



ADMINISTRATORS ATTITUDE TOWARDS COMPLIANCE TO SAFETY IN TEACHER TRAINING COLLEGES IN BUNGOMA COUNTY, KENYA

Wilfred Ombunya Wakhu¹,

James Ochieng Sika²ⁱ

¹Department of Educational Management and Foundations,
Maseno University, Private Bag,
Maseno, Kenya

²PhD, Department of Educational Management and Foundations,
Maseno University, Private Bag,
Maseno, Kenya

Abstract:

Demand for basic education by communities in Bungoma County has led to proliferation of many teacher training colleges. However, safety of learners in these colleges remains a major challenge to all college administrators. This reinforces a widely held view that the management has not fully implemented required safety measures in teacher training colleges. The purpose of this study will be to investigate the level of compliance by management to registration requirements on safety in Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Bungoma County Kenya. The study will be guided by the following objectives: to evaluate the attitudes of college administration towards compliance to registration requirements on safety in primary teacher training colleges in Bungoma County. The study concluded that college principals had a high positive attitude towards maintenance of safety standards. The study recommends that college administrators should enhance compliance on requirements in regard to physical facilities health, hygiene and requirements concerning land sizes. The study will enable education stakeholders and policy makers to critically monitor and evaluate adherence of safety standards and guidelines on registration in teacher training colleges thus form a basis on which further research can be done and add to the body of knowledge in the area of school safety so as to provide more concrete solutions to disaster management in education institutions.

Keywords: attitudes; education; safety standards; teacher training colleges

ⁱ Correspondence: email drjamessika@yahoo.com

1. Introduction

Provision of quality education is not only a Kenyan concern but a global one. Education is considered to be the stimulator of economic growth, more wealth and income distribution, greater equality of opportunity, availability of skilled human power, a decline in population growth, long life, better health outcomes, low crime rates, national unity and political stability. Education is the basis upon which any development in a nation is pegged. Good and quality education is achieved when all factors contributing to its success are adhered to. One of these factors is the provision of safe learning environments (Nyakundi, (2012).

Various legal documents have articulated the importance of safety of school children. The Basic Education Act 2013 (Republic of Kenya 2013), stipulates where application of a school or colleges, the County Education Board shall cause the school and or colleges to be provisionally registered for a period of eighteen months if he is certified among other things that the premises and accommodation are suitable and adequate, having regard to the age and sex of the pupils who are to attend the school and fulfill the prescribed minimum requirement of health and safety and conform with any building relations for the time being in force under any written law. The Public Health Act 2012 (Republic of Kenya, 2012) makes provision for security and maintaining health for the citizens. It gives guidelines regarding health and construction of building. These guidelines are applicable to schools.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Social demand for teacher training vacancies in Bungoma County has led to unprecedented growth in the number of Teacher Training Colleges in recent times to meet this demand with the County boasting the highest number of primary Teacher training Colleges in the region. Teacher Training Colleges that are unsafe can be a major hindrance to provision of quality education and efficiency in many counties. No meaningful teaching and learning can take place in an environment that is unsafe and insecure to both learners and staff. The Ministry of Education (MOE) commitment to the safety and overall welfare of learners culminated in a Safety Standards Manual for schools in Kenya, (Republic of Kenya, 2008). These guidelines were aimed at ensuring that the safety of learners is established and sustained. Despite the government efforts the available literature revealed that most institutions have no capacity to handle emergencies and are yet to implement safety standards manual produced seven years ago. The main objective of the study was to determine the attitudes of college administration towards compliance to registration requirements on safety in primary teacher training colleges in Bungoma County.

2. Literature Review

Safe and secure schools are fundamental to students' schools successes and achievements. Threats to the safety and security of schools can arise from natural hazards – for example: earthquakes, floods and storms or from human actions such as vandalism, arson and violent crime. While catastrophic events as human tragedies cannot be eliminated entirely, there is a role for facility designers, institutional managers, emergency response teams, and post crisis intervention in mitigating their negative impact. (OECD, 2006). Consequently, providing a safe and orderly school environment should remain an ever- present priority of the school administration.

Administrators in particular are key actors as they are bestowed with much of the obligations pertaining to comprehensive school safety. School administrators have the responsibility to ensure that the school environment is conducive to learning (Day and Golench, 1995). As Trump (2008) points out, today school safety is not only a “money” issue but also a “leadership” issue. Administrators must prevent potential challenges to their safe school environments and their reputations, recognize safety gaps, plan and budget for security and exercise caution in selecting consultants to strengthen their safety leadership. Although school boards and administrators set the climate of safety within schools teachers must also be directly involved, trained and supported in all stages of developing and implementing programs that accomplish safer schools. Knowledge of school safety laws and regulations provides administrators with the authority to know what is allowed, what is forbidden, as well as what actions are considered to be an obligation of the school.

Bear (2007) wrote that *“safety programs will happen when the administrators supports them and will cease when the interests and attention has been eliminated or become lax”*. Winter (1993) in his study on administrators' attitudes policies and procedures on school safety asserts that safety is important to administrators, and administrators overwhelmingly agree that it should be an integral part of instruction programme in school. Teachers should be aware of the expectations that administrators have regarding safety and recommends that the results of the study be shared with pre service and in-service teachers so that they might understand the importance of safety.

Effective school leaders strive to maintain safety within their schools Lezotte (1997). He describes a safe school as one in which all faculty, staff and students interact in a positive, non-threatening manner that promotes education while fostering positive relationships and personal growth and protecting all from harm. The school leader must gauge how safe students feel in the school, since they must feel safe and accepted in order to take the important risks associated with academic and social development (Blueston & Merrow, 2004).

The USA introduced the No Child Left behind (NCLB) Act during the Bush administration. Part of the NCLB was the requirement to eliminate unsafe schools (Preble, Gallenger, et al., 2003). Cauchon (2005) presented the opinion that schools increasingly have focused resources on improving test scores at the expense of safety. In

discussing the safety of students in schools Sergiovanni (2001) refers to ISLLC standard three *“The administrator has knowledge and understating of principals and issues relating to school safety and security and is committed to a safe environment”* as well as standard five *“The administrator also has knowledge of the law as related to education and school and uses legal systems to protect the right and confidentiality of students and staff”*.

Stephens (2004) was quoted as saying *“There are two types of school administrators: those who face a crisis and those who are about to”*. Stephens continued, *“Armed with knowledge an astute administrator can take actions to prepare for a crisis, avoid a crisis preclude successive crisis, and lead the healing process following a crisis”*. Stephens added, *“Administrators must make a conscious decision that safe and welcoming school are a high priority and measure their progress towards that end”*. Hill and Hill (1994) expressed the opinion that administrators must be proactive leaders due to societal demands for safe schools. According to Hill and Hill, *“The administrator is the pivotal catalyst in making a difference in building a strong school culture for learning to take place”*. Dietrich and Bailley (1996) stated that the responsibility for establishing a positive school climate began with the principal who provided leadership in developing and maintaining a climate of conducive learning.

Nyakundi (2012) sought to establish why school management is not fully implementing MOE safety standards and guidelines in public secondary schools in Marani District, Kenya. The major findings of the study were that the M.O.E safety standards and guidelines had not been fully implemented majorly due to inadequate funds and inadequate supervision. The author recommended policy makers to follow up, monitor and evaluate safety situation in all educational institutions and provide funds to enhance disaster preparedness. This study underscores the role of administrators in supervision of safety policies in the institution without which implementation will be a problem. The administrators need to take a lead and have a keen interest about school safety.

Kirui et al. (2011) found out that only 37% of school heads had attended any security management course as compared to 21.4% of board of Governors members and 40% of security guards. This indicated that most school heads and BOG members who are responsible for making decisions concerning security may be approaching security issues ignorantly and thereby endangering life and property. The study further found out that budgetary allocation by the BOG on security issues was below 10% of the total school budget. This was due to competing interests. In addition, the study found out about 82% of the schools reported that they do not have qualified security personnel. Also 67% of the school heads were of the opinion that security guards are not well enumerated and motivated.

According to Otieno (2010), education permanent secretary (PS) James Ole Kiyiapi is quoted to have said following the Endarasha, Kisii High school and Iterio secondary school tragedies that it will be mandatory for headteachers and their deputies to undergo refresher courses in administration to equip them with public relations skills to ensure harmonious relation between the administration, students and the wider community. In addition, students will be involved in decision making within the school and the system

well defined. According to Ole Kiyiapi, private firms will conduct trainings of principal on how to handle disaster management equipment such as fire extinguishers and First Aid kits. It will also be mandatory for schools to conduct drills that will ensure safety and test the preparedness of an institution in case of a disaster.

Some tragedies in schools are also started by students as an expression of dissatisfaction with school administration. According to the editorial of the standard 19th October 2010, the assaults can be attributed to harsh living conditions and high handedness of school administrators thereby curtailing freedom of boarding schools.

Nderitu (2009) sought to investigate disaster preparedness in public secondary schools in Githunguri Division, Kiambu District. The major findings of the study were the ministry of education guidelines had not been adequately implemented in schools. The study established that lack of funds was a major constraint in effective implementation of the safety requirement. The study recommended enhanced school inspection, provision of funds and integration of disaster management in the school curriculum.

From the foregoing discussions, the administrator is the pivotal catalyst in making a difference in building a strong school culture for learning to take place. The responsibility for establishing a positive school climate begins with the principal who provides leadership in developing and maintaining a climate conducive to learning. School leaders are therefore obligated to provide, support, mandate and encourage safe environments for all students and staff members. Whether administrators of primary teacher training colleges attitudes were affecting complying with registration requirements on safety requirements needs to be investigated and will form the focus of this study.

3. Research Design and Methodology

The descriptive survey design will be adopted to determine the influence of management attitudes to compliance to safety standards and requirements on physical infrastructure, health and hygiene and school environment in Teacher Training Colleges in Bungoma County, Kenya. A survey is used to describe, explain or explore existing status of variables at a given time. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). The design is in agreement with the views of Gay (1992), who contend that it is used to assess the attitudes and opinions about events, individuals or procedures.

3.1 Area of Study

Bungoma County covers an area of about 3,032km² and is located on the southern slopes of Mt Elgon. It borders the Republic of Uganda to the North West, Trans Nzoia County to the North East, Kakamega to the East and Busia to the West. The County lies between latitude 00⁰⁰ 281"North and Latitude 10⁰⁰ 301" North of the Equator, and Longitude 340⁰⁰ 201" East and 350⁰⁰ 151"East of the Greenwich Meridian. The County is divided into 9 sub counties.

Table 1: Distribution of Primary Teacher Training Colleges

County	Number of Primary Teacher Colleges
Bungoma	22
Kakamega	14
Vihiga	11
Busia	8

Source: CDEs offices Bungoma, Kakamega, Vihiga and Busia

3.2 Target Population

The study population will comprise the 22 college principals because they are in charge of implementation of the Ministry of Education Safety guidelines and college administrators, 22 chairmen of boards of management of the primary teacher training colleges, and all the nine District Quality assurance and Standards Officers in the nine Sub counties who will give details on specific aspects of safety standards and guidelines in their respective colleges and sub counties.

3.3 Sampling Technique and Instrumentation

Purposive sampling will be used to pick the 20 principals from the colleges to be sampled. This will also apply to the Sub County Quality Assurance Officers (SCQASOs). The principals will be picked because they bear the responsibility of implementing safety standards and guidelines in their colleges. Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SCQASOs) are responsible for enforcing compliance to the safety standards and guidelines by all institutions. The instruments of data collection will be questionnaires and interview schedules.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Administrators Attitude towards Compliance to Safety Administrators

The respondents were asked numerous questions for which they provided their perspectives and the answers' which are tabulated below: Table 4.2 show details response of college principals. In a scale of 1 to 5: Key 5 - Very strongly agree; 4 - Strongly agree; 3 - Agree; 2 - Disagree; 1 - Strongly disagree. In the interpretation of the scores, a value mean between 1.0 to 2.4 (low compliance); 2.5 to 3.4 (moderate compliance); on the other hand, a value between 3.5 to 4.4 (high compliance); 4.5 to 5.0 (very high compliance). Table 4.2 shows administrators' attitude towards compliance to safety requirements in teacher training colleges.

Table 4.2: Administrators Attitude and Compliance to Safety

Administrators attitudes	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean
Safety is one of my top priorities	11 (50.0)	11 (50.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.50
There is strong commitment to safety in this college	9 (40.9)	13 (59.1)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.41
Safety should be an integral part of instruction programmes in Teacher Training Colleges	7 (31.8)	15 (68.2)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.32
Maintaining a safe environment for students is an important part of my job	6 (27.3)	16 (72.7)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.27
Administrators should delegate responsibility for safety to all tutors and students	10 (45.5)	5 (22.7)	1 (4.5)	6 (27.3)	0.0 (0.0)	3.18
Administrators should be familiar with safety standards manual for colleges	10 (45.5)	12 (54.5)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.45
Tutors should periodically update their knowledge of current safety standards	12 (54.5)	10 (45.5)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.55
Tutors needing to upgrade their safety knowledge should do so at their own expense	5 (22.7)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	13 (59.1)	2 (9.1)	2.68
College budget gives priority to adherence to safety standards	6 (27.3)	10 (45.5)	6 (27.3)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.00
Equipment that is not in safe operating condition must not be used until it has been properly repaired	9 (40.9)	12 (54.5)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	0.0 (0.0)	4.23
Average Mean						4.06

Key: Strongly Agree [SA] Agree [A] Undecided [U] Disagree [D] Strongly Disagree [SD]
Safety is one of my top priorities.

There was strong commitment to safety teacher training colleges. According to teacher training Colleges principals, the colleges have strong commitment to safety standards in the colleges. The study showed that 50% strongly agreed while 50% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that indeed they are committed to safety standards in the colleges. The mean ratings was 4.50 (very high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was very highly complying with the quality standards of maintaining safety standards according to ministry of education requirement. The mean rating of 4.50 also indicate high positive attitude toward following standards required by the ministry of education.

According to teacher training colleges principals' safety should be an integral part of instruction programs in Teacher Training Colleges. The study showed that 40.9% strongly agreed while 59.1% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that indeed they have made safety an integral part of instructions in teacher training colleges. The mean ratings was 4.41 (high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was highly complying with the quality standards of integrating safety programs as part of instruction programs. The mean rating of 4.27 also indicate high positive attitude toward following standards required in integrating programs in teacher training colleges.

Maintaining a safe environment for students is an important part of administrator job. According to teacher training Colleges principals, part of their work is to create safe

environment for students learning. The study showed that 31.8% strongly agreed while 68.2% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that indeed their work include maintaining safe environment according to ministry of education requirement. The mean ratings was 4.32 (high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was highly complying with the quality standards of maintaining safe environment for students learning. The mean rating of 4.32 also indicate high positive attitude toward safety standards in colleges.

Teacher training colleges' administrators agreed that they delegate responsibility for safety to all tutors and students. The study showed that 27.3% strongly agreed while 72.7% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that delegation of responsibility was being practiced in their colleges. The mean ratings was 4.27 (high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was highly complying with the quality standards of delegation when necessary. The mean rating of 4.27 also indicate high positive attitude toward delegation of responsibility.

Administrators in teacher training colleges should be familiar with safety standards manual for colleges. The study showed that 45.5% strongly agreed while 22.7% agreed. This amounted to 68.2% of college principals who agreed that indeed they should be conversant with safety standards manual. However, 4.5% were undecided and 27.3% disagreed. The mean ratings was 3.18 (low compliance). The interpretation was that college administration were moderately complying with safety standards requirement for administrator. Approximately 31.8% had no safety manual. The mean rating of 3.18 also indicate moderate and positive attitude toward following standards manual.

Tutors should periodically update their knowledge of current safety standards. According to teacher training Colleges principals, the college tutors should update their knowledge on safety standards. The study showed that 45.5% strongly agreed while 54.5% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that indeed the tutors should update their knowledge on the current safety standards. The mean ratings was 4.45 (high compliance). The interpretation was that college tutors should update their knowledge on current safety standards. The mean rating of 4.45 also indicate high positive attitude toward following standards required by ministry of education.

Tutors needing to upgrade their safety knowledge should do so at their own expense. The study showed that 54.5% strongly agreed while 45.5% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that indeed the tutors should upgrade their knowledge at their own expense. The mean ratings was 4.55(very high compliance). The mean rating of 4.27 also indicate high positive attitude toward tutors upgrading their knowledge on safety standards.

College budget gives priority to adherence to safety standards. The study showed that 27.3% strongly agreed while 45.5% agreed. This amounted to 72.8% of college principals who agreed that college budget should give priority to adherence to safety standards. However, 27.3% were undecided. The mean ratings was 4.00(high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was highly likely to give top priority to safety issues in the college budget. The mean rating of 4.00 also indicate

high positive attitude toward safety issues in the colleges. According to Simatwa and Omollo (2010), Sound financial base is the back bone of any project hence implementation of safety standards to a larger extent depends on the availability of sufficient funds. Lack of enough financial resources has been identified as one major reason why safety measures and law enforcement in schools is not being implemented (Simatwa, 2003).

Enough finances are, therefore, required for the implementation of the safety policies in renovation of buildings in general, procurement of safety equipment and capacity building at each level. Ng'ang'a and Muthuiya (2013) found that school administrators are not able to provide adequate finances for putting up safe buildings and a safe environment so as to adhere to safety and standards regulation. The studies further stated that the government provides inadequate financial assistance to schools. Nyeri and Tigania are endowed with conducive climate and resources can be availed from parents, Yatta an Arid and Semi-Arid Area (ASAL) may not be able to raise funds. Ng'ang'a and Muthuiya (2013) found that school administrators are not able to provide adequate finances for putting up safe buildings and a safe environment so as to adhere to safety and standards regulation. The studies further stated that the government provides inadequate financial assistance to schools. Nyeri and Tigania are endowed with conducive climate and resources can be availed from parents, Yatta an Arid and Semi-Arid Area (ASAL) may not be able to raise funds

Equipment that is not in safe operating condition must not be used until it has been properly repaired. The study showed that 40.9% strongly agreed while 54.5% agreed. This amounted to 100% of college principals who agreed that equipment that is not safe in operating condition must not be used until it has been properly repaired. The mean ratings was 4.23 (high compliance). The interpretation was that college administration was highly complying with the quality standards of safety and hence safety standards were being adhered to according to ministry of education requirement. The mean rating of 4.27 also indicate high positive attitude toward following safety standards required by ministry of education. The average mean rating of 4.06 (high compliance) for administrators could be interpreted that the college principals had high positive attitudes towards maintenance of safety standards in the colleges within Bungoma County.

5. Conclusion

The average mean rating of 4.06 (high compliance) for administrators could be interpreted that the college principals had high positive attitudes towards maintenance of safety standards in the colleges within Bungoma County. The positive attitude may be in regard to budgetary allocations; commitment to management of safe environment, delegation; including safety issues in instructional programs and familiarization with safety manual. The study concluded that college principal had a high positive attitudes towards maintenance of safety standards.

6. Recommendation

The study makes recommendations that the college principal sustains positive attitude toward the college in regard to maintenance of safety standards. For this will improve the quality of education provided by the teacher training colleges and enhance adherence to safety standards.

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About the Authors

Wilfred Ombunya Wakhu: candidate for the award of Masters in Education Planning and Economics, Maseno University is a student member of the department of education management and Foundation, Maseno University and works with Ministry of Education in Bungoma County.

Dr. James Ochieng Sika: Senior Lecturer, Department of Education Management and Foundation, Maseno University. Previously worked with Ministry of Education and Teacher Service Commission.

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