ASSESSMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF THE LEVEL OF HUMAN RESOURCES AS A COMPONENT OF INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN USIGU DIVISION-BONDO DISTRICT, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

In the case of Kenyan academic institutions such as public secondary schools, the fruit of institutional capacity is the academic achievement of the students as reflected in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) results at the end of the four year course. Keeping in view all of the variables discussed by different other researchers, the researcher chose only those variables that are recognizable in the Kenyan educational system. This study was particularly keen on the assessment of the influence of the level of human resources as a component of institutional capacity on academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Usigu division-bondo district, kenya

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INTRODUCTION

Disparities in performance continued to be noticed as one of the many challenges facing education. These variations had raised a lot of concern as the government expenditure on education was not only aimed at increasing enrolment but also ensuring that academic performance was improved in these institutions at minimum cost. The KCSE results had been poor in the recent years and as a result students who went through public secondary schools in Usigu division could not compete favorably for national opportunities in institutions of higher learning or training.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study would be guided by the following objective: To assess the level at which human resources as a component of institutional capacity influence academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Usigu division.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Human Resources (HR) of an organization consist of all staff (teaching, managerial, and technical/support staff) engaged in any of the organization's activities. It is well-recognized that the human resources of any school are its most valuable asset. This is particularly true in learning institutions, where the people required to do the core work of the organization are highly trained individuals. In this study the focus will be on the teaching staff, with no less regard to the role played by the sub-ordinate staff in ensuring good academic performance of students such as preparing their meals in time, transporting them during academic performance enhancing tours, typing and producing their assessment tests, arranging their laboratories and libraries, and the list is endless.

In the United States, a study conducted by Motoko, Akiba, Gerald K. LeTendre, and Jay P. Scribner in the year 2004, revealed that the countries with better teacher quality produced higher academic achievement. These analyses provide empirical, cross-national evidence of the importance of investing in teacher quality for improving national achievement. According to National Academies in the year 2007, "Teacher quality is widely recognized by policymakers, practitioners, and researchers alike to be the most powerful school-related influence on a child's academic performance". Whether certification and standard setting will improve teacher quality

is a more complicated issue. U.S. studies such as those by Borman and Kimball (2005) and Rivkin, Hanushek, and Kain (2005), suggest that teacher quality is a significant factor in predicting student achievement; however, constructing measures of teacher quality is a challenging task because of the lack of consensus on what constitutes a qualified teacher. According to Akiba (2004), a highly qualified teacher is defined as fully certified, possessing a bachelor's degree, and demonstrating competence in subject knowledge and teaching. Many states still face difficulties in fully meeting these requirements (U.S. Department of Education, 2006), and data from the Council of Chief State School Officers (Blank, 2003) shows large state differences in the numbers of certified teachers providing instruction in subjects such as mathematics.

Many empirical studies have been conducted in the United States to identify the characteristics of teacher quality that are associated with higher student achievement. Several syntheses of these studies have identified teacher certification, subject matter knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and teaching experience as significantly associated with higher student achievement or greater achievement gains (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Rice, 2003; Wayne & Youngs, 2003; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001, 2002). Studies have found that students taught by teachers holding subject-specific certification achieve better. Empirical studies have revealed that students taught by teachers certified in mathematics score higher in both general mathematics and algebra than do students taught by teachers certified in other subjects. Contrary to these studies, Rowan, Correnti, and Miller (2002) found that subject-specific certification had no significant impact on elementary school students' achievement growth in mathematics or reading. These empirical studies seem to suggest that teacher certification matters in secondary schools but not in elementary schools (Rice, 2003).

In Africa, as in many other regions, the educational systems are confronted with challenges and many of these challenges directly or indirectly affect the teaching profession (Oplatka, 2007). In Nigeria, for example, Ogbodo (1995) argues that the quality of education depends to a large extent, on the quality of teachers. The quality of education and learning achievements of students depend heavily on the quality, competence, personality and dedication of teachers. Also a good number of studies have shown that students' achievement has a positive relationship with the quality of teachers. The training which a teacher receives has been proved to be important to students' academic success. (Idiagbe, 2004).

In Kenya, stepping in most classrooms one is confronted with an authoritarian teaching style focusing on memorization and discipline, a legacy of the days of British rule in Kenya. Since the most important condition for quality is the professional development of teachers, teacher enrichment through quality development will be the answer to these outdated teaching styles. According to Odhiambo (2003) in the current climate, teacher redistribution, redeployment and retraining are essential. His research clearly showed that a greater percentage of secondary school teachers in Kenya felt that they did not have opportunities for teacher professional development programmes and despite the concerns raised by the educational administrators that teachers needed to upgrade their teaching skills constantly and that quality of teaching was crucial to the education system in general and school development in particular, there is still no firm policy on teacher continuous development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Influence of Human Resources on Academic Performance of Students

Three aspects of human resources were investigated. These were; academic qualification which closely related to staff development, adequacy and teaching experience.

Academic qualification of the teachers

According to the findings posted in table 4.3, all the head teachers had a minimum academic qualification of a bachelors degree. However, 2(25%) of the head teachers had masters degree while 6(75%) of the head teachers had bachelors degree. This indicated that all the head teachers were professionally qualified to head their schools. To determine any influence of the head teachers' academic qualification on the academic performance, a correlation test was run and the results were as follows:

Table 4.14: Pearson's Correlation between education level of head teachers and academic performance of students.

	average school performance mean score for 2007,	education level of respondents

		2008 and 2009	
average school performance mean score for 2007, 2008 and 2009	Pearson Correlation	1	-.285
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.494
	N	8	8
education level of respondents	Pearson Correlation	-.285	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.494	.
	N	8	8

The test revealed that there was no significant relationship between the academic qualification of the head teachers and the academic performance of their students. This was a divergent opinion from that of Borman and Kimball (2005) who suggested that teacher quality is a significant factor in predicting student achievement. During the study, though, the researcher found out that some head teachers were pursuing masters degree. This was an indication that the head teachers appreciated the need to improve their academic qualification through furthering their education.

The researcher also obtained the academic qualifications of the assistant teachers as reported in table 4.4. From the findings of the study, 63(70.8%) of the teachers had bachelors degree, 6 (6.7%) diploma, 2 (2.2%) had graduated with other degrees which were not education oriented, 1 (1.1%) with masters degree, 11(12.4%) of the sampled assistant teachers were found to be form four graduates. 2 (2.2%) of the teachers were P1 holders whereas 4 (4.5%) were university students on holiday. These findings reveal a serious problem of understaffing and shortage of qualified teachers. The researcher sought to determine if there was any influence of understaffing of school on the academic performance of students. A correlation test was run and the following were the findings:

Table 4.15: Pearson's correlation of professional qualification of assistant teachers and academic performance of students

		average school mean covering the years 2007, 2008, and 2009	professional qualification
average school mean covering the years 2007, 2008, and 2009	Pearson Correlation	1	-.213(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.045
	N	89	89
professional qualification	Pearson Correlation	-.213(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.045	.
	N	89	89

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The findings revealed a weak negative correlation between professional qualification of teachers and academic performance of students. The higher the academic qualification of the teachers, the lower the academic performance of the students. This is a serious departure from the argument advanced by Ogbodo (1995) who argued that the quality of education depends to a large extent, on the quality of teachers. This therefore implies that teacher's effectiveness is not only a factor of academic qualification, but other factors also come into play, such as commitment to duty, motivation, and even the working environment. Those teachers who were qualified could also be complacent, hence the negative relationship.

Adequacy of teachers

The head teachers were asked to indicate the status of adequacy of teachers. They all responded with a 'no'. This meant that there were not enough teachers in their schools. This was evident from their attempt to take care of the deficiency by employing teachers on BOG terms as shown in the table below:

Table 4.16: Distribution of the respondents by employer

Employer	***Frequency***	***Percent***	***Valid Percent***	***Cumulative Percent***
BOG	35	39.3	39.3	39.3
TSC	53	59.6	59.6	98.9
volunteer	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	89	100.0	100.0	

From the results illustrated in table 4.16 above, 35(39.3%) of the assistant teachers were employed by the BOG. While 1(1.1%) of the teachers was a volunteer, 53(59%) of the teachers were employed by the TSC. This indicated a serious understaffing of public secondary schools in Usigu division. The researcher sought to establish the relationship between the number of teachers on the staff and the academic performance of students. Correlation between the two was run and the results tabulated as follows:

Table 4.17: Pearson's correlation of number of teachers and academic performance of students

		average school performance means core for 2007, 2008 and 2009	numbers of teachers in school
average school performance mean score for 2007, 2008 and 2009	Pearson Correlation	1	.661
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.074
	N	8	8
numbers of teachers in school	Pearson Correlation	.661	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.074	.
	N	8	8

No significant correlation was found to exist between the number of teachers on the staff and the academic performance of students. This proved that it does not necessarily mean that the higher

the number of teachers on staff, the better the academic performance even though there was a serious case of understaffing in the division. The researcher found no substantive evidence that the poor academic performance could be blamed on understaffing. This revelation differed from the assertions of Odhiambo (2003) that teacher redistribution and redeployment were essential.

Teaching experience of the teachers and academic performance of students

The researcher determined the teaching experience of both the head teachers and the assistant teachers. The years of experience of the head teachers were as shown in table 4.5. One (12.5%) of the head teachers had the longest teaching experience of 22years, followed by two others(25%) who had 21 years of teaching experience, and another two head teachers(25%) with 19 years of teaching experience. The three other head teachers (37.5%) had teaching experience of 15, 16, and 17 respectively. From the findings, the head teachers had relatively long years of teaching experience. To establish whether there the teaching experience of the head teachers had an influence on academic performance of students, a correlation test was run and the findings tabulated as follows:

Table 4.18: Pearson's correlation of teaching experience of head teachers and academic performance of students.

		average school performance mean score for 2007, 2008 and 2009	years of experience
average school performance mean score for 2007, 2008 and 2009	Pearson Correlation	1	-.186
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.659
	N	8	8
years of experience	Pearson Correlation	-.186	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.659	.
	N	8	8

From the findings in table 4.18 above, no significant correlation was found to exist between the years of experience of the head teachers and the academic performance of the students. This meant that it is not necessarily true that a more experienced head teacher would produce better student performance than one with fewer years of teaching experience. This finding deviates from the view held by Darling-Hammond & Youngs (2002) that teaching experience is significantly associated with higher student achievement or greater achievement gains.

The researcher also obtained data concerning the teaching experience of the assistant teachers. These were presented in table 4.6 above. The findings of the distribution of teachers by number of years of teaching experience revealed a crucial trend. 26(29.2%) of the teachers had only 0-2 years of experience, indicating that they were newly employed. 17(19.1%) and 18(20.2%) of the teachers had teaching experience of 6-10 years and over 10 years respectively. Majority of teachers were found to have teaching experience of 3-5 years. Those who had over ten years of teaching experience seemed to move out of TSC for better jobs or diminish due natural attrition and retirement. The possible relationship between the years of experience of the assistant teachers and the academic performance of students was investigated by the researcher through a correlation test and the results were tabulated as follows:

Table 4.19: Pearson's correlation of number of years of teaching experience of teachers and academic performance of students

		average school mean covering the years 2007, 2008, and 2009	teaching experience of the respondent
average school mean covering the years 2007, 2008, and 2009	Pearson Correlation	1	.174
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.104
	N	89	89
teaching experience of the respondent	Pearson Correlation	.174	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.104	.
	N	89	89

In view of the result of the Pearson' correlation, there was no significant relationship between the years of experience of assistant teachers and the academic performance of students. This meant that it is not necessarily true that the more the years of experience of a teacher, the better the performance of the students. This is still a deviation from the position taken by Darling-Hammond & Youngs (2002) that teaching experience is significantly associated with higher student achievement or greater achievement gains.

CONCLUSIONS

All the head teachers were professionally qualified to head their schools. However, there was no significant relationship between their academic qualification and the academic performance of their students. There was a serious problem of understaffing and shortage of qualified teachers. A weak negative relationship existed between professional qualification of teachers and academic performance of students implying that the higher the academic qualification of the teachers, the lower the academic achievement of the students. This therefore implied that teacher's effectiveness was not only a factor of academic qualification, but other factors also came into play.

There was no significant correlation between the number of teachers on the staff and the academic performance of students. Even though there was a serious case of understaffing in the division, there was no substantive evidence that the poor academic performance could be blamed on understaffing. Most head teachers had sufficient matching experience. No significant correlation was found to exist between the years of experience of the head teachers and the academic performance of the students. This meant that it was not necessarily true that a more experienced head teacher would produce better student performance than one with fewer years of teaching experience.

Majority of teachers were found to have teaching experience of three to five years, Those who had more years of teaching experience seemed to move out of TSC for better jobs or diminish due natural attrition and retirement. There was no significant relationship between the years of experience of assistant teachers and the academic performance of students. This meant that it is not necessarily true that the more the years of experience of a teacher, the better the performance of the students.

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