

Influence of Principals' Promotion of staff professional development on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya

Benjamin K.Ndambuki¹, Dr.Gideon M.Kasivu (Ed.D)², Dr.Rose.Mwanza (PhD)³

¹ PhD Candidate: South Eastern Kenya University, Kenya

² Lecturer, Department of Educational Administration and Planning,
South Eastern Kenya University, Kenya

(Corresponding Author)

³ Lecturer, Department of Educational Administration and Planning, South Eastern Kenya University, Kenya

Abstract: Performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination (KCSE) in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya has consistently been on the decline over years. Studies have not identified any particular cause to this trend. Principals' being heads of academic issues in the schools have a responsibility to correct this trend through among other ways, promotion of staff professional development in their respective schools. This down trend in KCSE performance created the need for this study. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' promotion of staff professional development on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The hypothesis for the study was that there is no statistically significant relationship between principals' promotion of staff professional development and KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The study employed mixed methods research design. The target population was all principals and teachers of public secondary schools in Makueni County. The study employed stratified sampling technique for schools, equal allocation sampling technique for both principals and teachers for quantitative phase while maximal variation sampling was used for qualitative phase. Means, percentage and frequencies were used to determine the distribution of variables under study among the respondents and presented in frequency tables. Pearson correlation coefficient was used to test the relationship between principals' promotion of staff professional development and KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County. The results for quantitative phase indicated that the coefficient of correlation (r) for the objective was 0.64 at significance level of 0.03. Principals interviewed attested that they promoted and encouraged staff professional development in their schools. The study concluded that principals of public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya embraced a variety of staff professional development strategies that positively influenced KCSE performance. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission to come up with formal and fully funded teacher-capacity –building programmes to equip teachers with new skills, methodologies and pedagogical skills since education is dynamic.

Key words: Staff professional development, Promotion of staff professional development, teacher capacity-building and teacher training.

Date of Submission: 06-04-2020

Date of Acceptance: 19-05-2020

I. Introduction

Globally many countries make high financial allocation to the development of the education sector. World Education Conventions and instruments such as Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Education For All (EFA) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) advocate for provision of quality education. A country's level of education is one of the key indicators of its level of development. Therefore, imparting relevant skills to the work force increase organizational productivity. Staff professional development refers to activities and programmes formal or informal designed to develop and enhance skills and competences for improved performance (Hallinger 2012). It is therefore the responsibility of educational managers to provide quality professional development to their teachers. One of the practices of educational leadership is providing and developing a climate of professional development amongst the members of staff.

According to Payne and Wolfson (2000), there are five components of the principal's role in establishing, providing and supporting professional development in learning institutions. The principal serves as a role model

for continued learning, inspire others, sets high expectations for lifelong learning, motivates and supports the staff professional development. Failure of the principal to perform these key functions creates an obstacle that deters growth and professional development amongst the members of staff. Teachers are required to go beyond their teaching subjects to facilitate the holistic development of the learners and that all stakeholders should endeavor to enhance teachers' performance through training (Muema, Kasivu and Mwanza (2019). DuFour (2004) and Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2005) content that educational leadership plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the staff professional development is designed to achieve the objective of high levels of learning for students. In view of this, principals should play a key role as staff professional developers. Professional development involves the career-long processes and related systems and policies designed to enable educators (teachers, administrators and supervisors) to acquire, broaden and deepen their knowledge, skills and commitment in order to effectively assist students perform well in their examinations. According to Mutuku (2015), the teacher training keep the teachers in touch with the current educational thinking in order to maintain good practice and raise standards of teaching. Mutuku (2015) further asserts that these skills promote the performance of the teacher, the teacher is able to transmit the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes to the learners in the learning process hence attainment of quality education by learners. Mutisya, Mwanja and Mulwa (2017) emphasize on training of principals and teachers to meet the right threshold for provision of quality education.

Statement of the Problem

Teachers' professional development is regarded as a key contribution to enhancing quality education. The Government of Kenya allocates high budgetary share of its national annual budget to the education sector in an attempt to provide teachers professional development in order to improve pedagogical skills amongst the teachers. However, in spite of these efforts by the Government, the performance of students in KCSE in Kenya has progressively continued to decline. In Makueni County KCSE declined from mean score of 5.070 in 2016 to 3.68 in 2019 recording a 1.39 margin drop. The Government of Kenya has put in place mitigation measures in an attempt to change this trend by training heads secondary schools on strategic planning and institutional management by Kenya Education Management Institute. Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has initiated Performance Contracting (PC) for principals and Teacher Performance, Appraisal for teachers, enhancing teacher curriculum supervision and staff professional development. All these strategies have been undertaken in order to improve the performance of teachers in their teaching for better learner outcomes in examinations. Despite all these efforts, KCSE performance has been declining consistently in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. There are insufficient empirical studies on the role of the principal in promoting staff professional development in their schools. This study therefore investigated the role of principals in promoting staff professional development and their influence on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

Purpose of the Study.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of principals' promotion of staff professional development on students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

Specific Objective of the Study

To determine the influence of principals' promotion of staff professional development on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

Hypothesis of the study

There is no statistically significant relationship between principals' promotion of staff professional development and students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya.

II. Review of Related Literature

Education is regarded as a vehicle for human development. This is well supported by evidence showing that increased educational attainment has positive correlations with poverty reduction, economic growth, health improvements and reductions in child mortality rate (Locke & Latham, 2013). According to UNESCO (2015), countries and communities that promote quality education have experienced enormous development. Researches have established significant relationship between staff training, job commitment and productivity. A study done by Xiao (2014) in China on instructional leadership established that teacher professional development led to quality teaching and teacher competency in the classroom thus enhanced learner outcomes. Related studies by

Allison (2013) assert that effective professional development is key to better students' performance in examinations. The study further assert that professional development is process that exposes teachers to various pedagogical strategies that improve classroom teaching for improved learner performance in examinations . A study done by Kaindi, Kimiti and Kasivu (2019) on Influence of the Curriculum Support Materials Procured Through Free Secondary Education Tuition Fund and Quality of Curriculum Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County quoted siringi who asserted, "access to secondary education alone is not sufficient to provide the quality skilled human resource necessary for our country's sustainable development. This can only be achieved by ensuring that the schools are properly equipped with highly qualified human resource that can promote provision of quality education. Principals are therefore required to provide capacity building training to their teachers to enhance their competence in performance.

A study by Melisa and Kaylan (2015) in USA established a significant relationship between teacher professional development and students' achievement. Melisa and Kaylan (2015) concluded that students' academic achievement would remain stagnant unless professional development was addressed as the key to students' success in acquisition of skills and attitudes in the classroom .The scholars further assert that staff professional development can be done within the school by pairing teachers who are weaker in certain areas with those who are stronger and then work together to set goals and deepen their practices around particular skills.

Conclusions made by Yusuf, Muhammed and Kazeen (2014) in their study on management of leadership styles in Nigeria established that managers must use different leadership styles in changing school situation by taking into account the effective management of followers to increase organizational performance and effectiveness. This is done by planning and implementing staff capacity – building programmes in the school level to equip teachers with necessary and up- to date skills and competences for learner achievement .The principal should ensure that funds for teacher capacity building are factored in the school annual budget , update teachers on such programmes and facilitate their attendance.

These research findings are in consistent with an astudy done by Wamulla (2013) in Kenya on academic performance in private schools who reported that there is a significant correlation between capacity-building and learners performance . Teachers who have been inducted through staff capacity development have exhibited the requisite skills and competences required for effective teaching that enhance learner outcomes in examinations. Principals should therefore ensure that teachers attend capacity building, workshops and trainings.

III. Research Methodology.

The study employed mixed methods research design. The study first conducted quantitative research, collected data, analyzed the results and then build on the results to explain them in more details with qualitative research. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003), the rationale for adoption of mixed methods research design was to draw on the strengths while minimizing the weaknesses of both quantitative and qualitative research methods within a single study. The quantitative phase of the study used questionnaires to collect data while the qualitative approach of the study collected information from the principals through interviews. The targeted population was 392 principals and 3364 teachers. Out of these, 386 principals participated in quantitative phase while 6 participated in the qualitative phase. Sampling in quantitative phase was done first followed by qualitative phase. A sample of 108 principals and 357 teachers participated in quantitative phase while 6 principals were sampled in the qualitative phase. In the quantitative phase, the study employed stratified sampling method by stratifying the schools into four categories namely; National, Extra-County, County and Sub – County schools. Maximal variation technique was used to select respondents in the qualitative phase of the study. The validity of the research instruments was determined by a pilot study of the survey instruments while the reliability of the instruments was done by test – retest method

IV. Research Findings And Discussion

The objective of this study was to determine the influence of principals' promotion of staff professional development on KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. Both principals and teachers were asked to respond to structured questions that provided information that helped to establish the extent to which principals' promotion of staff professional development influence students' performance of KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. Information provided on this objective were represented in table 1.2

Table 1.2. Teachers and Principals' Responses on Principals' Promotion of Staff Professional Development on KCSE Performance.

N = 345 Teachers

N= 108 Principals

Statements	N = 345 Teachers								N= 108 Principals							
	Teachers								Principals							
	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%	SA F	%	A F	%	D F	%	SD F	%
Principal implements staff Development programs in the school to improve their performance	245	71.0	100	29.0	0	0	0	0	83	79.9	17	16.2	1	1.0	4	3.8
Principal encourages teachers to attend courses to improve their professionalism	243	70.4	97	28.1	1	0.3	4	1.2	83	78.3	19	17.9	0	0	4	3.8
Principal plans workshops and internal training To meet instructional needs of teachers	224	65.1	110	32.0	6	1.8	4	1.2	86	80.4	15	14.2	0	0	5	4.7
Principal ensure that HOD's in the school hold meetings with teachers to share information From courses attended to enhance classroom Teaching	227	66.0	108	31.4	6	1.8	3	0.9	91	85.0	10	9.4	1	0.9	4	3.8
Principal ensure that funds for staff professional development are allocated in the school annual budget.	227	65.8	107	31.0	7	2.1	4	1.2	84	74.2	18	17	0	0	4	3.8

Table 1.2 represents findings provided by teachers and principals indicating the extent to which principals' promotion of staff professional development influence KCSE performance in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya. It shows the efforts and strategies done by the school principal in promotion of staff professional development and the influence on students' performance at KCSE examinations in their schools. The information shown in Table 1.2 indicated that majority of both teachers and principals at 71.0% and 79.9% strongly agreed that principals implement staff professional development programs in the school to improve classroom practices while 29.0% of teachers and 16.2% of principals agreed to the statement None of the teachers disagreed and strongly disagreed while 1.0% and 3.8% of principals disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that principal implements staff development programs in the school to improve their performance.

The study findings established that majority of principals implement staff development programs in their schools to improve classroom practices. Similarly, considerable number of teachers and principals agreed to the statement that principal encourages teachers to attend courses to improve their professionalism at 29.0% and 16.2% respectively. A negligible percentage of both teachers and principals disagreed with the statement while 1.2% and 3.8% of both teachers and principals strongly disagreed. From these findings, it shows that principals of public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya encourage and support their teachers to attend courses to improve their professionalism that contribute to improvement in KCSE performance.

The third statement sought to establish whether principals plan workshops and internal training to meet instructional needs of their teachers. A very high percentage (80.4%) of principals strongly agreed to the statement, 14.2% agreed, none disagreed while 4.7% strongly disagreed. On the same statement, 65.1% of teachers strongly agreed, 32.0% agreed, 1.8% disagreed while 1.2% strongly disagreed. The findings imply that majority of principals in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya highly support the idea of staff professional development for their teachers.

The fourth statement sought the opinion of both teachers and principals on whether principals ensure that HOD's hold meetings with teachers to share information from courses attended to enhance classroom teaching. Majority of teachers and principals at 66.0% and 85.0% respectively strongly agreed to the statement, 32.0% and 14.2% agreed while very few disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement.

The last statement sought the opinion of both teachers and principals on whether the principal ensure that funds for staff professional development are allocated in the school annual budget where 65.8% and 79.2% of both teachers and principals strongly agreed to the statement. Teachers agreed at 31.0% while principals did at 17.0% while both strongly disagreed at 1.2% and 3.8% respectively.

The findings reveal that principals support staff professional development in their schools by ensuring that funds are made available in the school annual budget for capacity- building. These study findings imply that principals of public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya greatly support and promote the idea of staff professional development for their teachers. These research findings are in consonance with a study done by Wamulla (2013) in Kenya on academic performance in private schools who reported a significant correlation between capacity-building and learners performance.

To test the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between principals' promotion of staff professional development and students' performance in KCSE in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya, a simple regression test was carried out between the responses on principals' promotion of staff professional development and KCSE performance. This input was correlated with the mean scores of KCSE performance for the period under study. A coefficient of correlation (r) and alpha levels of the significance were determined which established the strength and the significance of the correlation. The results were presented in Table 1.3

Table 1.3 Regression Test between Principals' promotion of staff professional development and students KCSE performance

Independent variable (Constant predictor)	Dependent variable	(r)	Sig. (b)
Principals' promotion of staff professional development	KCSE performance	0.64	
Pearson Chi Test			0.03

Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed) df= 1

(a) Constant predictor: Principals' promotion of staff professional development

(b) Dependent Variable: KCSE performance

Table 1.3 Shows that the coefficient of correlation (r) for principals' promotion staff professional development was 0.64 depicting a strong positive relationship between principals' promotion of staff professional development and students' KCSE performance. The output also revealed that the significance level of principals' promotion of professional development and students' KCSE performance was high at alpha level 0.03, a value lower than alpha 0.05 showing a high significant influence of principal's promotion of staff professional development and students' KCSE performance. The relationship implied that principals' promotion of staff professional development resulted to high level of students' KCSE performance in Makueni County, Kenya. These findings concur with conclusions of the study done by Yusuf, Muhammed and Kazeen (2014) on management of leadership styles in Nigeria that established that managers plan and implementing staff capacity – building programmes in the school level to equip teachers with necessary and up- to date skills and competences for learner achievement.

In the qualitative phase, principals were asked questions related to their roles in promoting staff professional development in their schools. One principal was asked the roles he played in promoting staff professional development in his school upon which he said;

“Opportunities are given to teachers for advancement. Within the school, principal organize workshops and trainings for teachers through the HOD's and national examiners. There is team teaching and teacher lesson observation programme that identify knowledge and methodology gaps that are plugged for better academic performance”.

The study findings concur with revelations by Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005), who observed that workshops, in-service, internal and external trainings and availability of funds lead to better students' academic performance. Further, principals are staff professional developers, facilitators and implementers of school programmes. In Kenya Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has introduced Teacher Professional

Development (TPD) programmes such as Performance Contracting (PC) and Teacher Performance Appraisal Development (TPAD) to identify teacher professional gaps and measures to address them.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study findings have revealed a significant positive relationship between staff professional development in students KCSE performance public secondary schools and KCSE performance in Makueni County, Kenya. The study established that both principals and teachers in public secondary schools in Makueni County, Kenya fully support the idea of staff professional development for it is a key factor for better KCSE performance.

The study recommends that the Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education and Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and all other education stakeholders embrace and support staff professional development to enhance learner performance in KCSE. Training of both principals and teachers will equip them with knowledge and skills required in curriculum delivery in schools for better learner performance.

References

- [1]. Allison, G. (2013). *Effective professional Development in Era of High Stakes Accountability*. Washington. Centre for Public Education.
- [2]. DuFour, R. (2002). "The learning –centered Principal". *Educational leadership* 59, (8) 12-15.
- [3]. Hallinger, P. (2012). *School leadership that makes a difference: Lessons from 30 years of International Research*. Rome. Ministry of Education.
- [4]. Kaindi R.M., Kimiti P., Kasivu G.M. (2019) Influence of the Curriculum Support Materials Procured Through Free Secondary Education Tuition Fund and Quality of Curriculum
- [5]. Implementation in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County. *Journal of Education and Practice* www.iiste.org ISSN 2222-1735 (Paper) ISSN 2222-288X (Online) Vol.10, No.32, 2019
- [6]. Locke, E. A. & Latham, G.P. (2013). *New Developments in Goal Setting and Task performance*. New York. Routledge.
- [7]. Melissa, T. & Kaylan, C. (2015). Is Effective Teacher Professional Development just a "Mirage?" *Journal on Education Policy Programme*. New America.
- [8]. Muema A, Kasivu, G. M. & Mwanza R (2019). Influence of Motivation on Teachers' Involvement in Co-Curricular Activities in Public Secondary Schools in Matungulu Sub County, Machakos County, Kenya. *International Journal of Education and Research*. ISSN: 2411-5681. Vol. 7 & No.5 2019
- [9]. Mutisya, A.M., Mwanja, J.M., & Mulwa, D.M (2017) The Influence of Principal's Related Factors on ICT Intergration in the Management of Public Secondary Schools in Kitui County, Kenya. *Journal of Educational Policy and Entrepreneurial Research*, ISSN: 2408-770X (Print), ISSN : 2408-6231 (Online), Vol. 4, No. 1, pp. 13-24.
- [10]. Mutuku, K. (2015). *Kenya National Union of Teachers' initiatives influencing provision of quality education in primary schools in Machakos County, Kenya*. (Unpublished PhD thesis). The University of Nairobi.
- [11]. Payne, D.G. Wolfson, T. (2000). Teacher professional Development. The principal's critical role. *Research Article* <https://doi.org/a0.1177/019263650008461803>.
- [12]. Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C (eds). 2003. *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousand oaks, CA: Sage
- [13]. UNESCO, (2005). *Ensuring Access to Education for All*. Paris. UNESCO.
- [14]. Wamulla, O.J. (2013). *Factors Influencing academic performance in Kenya certificate of secondary Education in private schools in Westlands Division Nairobi, Kenya*. Project Report. University of Nairobi.
- [15]. Waters, T. Marzano, J. & McNulty, B. (2003). *Belanced leadership: What 30 years tell us about the effect of leadership on student attainment*. Denver: Mid-Continent Research for Educaiton and learning.
- [16]. Xiao, L.J (2014). *Principals' Instructional leadership: Fostering Teacher Professional Development*. Hong Kong. Hong Kong Institute of Education.
- [17]. Yusuf, M.O. Muhammad, U.D & Kazeem, A.O (2014). *Management of Leadership Style: an approach to organizational performance and effectiveness in Nigeria*. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science and Education*, 17-29.

Benjamin K. Ndambuki, et. al. "Influence of Principals' Promotion of staff professional development on students' performance in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) in Public Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya." *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 10(3), (2020): pp. 40-45.