

# **Influence of Head Teachers' Facilitation of Teachers' Professional Growth on Pupils' Performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Public Primary Schools in Meru County, Kenya**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of head teachers' facilitation of teachers' professional growth on pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in public primary schools in Meru County. The objective of the study was to establish the influence of facilitation of teachers' professional growth by the head teachers on pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County. Descriptive survey research design was adopted and a sample of 67 head teachers, 389 teachers and 778 pupils was drawn from 67 public primary schools in Meru County. The instruments used were the questionnaires for head teachers and teachers while focus group discussion was applied to collect data from the pupils. Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. The data was presented in frequencies, mean, standard deviation and percentages. The study found that failure to facilitate teachers' professional growth significantly influenced academic performance of pupils in KCPE. This study recommends that the head teachers should facilitate teachers' professional growth by encouraging teachers to attend workshops and training courses.

**KEY WORDS:** Facilitation, Head teachers, Public primary schools, Pupils' KCPE performance, Teachers' professional growth.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to the Study**

Head teachers are seen as the driving forces behind any school and it is argued that they are significant to the academic growth of pupils (Williams, 2010). Hence it is the responsibility of the head teacher to facilitate teachers' professional growth by encouraging them to attend in-service courses for the benefit of the pupils. This is the reason why Adeogun and Olisaemeka (2011) concluded that any organization that does not plan for its human resources will often find that it is meeting neither the personnel requirements nor its overall goals effectively.

Teachers' professional growth provides opportunities for teachers to explore new roles, develop new instructional techniques, refine their practice and broaden their individual skills (Mosha, 2017). A teacher who perceives professional growth positively is likely to attain new knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and dispositions. Within such disposition is pride, self-esteem, commitment, self-drive and creativity. All these attributes have to be owned by teachers who are determined to assist pupils to improve in academic performance (Mosha, 2017). But the support of head teachers is crucial for promotion of teachers' professional growth. However, inadequate teachers' recognition and absence of incentives to teachers by the head teachers lead to low productivity and poor academic performance of pupils (Republic of Kenya, 2012).

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The government of Kenya has invested a lot on head teachers through workshops, seminars and teacher training institutions (Republic of Kenya, 2012). The government has also provided funds to procure teaching and learning materials through Free Primary Education (FPE) program since 2003 (Okech and Somers, 2010). But the quality and performance in education is still below average in most public primary schools in Meru County due to poor management of both human and material resources. However, it is

indicated that in the last five years, pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County has been below average. The head teachers, as the leaders of schools, play great roles in academic performance of primary schools in Kenya (Chitiavi, 2002). A study by Orodho (2014) in Mandera County indicated that effective management of schools translated positively to students' academic achievement. But none of these scholars addressed head teachers' management strategies on pupils' performance in KCPE in public schools in Meru County. It was therefore important to carry out the research to find out the influence of head teachers' facilitation of teachers' professional growth on pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County.

### **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The study objective was:

- i. To establish the extent to which facilitation of teachers' professional growth by the head teachers influences pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County.

### **1.4 Hypothesis of the Study**

The study hypothesis was:

- i. There was no significant relationship between facilitation of teachers' professional growth by head teachers and pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County.

## **II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

### **2.1 Influence of Facilitation of Teachers' Professional Growth by the Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE**

Professional growth is defined as the process where the individual teachers undergo training and re-training such as seminar, conference, workshop and lectures for the purpose of making them to more confident, efficient and effective in the school system (Panigrahi, 2012). However, other scholars have defined professional growth differently. For example, Ocham and Okoth (2015) defined staff professional growth as a way of giving the staff a chance to update and improve their skills, knowledge and qualifications in order to be adoptive to their jobs.

Teachers' professional growth may also mean capacity building for teachers which according to Stocklin (2010) are the systematic process which involves subjecting teachers to intellectual activities purposely designed and meant to develop and update their knowledge to the classroom activities which has positive impact on the students. According to Pelton (2013) capacity building programs organized by head teachers for teachers enhanced their professionalism and made them better in content delivery. Professional development relies on the assumption that it improves the ability and skills of teachers and improves pupils' academic performance. Teachers who attend seminars grow professionally and become respectful and committed to meeting the needs of individual pupils from diverse backgrounds (Pelton, 2013).

According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (2012) some of the ways in which head teachers can meet their staff motivational needs include, giving teachers a chance to attend in-service trainings and other activities, delegating important responsibilities such as chairing subject panels and inviting role models to talk to teachers. Professional growth for teachers needs to be geared towards changes in the classrooms where teachers work in terms of new skills, knowledge and positive attitudinal change (Tam, 2014).

Head teachers in effective schools therefore involve themselves in ensuring that teachers get opportunity for in-service training (Republic of Kenya, 2012). Kara (2010) found that when head teachers establish and participate in the technical development of their staff, students' academic performance is enhanced. The study further indicates that recognition of teachers is mainly done through technical professional development and appreciation in kind or words for positive contribution to the success of the school as seen in students' achievement. Ocham and Okoth (2015) found that when teachers were encouraged to go for professional courses by head teachers, the teachers were motivated to work harder to achieve the institutional goals. This explains why motivated teachers are able to learn from others whenever they are facilitated to participate in various professional development activities such as workshops and seminars.

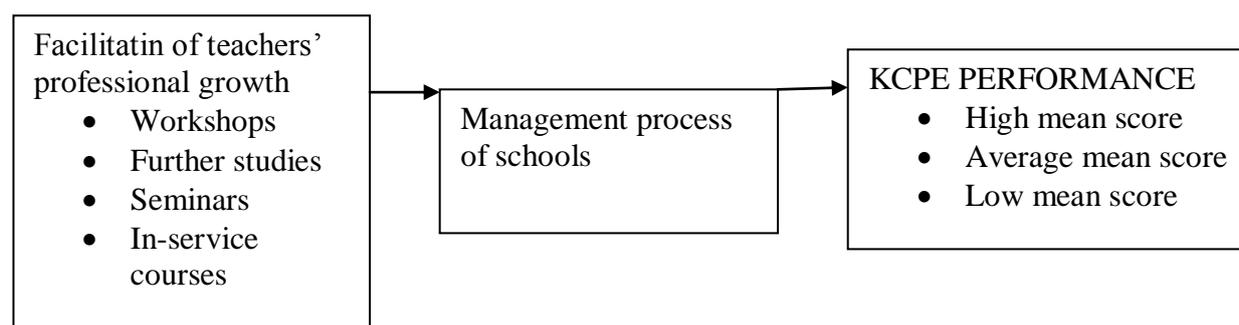
A study by Nzambi (2012) found that head teachers promote teachers' professional development by using supervisors and colleagues to train teachers on instructional practices. Other methods include allowing and encouraging teachers to undertake private studies, using external sources, County level workshops consultations. Ocham and Okoth (2015) found that teachers and administrators benefit to a great extent from all the professional development opportunities they get that they can be in form of in-service programs, funding for outside workshops and conferences. Such opportunities also encourage teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills.

## 2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study adopted path goal theory. The theory was developed by Evan Martin in 1970 and modified by House Robert in 1971. According to this theory, leaders are effective because of their impact on subordinates. The theory is concerned with is how the leader influences the subordinates' perceptions of their work goals, personal goals and directs paths to goal attainment. The theory suggests that a leader's behavior is motivating or satisfying to the degree that the behavior increases subordinates' goal attainment and clarifies the paths to these goals. In this theory it is assumed that a leader complements his employees and compensates for their shortcomings. This theory is related to the current study such that head teachers need to facilitate teachers' professional growth which leads to improvement of pupils' performance in KCPE. As the path goal theory provides ways for leaders to encourage and support their employees in achieving their goals, the head teachers need to encourage and support teachers by encouraging them to attend professional courses, undertake post college studies and facilitating them to attend in-service courses.

## 2.3 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a model of presentation which shows the relationship of variables diagrammatically (Orodho, 2014). Figure 1 shows the relationship between facilitation of professional growth by head teachers and pupils' performance in KCPE.



**Figure 1 Relationship between Facilitation of Teachers' Professional Growth by Head Teachers and pupils' performance in KCPE**

Figure 1 shows how inputs such as encouraging teachers to attend workshops, further studies, seminars and in-service courses and in the process of school management lead to KCPE performance which can be high, average or low mean score depending on the head teacher's capability. The independent variable is facilitation of teachers' professional growth by head teachers while dependent variable is KCPE performance.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Baskarada (2014) defines target population as all the members of a real set of people, events or objects to which a researcher wishes to generate the results of the research. 668 head teachers, 4,008 teachers and 8,016 class seven and eight pupils in public primary schools in Meru County were the target population. A sample is a sub-group carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with relevant characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2015). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2015), a sample size of 15% and above of the target population is large enough and allows for reliable data analysis and testing and this is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1 Sample Size**

Sub-County	Target Population	15% Sample Size
Imenti South	11117	
Meru Central	9514	
Imenti North	8212	
Igembe North	8613	
Igembe South	7211	
Tigania East	8312	
Tigania West	8513	
Buuri	54 8	

**Total**

**668100**

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**Source: Meru County Director of Education (2018)**

Table 1 shows a sample size of 15% for each sub-County in public primary schools in Meru County. The study used purposive sampling technique in determining the sample size for each Sub-County. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2014), purposive sampling is a sampling technique that allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the study objectives. The researcher used a total sample size of 100 head teachers out of 668 target population in public primary schools in Meru County. This was obtained by calculating a sample size of 15% of the target population per sub- County and this percentage was large enough to allow for reliable data analysis and testing (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2015).

### **3.2 Data Collection Instruments**

Research instruments are techniques used by a researcher to gather information pertaining to the study aimed at establishing or refuting some hypothesis (Hakim, 2015). The researcher used the questionnaire to collect data from head teachers. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2010), the questionnaire is preferred because the responses are gathered in a standardized way and they are more objective than interviews. Questionnaire is also relatively quick to use especially when information is collected from a large portion of a group. Questionnaire allowed uniformity in the way questions were asked thus ensuring greater comparability in the process (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2012). This instrument saved time since the targeted respondents were literate and therefore easier for them to respond to questions. The study used both open and closed-ended questions where the latter were more to limit the respondents' answers on specific subject matter for easier data analysis.

### **3.3 Validity and Reliability of Instruments**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data represent the phenomenon under study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2012). According to Gaul and Gaul (2006) instrument validity refers to the degree to which research instrument actually measures the concept or property it is supposed to measure. The researcher asked two supervisors from the Department of Educational Administration and Planning of the University of Nairobi to check on content validity. The instruments were critiqued and all suggestions were incorporated before use (Orodho, 2014). For example, there was a suggestion to use clear and short questions for the respondents in the questionnaire and this was adhered to.

According to Orodho (2014) reliability is the degree to which a measurement technique can be depended upon to secure consistent results upon repeated applications. Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) also found that reliability is a measure of the degree to which research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher applied test-retest method to assess the reliability of the instruments. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) test-retest method involves administering the same instrument twice to the same group of respondents at an interval of two weeks. The selected two head teachers and twelve teachers were given different sets of questionnaire while the researcher administered focus group discussion questions to the two selected groups of pupils (Hertzog, 2009). The same instruments were administered to the same groups of respondents after two weeks. Then the researcher scored the results manually and correlated the scores from both testing periods. The correlation coefficient for the head teachers' questionnaire was 0.9 while the coefficient correlation for the teachers' questionnaire was 0.8 which was good and this implied that the instruments were reliable and acceptable for use in the study (Cronbach and Richard, 2004).

### **3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a study and making deductions and inferences: It includes scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). After collecting the questionnaire from the respondents, they were checked to ascertain whether they were complete and accurate. The data was then entered into the computer for analysis using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 which processed accurate frequencies, percentages and mean which were used to discuss the findings. From the analysis, the findings were presented in the subsequent chapters where discussions, conclusion and recommendations were drawn. The multiple linear regression model was used to measure the relationship between independent variable, that is, facilitation of teachers' professional growth by head teachers while dependent variable is, pupils' performance in KCPE. The regression model helped to explain the magnitude and direction of relationship between variables of the study through the use of correlation-coefficient of determination and determination and the level of significant.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations in the Research

Ethical considerations are issues of voluntariness, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality and data protection among others (Orodho, 2014). This researcher advocates that despite of the high value of knowledge gained in research, knowledge cannot be pursued at the expense of human dignity. Therefore before data collection, the researcher sought permission and clearance from all relevant authorities such as NACOSTI, County Commissioner and County Director of Education and head teachers in Meru County. The researcher sought consent from all the respondents and before data collection they were assured of confidentiality.

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Head Teachers' Highest Academic Qualifications

Head teachers were asked to state their highest academic qualifications and results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2 Distribution of Head Teachers by Highest Academic Qualifications**

Academic Qualification	Head f	Teachers %
P1.Certificate	46	71.3
Bachelors degree	14	21.5
Post graduate	5	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 indicates that majority, 71.3% of the head teachers were certificate holders, while 21.5% were bachelors' degree holders and a few, 7.2%, had post graduate qualifications. This implies that head teachers had more knowledge and administrative skills to handle challenges that are common in schools which prevent pupils from performing better in academics (Lorgwell-Mackean, 2012).

### 4.2 The influence Facilitation of Teachers' Professional Growth by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE

The researcher sought to investigate the influence of head teachers' strategy of facilitation of teachers' professional growth on pupils' performance in KCPE. The questionnaire given to the respondents was based on a 5 Likert scale from strongly agree rated at 5 in a descending order to strongly disagree that was rated at 1. The key is as follows: 5= Strongly agree (SA), 4=Agree (A), 3= Un decided (U), 2= Disagree (D), 1=Strongly disagree (SD). A number of items were included in the questionnaire for head teachers and the findings are presented in Tables 3

**Table 3 Head Teachers' Responses on the Influence of Facilitation of Teachers' Professional Growth by Head Teachers on Pupils' Performance in KCPE**

Statement	SD		D		U		A		SA	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
1.I fairly identify teachers to attend workshops.	5	7.9	7	11.1	8	12.7	19	28.6	26	39.7
2.Teachers who attend workshops learn new teaching and learning methods.	6	9.5	8	12.7	3	4.8	20	30.2	28	42.8
3.Teachers who attend workshops are awarded certificates by the school and the workshop organizers.	5	7.9	7	11.1	8	12.7	19	28.6	26	39.7

4. Workshops promote confidence among teachers in content delivery.	20	30.1	9	14.3	2	3.2	15	23.8
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**n=65**

Table 3 shows that majority, 39.7% of the head teachers strongly agreed that they identified teachers who attended workshop in a fair manner while 7.9% strongly disagreed to this statement. Adeolu (2012) found that for organized trainings such as workshops to be effective, the principals need to be fair in selecting those to attend and plan well so that participants are sufficiently informed of the purpose of the training. The advantages of a workshop are the exchange of knowledge among the participants that enable teachers to improve skills, competencies and enhance their professional growth.

On whether there was any impact on teachers who attended workshops, Table 3 shows that majority, 42.8% of the head teachers strongly agreed that teachers who attended workshops learnt new instructional methods while a few, 9.5% strongly disagreed to this statement and only 4.8% were undecided. But although such teachers were expected to assist the pupils perform better in academics, this was not well reflected in their respective schools. Mungai and Njoki (2012) found that although professional development programs were meant to enhance the capacity of teachers but the main challenge was the way they were conducted such that they were organized to offer short term solutions facing teachers in their immediate environment. There were no follow up training programs to assess whether teachers benefited from the programs that they attended.

Table 3 shows that majority, 39.7% strongly agreed that their schools and the workshop organizers awarded teachers with certificates whenever they attended such trainings while 7.9% strongly disagreed to this statement. These findings correspond with Kara (2010) who found that when head teachers participate in the technical development of their staff through recognition of teachers by awarding of certificates, appreciation in kind or word, students' academic performance is enhanced.

On whether workshops promoted confidence among teachers in contents delivery, Table 3 shows that majority, 30.1% strongly disagreed that teachers who attended workshops gained confidence in contents delivery while 23.8% of the respondents agreed to this statement and only 3.2% were undecided on this statement. Enueme and Egwunyenga (2010) carried out a survey on 20 teachers randomly selected from 12 government owned schools in Asaba metropolis in Nigeria. They found that head teachers were very active in promoting professional development of their staff. The findings further noted that adequate professional development not only improved confidence in teachers but also improved teachers' work performance and enhanced students' academic performance.

#### **4.3 Discussion**

The study findings indicate that facilitation of teachers' professional growth by head teachers had significant influence on pupils' performance in KCPE in public primary schools in Meru County. The study found that when teachers are facilitated to grow professionally by head teachers, they reciprocate by working hard towards the success of the pupils' academic performance. Ocham and Okoth (2015) concur that when teachers were encouraged to go for professional courses by head teachers, the teachers were motivated to work harder to achieve the institutional goals. The study found that when head teachers encourage teachers to go for further studies, attend in-service courses and workshops this enhances teachers' instructional skills. This corresponds with Ocham and Okoth (2015) that teachers and administrators benefit to a great extent from all the professional development opportunities they get that they can be in form of in-service programs, funding for outside workshops and conferences. Such opportunities also encourage teachers to enhance their pedagogical skills.

The findings in Figure 1 indicate that when head teachers encourage teachers to attend workshops, further studies, seminars and in-service courses in the process of school management, this affects pupils' performance in KCPE which can be high, average or low mean score depending on the head teacher's capability. Kara (2010) concurs that when head teachers participate in the technical development of their staff through recognition of teachers by awarding of certificates, appreciation in kind or word, students' academic performance is enhanced. This finding is also in line with Enueme and Egwunyenga (2010) that head teachers were very active in promoting professional development of their staff and this improved confidence in teachers and also improved teachers' work performance and enhanced students' academic performance.

## V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that head teachers' facilitation of teachers' professional growth had significant relationship on pupils' performance in KCPE. However, from the study it is clear that although majority of teachers were facilitated to grow professionally, this was not reflected on pupils' academic performance since most of them had no time to reflect on their own experience as well as give support in modifying their classroom practices.

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