of lessons because of the teacher understaffing in the schools. Even with a Comprehensive Learning Environment, high levels of workload and lack of support can lead to teacher burnout, negatively affecting teaching quality and, subsequently, pupil learning outcomes. Heavy workloads do not give room for the teachers to create a supportive, inclusive, and engaging atmosphere where children feel valued, respected, and motivated to learn in the Comprehensive Learning Environment because of the burnout effect (Skaalvik and Skaalvik ,2020).

The TPAD appraisal tool being used to assess the achievement in the Comprehensive Learning Environment is deficient as in appraisal of other aspects of the Teacher PC process (Wanjiku et al, 2024). The Key elements in the comprehensive learning environment include physical safety, inclusivity, emotional support, teacher-student relationships, and active learning approaches which are all crucial in creating an environment that fosters student success (Kamoet and Mbirithi,2024). Aspects like emotional support, learners feeling valued are psychological aspects which are subjective. The TPAD tool lacks aspects assessment of emotional support, teacher-student relationships, and active learning approaches.

CONCLUSION

Teachers' achievement in the Comprehensive Learning Environment target had no effect on learning outcomes of pupils in public primary schools in Kakamega County.

RECOMMENDATION

The government should provide adequate resources for effective implementation of the Comprehensive Learning Environment in Public primary schools

REFERENCES

1. Amadi, U. V., & Nwogu, U. J. (2023). The impact of funding on educational development in

Nigeria. Journal of Education in Developing Areas, 31(3), 61-82.
2. Boruett, H. C., Ronoh, A., Kisirikoi, F., & Dimba, M. (2021). Employees' Attitude and Implementation of Performance Appraisal System in the Ministry of Education in Nairobi City County, Kenya.
3. Camilleri, M. A. (2021). Using the balanced scorecard as a performance management tool in higher education. Management in Education, 35(1), 10-21.
4. Chirchir, K. M., & Letangule, S. (2021). The Influence of Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development Implementation on the Secondary Students' Examination Scores in Public Schools in Kenya. European Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 2(6), 34–44. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2021.2.6.199
5. Cobanoglu, F., & Sevim, S. (2019). Child-friendly schools: An assessment of kindergartens. International Journal of Educational Methodology, 5(4), 637-650.
6. Darling-Hammond, L., Wechsler, M. E., Levin, S., & Tozer, S. (2022). Developing Effective Principals: What Kind of Learning Matters?. Learning Policy Institute.
7. Duoblienė, L., Kaire, S., & Vaitekaitis, J. (2023). Education for the future: applying concepts from the new materialist discourse to UNESCO and OECD publications. The Journal of Environmental Education, 54(3), 213-224.
8. Government of Kenya- GOK. (2012). Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) Evaluation Report 2005–2010. Government Printer.
9. Government of Kenya- GOK, (2012). Kenya: Facts and figures 2012. Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics.
10. Hallinger P., Heck, R. H., & Murphy, J. (2014). Teacher evaluation and school improvement: an analysis of the evidence. Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability, 26(1), 5–28.
11. Hood, C. (2012). Public management by numbers as a performance-enhancing drug: two Hypotheses. Public Administration Review, 72(s1), S85-S92.
12. Kagema, J., and Irungu, C. (2018). An analysis of teacher performance appraisals and their influence on teacher performance in secondary schools in Kenya. International Journal of Education, 11(1), 93-98.
13. Kamoet, P. E., and Mbirithi, D.M. (2024). Effect of classroom environment on the academic achievement of secondary school students in Mombasa County, Kenya. International academic journal of social sciences and education, 2(3), 345-363.
14. Nthenge, M. (2017). The Basic Education Act of 2013 as a tool for advancing early childhood development and education for children with disabilities in Kenya. African Disability Rts. YB, 5, 3.
15. Nyongesa, W. J., & van der Westhuizen, J. (2023). The effect of performance contracting on public service delivery of employees in Huduma Centres in Western Kenya. African Journal of Inter/Multidisciplinary Studies, 5(1), 1-16.
16. Odhiambo, K. O., Murira, F. N., & Ogeno, J. O. (2023). Effect of Recognition and Appreciation on Primary School Teachers' Job Performance in Kisumu County, Kenya. Journal of African Interdisciplinary Studies, 7(7), 5-20.
17. Okech, T. C. (2017). Impact of performance contracting on efficiency in service delivery in the public sector. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, 5(5), 198-213.
18. Qvortrup A. & Lykkegaard E. (2022). Study environment factors associated with retention in higher education. Higher Education Pedagogies, 7:1, 37-64
19. Skaalvik, E. M., & Skaalvik, S. (2020). Teacher burnout: relations between dimensions of burnout, perceived school context, job satisfaction and motivation for teaching. A longitudinal study. Teachers and Teaching, 26(7-8), 602-616.
20. Teachers Service Commission - TSC (2017). A Report on the Implementation of the PC/TPAD, by CSOs & CDs KTIC/TPAD/V.1/6(62)TSC (2017), Strengthening of PC & TPAD at Institutional Level, Circular No.14/ADM/192A/Vol.IX TSC Annual Report (2015-2016)
21. Teachers Service Commission - TSC (2017). A Report on the Implementation of the PC/TPAD, by CSOs & CDs KTIC/TPAD/V.1/6(62)
22. Teachers Service Commission - TSC (2017). Strengthening of PC & TPAD at Institutional Level, Circular No.14/ADM/192A/Vol. IX
23. Teachers Service Commission - TSC Unit, Kakamega county (2019). KCPE performance by

Kakamega primary schools.
24. Teachers Service Commission - TSC Unit, Kakamega county (2019). The distribution of Schools in Kakamega Sub-Counties.
25. Teachers Service Commission - TSC. (2017). Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) Manual. Teachers Service Commission.
26. Wanjiku, S. W., Ndichu, F. M., & Andafu, E. M. (2024). A Critique of the Teachers' Performance Appraisal and Development Tool of Evaluation in Kenya with Reference to the Socratic Pedagogy. European Journal of Education and Pedagogy, 5(3), 74–81. https://doi.org/10.24018/ejedu.2024.5.3.846
27. Xiao, E., Sun, M., Lv, K., Zhu, X., & Jia, W. (2023). Development and validation of child-friendly school environment questionnaire from Chinese culture. Frontiers in Psychology, *14*, 1288085.