



CHALLENGES INFLUENCING HEAD TEACHERS TRAINING IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LUGARI SUB COUNTY, KENYA

Pauline L. Indiazi

Kisii University, Kenya

Abstract:

This research was informed by the fact that the academic performance of public primary schools in Lugari Sub County have deteriorated over a period of time. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate challenges influencing head teachers training and its influence on academic performance of public primary schools. The study was conducted in selected public primary schools in Lugari Sub County. The study was guided by explanatory research design, 10 Head teachers and 224 teachers formed the study sample. The study used questionnaires and interview schedules as instrument of data collection. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings shows that the lack of monitoring and evaluation, high cost of training programmes, negative attitude towards training by some head teachers and heavy workload that head teachers were the challenges encountered. The study recommends that Ministry of Education should also put up strategies; to have head teachers get formal pre-service training on how to cope up with administrative challenges so that they can achieve better performance.

Keywords: administrative, support, early childhood education, academic performance

1. Introduction

According to Oluoch (2002), education is the process of acquiring and developing desired knowledge, skills and attitudes. The word process brings in the idea that education is a continuous activity that never ends (Njau, 2003). The word develop also shows that acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes is not for once but the acquisition of more and more knowledge, skills and attitudes is necessary so as to deepen and widen what has already been acquired. It is against this definition of education that the issue of headteacher in-service training is looked at. That the education of the headteacher does not end in the training but has to be continuous even after they are appointed as school heads. Since head teachers and teachers are the greatest potential asset to any organisation, the development of people and the creation of organisational conditions for full utilisation of their developed talents should be of the highest priority and concern to the governing body and the top management of any organisation

(Friday, 2016). Therefore, the development of the human resources assumes that the process is continuous and there is always room for improvement. It also assumes that circumstances change and hence the need to cope with the changes (National Policy on Education, 2014). In many developing countries, in-service training systems were introduced to retrain or upgrade teachers who were hastily recruited during the period of rapid expansion (Njau, 2004).

In-service training is compulsory in European countries. In Finland, teachers are required to devote three days in a year to in-service training. In New Zealand, in-service teacher education is the responsibility of the Board of trustees. The school boards have an operations grant, which includes the professional development of their teachers. In addition, the Ministry of Education directly funds the provision of some professional development and in-service training opportunities (Njau, 2014). In Kenya, the Education Act (2013) gives the mandate of maintaining standards in schools to the Inspectorate. As such, the inspectorate's mission of establishing, maintaining and improving educational standards can be achieved in one way through in-serving teachers. The other organ, which should provide in-service to head teachers in Kenya, is Education Management Institute (KEMI). With the new trends in the education, school heads have to keep abreast with the changes in the teaching methodologies, curriculum, administration and management of schools (Njau, 2003). The process of development of Human resource is continuous. With reference to Kenya's Education Act of 2013, an administrator is any person or body of persons responsible for the administration and management of a learning institution and/or school. The Act concludes in itself that head teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable and skilled to manage school affairs. The head teachers have only been put on in-service like KEMI which offers in-service for head teachers, deputy head teachers and senior teachers in school administration but does prepare teachers aspiring to be head teachers. The courses are offered mostly during April or August holidays for two weeks (Marondo, 2013). This course duration is too short to qualify head teachers in the administration sector. This should be done over a good period of time to better the administration sector in public primary schools.

1.1 Statement of the Study

Just like other organizations that are concerned with their staff development the study was to investigate the challenges that face in-servicing of headteachers as one method of staff development with the aim of improving academic performance of their schools. The study wanted to establish the difficulties encountered in-servicing of secondary school teachers in Lugari Sub County by not only the Ministry of Education but also and the school board of management.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Challenges that Head teachers Training on Administrative factors has on Head Teacher's Academic Achievement

The head teachers face a lot of administrative challenges that affect academic achievement in most primary schools in Lugari Sub-County. These challenges are based

on different administrative duties or issues of school head teachers such as human resource management, financial management, curriculum implementation, instruction material management, physical resource management, and institutional wholesome discipline. Financial management being the core issue in head teacher's administration, the head teacher needs to be very much informed in the financial administrative skills. The head teacher should be able to manage the cash inflow and outflow. Orloskey et al (2008) assert that financial administration determines the way the school is to be managed. The head teacher needs to prepare a budget and exercise both accounting and auditing of school accounts. The budget prepared must go in line with the school needs in accordance with the financial regulations. According to Anyango (2001) head teachers need to ensure the school budget is developed and implemented properly especially on procurement and investment. This means, if the head teachers have not been comprehensively trained on financial management and utilization of resources, they are likely to have a difficult time in drawing the school budget and accounting for expenditures.

MOEST (2005) notes that the major challenge in financial management is expanding its access at a relatively low cost while still improves its quality, Njenga (2004) states that parents being the main source of financing in schools, require proper accounting and auditing of the money provided to schools for development. Most teachers not having acquainted with the financial accounting and auditing, takes longer times to take their books of account for auditing by the Ministry of Education hence causing the delay in financial disbursement by the government and expenditure analysis data (Muasya, 2004). Through the training programme, head teachers and their deputies will develop the skills they need to create more holistic and meaningful performance planning, monitoring and evaluation at the school level. They will be able draw up and provide support supervision to the implementation of the term and annual school management plans, translate the annual plans into administrative indicators and targets, conduct management reviews and feedback sessions with their teachers, conduct meaningful management evaluations and make recommendations that are in line with staff expectations, school requirements and best practice. KESI has the ability and the effectiveness of providing the in-service courses in education and training in spite of some constraints.

Most physical facilities were adequate for in-service training. However as established from the sub-county office, there are no policies to make head teacher education and training mandatory. The manual contains the different training modules that all head teachers and their deputies will need to go through in order to understand the process. Kenya Education Management Capacity Assessment (KEMCA), (2008) said that the problem of leadership in education in Kenya is that it suffers from lack of commitment and the functional area of head teacher development. Quality assurance entails monitoring curriculum from the directorate of quality assurance and standards are expected to visit schools regularly, implementation in schools. Officers organize seminars for teachers among others. Despite the government's effort in strengthening the directorate, other challenges are: managing the TPADS has been very difficult but

the head teachers are meant to adjust by assigning different groups to different projects in public primary schools.

3.2 Empirical Studies

Njau (2003) study investigated whether there are any forms of in-service for the teachers and the value the teachers attach to in – service training. A total of fifteen (15) schools and 317 teachers from these schools were selected for study. Also targeted were education officers in various departments. The study revealed that in-service training for secondary schools in Nairobi Province is quite limited. Only 53.4% of teachers have been able to attend in-service training. The study also revealed that among the challenges or constraints hindering implementation of in-service training are lack of funds, time, poor management and poor co-ordination. This study concluded that the teachers are in need of in-service and the MOEST and individual schools should be more serious in addressing the issue of in- service amongst the secondary school teachers.

Marondo (2013) established the factors that influence head teachers competence in financial management, in public primary schools, Mbeere District Kenya. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The target population was 95 public primary school head teachers and 5 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standard Officers in the District. The findings led to the conclusion that majority (60%) of the head teacher had not attended even a single course in financial management. This implies that most of the Head teachers are managing the public funds /resources on trial and error muddling through and this is very dangerous as it may lead to wastage of resources and legal implications on the part of head teacher who may unintentionally mismanage the funds.

Eduwen (2016) conducted an overview of problems of in-service education of teachers in Nigeria. The researcher found out that in-service education programme was capital intensive and most of the participants were self-sponsored. As a result, many of them could not cope with exorbitant school fees and other incidental expenses for textbooks and personal upkeep. Another problem was that there were a lot of discrepancies in the approaches and techniques adopted by the different institutions involved in in-service education programmes which imply lack of uniformity in course content and methodology. Lastly, there was the problem of poor planning and organization whereby available activities for participants were impersonal and unrelated to their job settings in the classroom.

Auma (2014) study sought to determine the extent to which exposure to management training by KEMI, attendance of annual conferences and pursuit of higher education influences principals effectiveness in management of management of finances and human resources. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. It targeted all the 100 secondary schools in the county. Some of the challenges that principals faced in day to day school operation include high BOG drawings, fraud in their accounts department, salary delays for workers, lack of parents support,

collection of fees, incompetence of the accountants, rising food prices, delay in disbursement and inadequate funding.

Nkanata (2013) examined the administrative challenges that headteachers face which affected academic performance in the day secondary schools in Igoji East Division. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study targeted all the 17 headteachers, 325 teachers and 1700 students in the 17 day secondary schools in Igoji East Division. The study established that the major administrative challenges that influenced students' academic performance were: students' indiscipline, management of school finances and inadequate teaching/ learning materials and physical facilities. This undermined effectiveness of school administrators in ensuring there is smooth teaching and learning process in schools which eventually translated to poor academic performance among students.

Mutuva (2012) investigated the challenges that are faced by headteachers in managing the human resource in their schools and the impact the challenges have on teaching and learning in the schools. The research design for this study was descriptive survey. The target population for the study was all the forty five headteachers in Nzau District while the sampling design used was purposive and all the headteachers participated in the study. Headteachers (93.3%) said that in their school, induction took place for beginning teachers and the main problem was lack of time due to work overload. The challenge affecting in-servicing and developing teachers, were resistance to change, lacked commitment towards learning and training.

Mbesa (2016) study was to establish the influence of KEMI principals' diploma in education management program on management practices of public secondary schools in Matungulu Sub County, Kenya. The sample size for the study constituted 26 principals and 213 teachers who were randomly sampled. The study concluded that KEMI training by the principals has a significant influence on management practices (financial management, human resource management, curriculum implementation and project planning implementation) by principals in public schools in Matungulu Sub-county.

Mbugua, Miriti, Muthaa and Reche (2012) study sought to establish the roles of deputy head teachers, the challenges they face in school administration and the strategies they use to address them. The target population was 260 subjects from 65 public secondary schools in Imenti South District. The study established that deputy head teachers are faced with challenges as they perform their duties. These include lack of adequate training, unclear guidelines on their specific roles in administration of the school, poor relationship with head teacher and teachers, and poor community relations resulting mainly from local politics.

Altun (2011) elaborate the practices of INSET (in-service education and training) activities based on two different countries. The study was based on analysis of literature search. Altun found out that teachers' continuing professional development was a crucial element in ensuring the quality of what children experience through their education. As the teachers involved and gained knowledge, skills and experience, their

increased confidence and expertise subsequently affects all children within their classrooms.

3.3 Materials and Methods

The researcher combined qualitative and quantitative approaches as its methodology. An explanatory research design was used. The research was carried out in public primary schools in Lugari Sub-County in Kakamega County. The targeted population was derived from 45 schools, 45 head teachers and 746 teachers. The researcher employed random sampling and purposive techniques to select respondents who participated in the research. The research used interview guide and questionnaires to collect data. The research instruments were tested for validity and reliability. The analysis of data collected from the field was conducted using descriptive statistics.

4. Results

The objective of this research was to determine the challenges that influenced the training of headteachers in schools. This was because the low application of instructional and financial management skills by school heads could be due to specific challenges that they face as individuals, schools situation and also bodies involved in training. Therefore, the teachers were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed on the challenges that their school heads faced in training which culminated to poor academic achievement of their schools. The responses made by teachers are summarised in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Challenges influencing Headteachers Training

Challenge	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Lack of time due to many responsibilities that school head have (workload)	15	7.6	20	10.2	25	12.7	50	25.4	87	44.2
Poor coordination of training by those responsible e.g. QASOs	14	7.1	30	15.2	23	11.7	76	38.6	54	27.4
Exorbitant fees charged during those training forums	5	2.5	14	7.1	48	24.4	60	30.5	70	35.5
Negative attitude towards training by some head teachers (lack of commitment)	10	5.1	21	10.7	26	13.2	79	40.1	61	31.0
Lack of uniformity in course content by institutions (persons) offering those training courses	24	12.2	34	17.3	30	15.2	44	22.3	65	33.0
Poor planning and organisation of training	20	10.2	18	9.1	39	19.8	72	36.5	48	24.4
Lack of follow up (monitoring) on whether the training provided is being applied by head teachers in schools	6	3.0	33	16.8	43	21.8	49	24.9	66	33.5

When asked to whether lack of time hindered headteachers training on improving their instructional and financial management competences, 87 (44.2%) strongly agreed and 50

(25.4%) agreed. This implies that due to workload that head teachers have, majority of them are unable to attend in-service training and even those who attend may not be in a position to fully understand the content being taught due to heavy workload in their schools.

Secondly, only 76 (38.6%) of teachers agreed and 54 (27.4%) strongly agreed that poor coordination of training by those responsible influenced the achievement of training goals. For instance, the head teachers lamented that those training seminars were haphazardly conducted and therefore they found themselves not well prepared psychologically to undertake such training and this resulted to non-application of what was trained in the school situation. This implies that education authorities concerned should properly organise training so that the head teachers would be fully aware if they need those kind of training or not rather than forcing them to undergo that appears not to be beneficial in improving academic achievement of their schools.

Thirdly, on whether exorbitant fees were charged during such training and could be a challenge preventing them from attending such training, 5 (2.5%) strongly disagreed, 14 (7.1%) disagreed, 48 (24.45) were unsure, 60(30.5%) agreed and 70 (35.5%) strongly agreed. This shows that 66.0% of teachers agreed that some training programmes are costly and schools do not have the capacity to sponsor their school heads hence influencing their non-attendance. Because most public primary schools are underfunded by government, parents are usually reluctant to pay additional costs aimed at enhancing quality education in schools.

Research findings also showed that 79 (40.1%) of teachers agreed and 61 (31.0%) strongly agreed that negative attitude that head teachers have towards training influenced the achievement of training goals. This shows that a significant number of head teachers do not value the significance of participating in continuous professional development programmes and therefore their schools may end up lagging behind in academic achievement. This implies that head teachers need to be informed first on the importance of them attending training rather than being forced considering some of them have negative perceptions towards it. When asked as to whether lack of uniformity in course content by institutions offering those training courses, 24 (12.2%) strongly disagreed, 34 (17.3%), 30 (15.2%) were undecided, 44 (22.3%) agreed and 65 (33.0%) strongly agreed. This implies that 55.3% believe that content offered in those training programmes do not meet the needs of the head teachers attending the training. Further this challenge could be as a result of improper planning of training programme where head teachers see no relevance of attending such training forums.

Further, it was found out that 72 (36.5%) of teachers agreed and 48 (24.4%) strongly agreed that poor palling and organisation of in-service training programmes was a challenge influencing its effectiveness in transforming academic achievement of schools. This implies that the bodies involved in planning for headteachers in-service training development programmes do not have proper planning strategies. This agrees with the management principle that poor planning of training programmes would influence its execution and application in the long run.

When asked on whether lack of follow up on training content application by heads in schools was a challenge, 6 (3.0%) strongly disagreed, 33 (16.8%) disagreed, 43 (21.8%) were neutral, 49 (24.9%) agreed and most 66 (33.5%) strongly agreed. The result therefore implies that QASOs failure to monitor and evaluate whether training objectives are actually implemented in school on regular basis affects its role in improving academic achievement of schools. The findings made on this sections shows significant challenges influencing training of head teachers in public primary schools in Lugari Sub County, Kakamega county, Kenya.

4.1 Head teachers Views on Challenges Influencing In-Service Training

The majority of the head teachers were not trained into the new jobs. The findings are that majority of the school administrators were never properly inducted in their new roles. They performed their new roles on trial and error basis. In most cases head teachers are expected to coordinate the allocation of resources besides organization of different school. Among other challenges, timidity and lack of confidence in handling personnel, especially those of higher qualification compared to them was a hurdle for head teachers. Financial issue was a challenge to the head teachers. The head teachers were not able to manage the funds allocated to school well.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

Both teachers and head teachers mentioned various challenges that were experienced within and outside the school and contributed to the situation at hand. Research results showed that 69.6% of teachers mentioned that lack of time because of many tasks and responsibilities prevented head teachers from attending various training programmes. The high workload that head teachers faced was occasioned by inadequate number of teachers whom they could delegate responsibilities to. Lack of follow up by training organisers appeared to be also challenge that influenced effective delivery of continuous professional envelopment programmes for head teachers in public primary schools in Lugari Sub County. Negative attitude that some head teachers had to training programmes also affected its effectiveness in schools. Lack of support due to high costs of training was also mentioned to be a hindrance influencing effectiveness of training programmes. Lack of conducting training needs analysis was also cited to be a challenge facing the effectiveness of training programmes. The study recommends that KEMI should initiate training for head teachers for effective performance of the supervision role in curriculum implementation.

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