



## THE EFFECT OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT TRAINING ON THE PERFORMANCE OF HEAD TEACHERS IN MANAGING PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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### Abstract:

This study investigated the effect of training in school governance and curriculum management on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. The study was driven by the public outcry over the deteriorating standards of primary education in the region despite Government's efforts to improve the managerial performance of school heads. The researchers employed a descriptive, cross-sectional sample survey research design. Data were collected with the use of survey and interview methods from 234 head teachers, 364 teachers, 19 center coordinating tutors, six district education officers and six inspectors of schools selected through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The data were analyzed with the use of appropriate descriptive and inferential statistical techniques as well as content analysis methods. Study results revealed a significant difference in the performance of trained and untrained head teachers: the trained ones managed schools better than their untrained counter-parts. Second, training in school governance and curriculum management had weaknesses in its curriculum and delivery. Finally, training in school governance ( $p=0.044<.05$ ), and curriculum management ( $p=0.044<.05$ ) were found to have significant positive effects on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools. The researchers thus concluded that the training in school governance and curriculum management was largely effective in improving the managerial performance of head teachers in primary schools, other factors notwithstanding. It was thus recommended that the Government of Uganda should continue training head teachers in school governance and curriculum management, strengthen their training curriculum, and make such training

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opportunities more accessible to many teachers. This would enable head teachers to improve their performance as well as that of their teachers and pupils.

**Keywords:** curriculum management, governance, head teachers, performance, primary schools, training

## **Introduction**

World over, a lot of importance is attached to primary education. In the case of African countries, the largest portion of the education budget is often allocated to the primary education sector. According to Oni (2009), this happens because primary education lays the foundation for further education; and in most cases, provides the basic knowledge and skills required by the majority of the given group of people to survive and be useful members of their society. This also explains why primary education is considered basic education in most countries of the world, Uganda inclusive. It also justifies the inclusion of achieving universal access to primary education by 2015 for different nations in the just ended United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). However, the management of primary schools is a daunting task – even for the most trained head teacher.

This study examined the effect of training in school governance and curriculum management, which were undertaken by the Government of Uganda on the managerial performance of head teachers in public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. It specifically focused on the training in school governance and curriculum management that were carried out under the teacher development and management system (TDMS) training program that was launched in Uganda by the Education Ministry over a decade ago. In this section, the researchers present the background to the study, the study objectives, and hypotheses.

Globally, different nations have been investing in uplifting the standards of management of their schools; and available literature reveals that specialized and focused head teacher trainings began several years ago especially in the developed countries (for examples in England [Bolam, 2004]; and in the United States of America [UNESCO, 1998]). These efforts by different governments to improve school management later spread to other parts of the world including in African countries such as: South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Kenya and Uganda.

A few scholars have already investigated the effectiveness of various training programs on the performance of head teachers in their duties of managing schools (for examples Odubaker, 2008; Odia and Omofonmwa, 2007). However, all these earlier studies did not examine the effect of training in school governance and curriculum

management on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. At least Odubuker' study of 2008 looked at the effectiveness of training in school governance and curriculum management in Uganda. But even so, it never delved deeply in evaluating the performance of the head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. This study was therefore conducted to fill this knowledge gap.

This particular study was underpinned by the human capital theory originally postulated by Adam Smith in 1776 (cited in Becker, 1993). The theory states that investment in education and training is meant to build the human capital stock of a country (or organization) by equipping learners with desirable knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA). These KSA help increase labor proficiency and productivity. This theory was therefore opted for in this study because the TDMS training program which the Government of Uganda launched over a decade ago, was looked at as an investment in building the human capital stock (KSA) in the head teachers so that they could perform better in managing primary schools. The researchers hypothesized that the head teachers who received the training in school governance and curriculum management have acquired managerial knowledge and skills which should make them be more effective than their counter-parts who had not trained in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. The study was thus geared at testing this hypothesis.

In the study, there were two key concepts of interest, namely: training and performance in managing primary schools. According to the Collins English Dictionary (2009), training refers to the process by which someone is taught the skills that are needed for an art, profession, or job. In the case of this study, the researchers looked at the training that was carried out under the teacher development and management system (TDMS) program undertaken by the Education Ministry of Uganda. The TDMS program was comprised of five different training areas, namely: institutional leadership, school governance, personnel, financial, and curriculum management. This paper is, however, focused on discussing the results of only two areas of the training; that is, school governance and curriculum management.

The second key concept in this study was performance of head teachers in managing primary schools. The word performance, according to the businessdictionary.com (2016), refers to the accomplishments of a given task measured against preset known standards of accuracy, completeness, cost, and speed. In this study, head teachers' performance in the management of primary schools was looked at in terms of how well (or how badly) the head teachers managed staff, students, parents, curriculum, resources, and records. The performance of head teachers was therefore

measured basing on the judgment of the teachers in the public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda.

In Uganda, teachers are appointed to headship because they are efficient classroom teachers. As a result, many head teachers tend to make mistakes because they operate using trial and error methods (Odubuker, 2008). But over the years, Government of Uganda has made efforts to invest in the training of head teachers in order to uplift their performance (e.g. TDMS). However, despite these training programs, the performance of head teachers in the primary schools in the country still leaves a lot to be desired. This has been exhibited by low levels of literacy and numeracy among pupils, low teacher job satisfaction, limited participation of parents in school activities, etcetera. This research was intended to find out if the training in school governance and curriculum management had a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda.

### **Study Objectives**

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the effect of training in school governance and curriculum management on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. However, the study specifically aimed at achieving the following two objectives:

- i) To establish the effect of school governance training on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools; and
- ii) To determine the effect of curriculum management training on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda.

### **Literature Review**

Several scholars have studied the relationship between management training and head teachers' performance in different educational settings. The major point that has emerged out of many of these studies is that good performance does not just happen; it is a result of good leadership, other factors notwithstanding (Chatiavi, 2002). Therefore, it is important that performance of a school is appraised against the performance of the person who leads it (Lydia & Nasongo, 2009). This is why this study was mooted out to try and understand how training in school governance and curriculum management had improved head teachers' performance in managing primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. According to Aguti (2002), ever since the universal primary education (UPE) program started in Uganda in 1997, major achievements have been

recorded in the primary education sector of the country especially in the expansion of pupil enrolment and training of head teachers. However, not much has been done to find out how the trained head teachers managed school' stakeholders, hence the need for this study. Yet, parental involvement in school governance is very vital; hence the investigation to find out whether schools had functional management committees (SMCs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and whether the head teachers involved them in school activities. Finally, with regard to curriculum management training and head teachers' performance, Edho (2009) advises that appropriate supervision of instruction and monitoring of school activities is a major role for the school administrator. This is the reason why this study focused on investigating how head teachers carried out instructional supervision to effect curriculum implementation.

### **Methodology**

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional sample survey research design, where both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis were used. The researchers opted for a descriptive research design because the study was aimed at investigating the effect of training in school governance and curriculum management on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. Specifically, the study used a cross-sectional sample survey design because the researchers aimed at collecting data from a cross-section of the target population at one point in time in order to avoid wasting time returning to the field to collect additional data that would make the process rather time consuming and costly if the design was longitudinal in nature. In addition, using the design would help to generalize the findings obtained from the sampled population to the targeted population of all head teachers and teachers of primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda.

The Greater Masaka Region of Uganda is comprised of the current eight districts curved out of the original Masaka District. However, data were collected from only six districts, namely: Masaka, Rakai, Lyantonde, Kalungu, Lwengo and Bukomansimbi districts. These accounted for 75 percent coverage of the total area of study; and it was well above the minimum 10 percent coverage recommended by Gay and Airasan (2000) in survey studies of this kind. During the study, Kalangala District was left out purposively because it is an Island and uses multi-grade teaching while Sembabule was not used because it does not fall within Ndegeya Primary Teachers' College's catchment area that the study originally focused on. During the study, data were collected with the use of survey and interview methods from 234 head teachers, 364 teachers, 19 center coordinating tutors (CCTs), six District Education Officers (DEOs) and six District

Inspectors of Schools (DISs) selected through purposive and stratified random sampling techniques. The data were analyzed with the use of appropriate descriptive (mean, percentage, SD) and inferential (t-test) statistical techniques as well as content analysis methods.

## Results and Discussion

The aim of this study was to evaluate the effect of head teachers' training in school governance and curriculum management on their performance in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region. In this section, the researchers present and discuss the results of the study. The section is divided into two parts, namely: the background information on respondents and the verification of research hypotheses. But first, we present the background information on respondents.

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents by Background Information

Background Variable	Attributes	Teachers		Head teachers	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	242	66.5	168	71.6
	Female	122	33.5	66	28.4
	Total	364	100	234	100
Age	<30 years	46	12.6	12	5.2
	30 – 39 years	99	27.2	42	17.9
	40 – 49 years	201	55.2	149	63.7
	50+ years	18	5.0	31	13.2
	Total	364	100	234	100
Work Experience	<10 years	121	33.2	121	51.7
	10 – 20 years	235	64.6	104	44.4
	20+ years	8	2.2	9	3.9
	Total	364	100	234	100
Participating in TDMS Training	Trained	288	79.2	135	57.7
	Untrained	76	20.8	99	42.3
	Total	364	100	234	100
Location of Schools	Urban	47	12.9	25	10.7
	Peri-urban	46	12.5	24	10.4
	Rural	271	74.6	185	78.9
	Total	364	100	234	100

Table 1 indicates that a total of 364 teachers and 234 head teachers participated in the study. Of the 364 teachers, 242 (66.5%) were males and 122 (33.4%) were females. Even among the 234 head teachers, 168 (71.6%) were males and 66 (28.4%) were females. The

males dominated in both categories because available records from the District Education offices indicate that there are generally more male head teachers and teachers than their female counter-parts working in the primary schools in the region studied.

In terms of age, the results in Table 1 indicate that the majority of teacher respondents (49%) were younger than the bulk of the head teachers. This indicates that teachers are appointed to head schools after some years of teaching experience. In terms of work experience, results in Table 1 indicate that the majority of the teacher respondents (45.8%) have been in service for a period of less than 10 years. This is also true of the majority of head teacher respondents (51.7%) who have been head teachers for less than 10 years. This implies that most head teachers have few years of work experience and could account for the poor performance in managing most public primary schools in spite of the training they undergo. Results in Table 1 also reveal that a whole 79.2 percent (or 209) of the teacher and 57.7 percent (or 135) of the head teacher respondents have undergone TDMS training. This indicates that the majority of the teachers and head teachers in the region were already trained and they were expected to perform their duties satisfactorily. Yet, this does not seem to be the case. Finally, the results also indicate that the majority (74.6% or 197) of the teacher as well as head teacher respondents (78.9% or 185) were drawn from rural public primary schools. These suggest that most schools in the region studied are located in rural areas.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

As a result of the study objectives, the researchers derived two research hypotheses for verification, namely:

- i) School governance training has a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools.
- ii) Curriculum management training has a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools.

To verify these two research hypotheses, the researchers first converted them into null hypotheses. Second, the researchers generated indices from the descriptive statistics indicating respondents' responses in order to measure the different study variables including training in school governance and curriculum management; and lastly, head teacher performance in managing schools. Thereafter, the researchers chose to compare with the use of the t-test statistical technique the performance of head teachers who had been trained in school governance and curriculum management and those who had not been trained in order to determine if the training had brought any significant difference in the performance of the head teachers in managing public primary schools in the

Greater Masaka Region of Uganda. The results of the hypothesis tests are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

### Test of Hypothesis One

The first research hypothesis that was verified was stated as *“school governance training has a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools.”* For statistical purposes, this research hypothesis was converted into a null hypothesis and stated as *“school governance training has no significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools”*. After generating indices called training in school governance and performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools, a t-test was performed and the results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Independent t-test between school governance training and head teachers’ performance in managing school

Category of head teachers	Sample size	Sample Mean	Sample Std. Deviation	t	sig. (p)
Trained	136	4.38	0.73	2.027	0.044
Untrained	98	4.18	0.75		
Total	234				

The results in Table 2 indicate that the trained head teachers (n=136) who underwent school governance training scored higher in their performance in managing public primary schools (mean = 4.38) than the untrained ones (n=98, mean=4.18). To confirm whether school governance training had a significant effect on the performance in managing public primary schools of the head teachers, a t-test was performed, yielding  $t=2.027$  whose significance value ( $p=0.044$ ) was less than the benchmark 0.05 ( $p < 0.05$ ), implying that the t was significantly large. Therefore, the null hypothesis which was stated as *“School governance training has no significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools”* was thus rejected because there was enough evidence to conclude that head teacher’s school governance training positively affected their performance in managing public primary schools in the region studied..

During interview about school governance, different interviewees expressed different views regarding the involvement of stakeholders in the governance of the schools. In fact, one DEO revealed that *“most head teachers have good working relationship with parents”*. Another DEO however revealed that *“at first some parents had misunderstood the concept of universal primary education (UPE). They (Parents)*



thought that Government of Uganda was to provide every item needed by the child at school including pens, books, lunch, to mention but a few. However, with the help of CCTs who sensitized the parents and community about UPE, things are now moving on better" (at the time of collecting data). Another CCT reiterated that "*many parents are now supporting their children although it can still be improved*".

From the above results, we can see that the difference in the mean performance of head teachers who have received training in school governance and those who have not was statistically significant. This finding was in agreement with that of Kasozi's (1994) study which reaffirmed that governance is the way in which power (legal, political, social, professional) is exercised in the management of an institution and without proper training, it becomes difficult for a head teacher to exercise that power. In a study of 2007 in Botswana, it was discovered that bad school results were caused by the parents, parent-teacher-associations (PTAs) and governing bodies. The study thus concluded that in schools where parent-community involvement was highly visible, teacher effectiveness was apparent and contributed significantly to the improvement of the learners' performance; while in schools where parent-community involvement was non-existent, or minimal, the results were the opposite (Angella, 2007). This Botswana' scenario is not any different with Uganda' situation.

### **Test of Hypothesis Two**

The second research hypothesis that was verified in this study was stated as "*curriculum management training has a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools.*" For statistical purposes, this research hypothesis was also converted into a null hypothesis and stated as "*curriculum management training has no significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools.*". After generating indices called training in curriculum management and performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools, a t-test was performed and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3:** Independent t-test between curriculum management training and head teachers' performance in managing school

Category of head teachers	Sample size	Sample Mean	Sample Std. Deviation	t	sig. (p)
Trained	136	4.06	0.82	2.434	0.042
Untrained	98	3.80	0.78		
Total	234				

The results in Table 3 indicate that the trained head teachers (n=136) who underwent curriculum management training scored higher in their performance in managing public primary schools (mean = 4.06) than the untrained ones (n=98, mean=3.80). To confirm whether curriculum management training had a significant effect on head teachers' performance in managing public primary schools, a t-test was performed, yielding  $t=2.434$  whose significance value ( $p=0.042$ ) was less than the benchmark 0.05 ( $p<0.05$ ), implying that the  $t$  was significantly large. Therefore, the null hypothesis which was stated as "*curriculum management training has no significant effect on the performance of head teachers in the management of public primary schools*" was thus rejected because there was enough evidence to conclude that head teacher's curriculum management training positively affected their performance in managing schools.

The results of this study with regard to hypothesis two revealed that the difference in the mean performance of head teachers who have received training in curriculum management and those who have not was statistically significant. This finding also concurred with that of Martin and Willower (2006) who indicated that heads of schools invest very little time in instruction related activities. Most of their time is spent on administrative house-keeping matters and maintaining order at the expense of instructional supervision, thereby failing to implement successfully the school curricula. Yet, head teachers trained in curriculum management could help the teachers in preparing schemes of work, providing teaching and learning aids, making lesson plans and selecting appropriate methods of teaching. This view matches with that of Nakpodia's (2011) who asserts that head teachers are expected to direct, control and monitor behavior of teachers while implementing the curriculum. Teachers too expect help and warm encouragement from head teachers which is free of threat. Teachers therefore need a head teacher who is competent, trust worthy and caring which qualities were imparted in Ugandan head teachers because they were trained in personnel management as well as curriculum management.

## **Conclusion**

Basing of the study findings and the discussion that ensued, the researchers thus concluded that the training in school governance and curriculum management has a significant effect on the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools. Therefore, the training in school governance and curriculum management that was carried out in Uganda by the then Ministry of Education and Sports was largely effective in improving the performance of head teachers in managing public primary schools in the Greater Masaka Region of Uganda, other factors notwithstanding. In other words, the training in school governance and curriculum management made head teachers to do their job of managing the public primary schools better compared to those head teachers who never underwent similar training.

## **Recommendations**

As a result of the study findings and conclusion, the researchers recommend that the Government of Uganda should continue training head teachers in school governance and curriculum management, strengthen their training curriculum, and make training opportunities in school governance and curriculum management more accessible to many teachers. This would enable head teachers to improve their performance as well as that of their teachers and pupils.

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