

Head Teachers' Perception on Teachers' Morale towards Instructional Work in Public Primary Schools in Kegogi Division, Marani Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to find out the head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division of Marani Sub-County, Kenya. The study utilized mixed research design. The target population was 29 head teachers and 145 teachers in public primary schools in the division. Purposive non-sampling method was used to select the head teachers. The selection was based on the schools' performance in class eight mock examination thus high and low performing schools were included in the study. Consequently, 9 head teachers were interviewed. Simple random sampling method was used to select teachers. In this case, 45 teachers which represented 30% of the population were selected. Interview schedule and questionnaire were used as data collection instruments. Quantitative data was analysed using frequencies and means while qualitative data was analysed using text themes. The results were presented in form of tables, figures and text form. From the findings of the study, it was established that teachers' morale towards instructional work was low with an overall mean of 2.31 out maximum 5.0. Head teachers from schools with low teachers' morale revealed that teachers were not keen in preparing teaching and learning resources hence low performance in their instructional work. The study recommended that head teachers should ensure that teachers prepare teaching-learning resources for better instructional results. Head teachers should as well make certain that they assess teachers regularly and release timely feedback to ameliorate teachers' instructional work.

Keywords: Head Teachers' Perception, Teachers' Morale, Instructional Work, and Public Primary School.

1. INTRODUCTION

Morale is an important factor which influences level productivity in a work place. However, several authors have asserted that its standard definition is elusive (French, 1988). Some authors for instance, Linda (1998) defines morale as a state of mind, encompassing all the feelings determined by an individual's anticipation of the extent of satisfaction of needs which he/she perceives as significantly affecting his/her total work situation. According to Houchard (2005), morale is the idea or willingness to endure hardship. Webster's New World Dictionary (1967) describes morale as a mental condition with respect to courage, discipline, confidence, enthusiasm, willingness to endure hardship, etcetera with a group, in relation to a group, or within an individual. Guion (1958) defines morale as the extent to which an individual's needs are satisfied and the extent to which the individual perceives that satisfaction as stemming from his total job situation. In school situation, teachers' morale may be defined as the extent to which a teacher feels that his/her needs have been fulfilled and connects the fulfillment as emerging from his or her work performance.

Ellanberg (1972) argues that where teacher morale is high, there is typically high productivity in terms of teachers and pupils academic achievement. Similarly, Black (2001) argues that where teacher morale is high, teachers' perform well in their work. Mendel (1987) asserts that low morale lead to decreased productivity. Further, Lou (2007) contends that low morale leads to lots of negative attitudes and behaviour of teachers thus little initiative is witnessed when it comes to preparing lessons and other classroom activities. According to Lumsden (1998), low levels of teachers' morale lead to decreased teacher productivity and burnout. It has also been established by Hoy and Miskel (1987) that school environment affects teachers' morale and work performance. However, Miller (1981) opines that improving school environment enhances teachers' morale make teaching more pleasant.

The head teacher as a Chief Executive Officer in any given school (Mbiti, 1974) is important due to his / her skills in school management which in turn affect the behavior of the school in terms of how teachers teach, how much pupils learn and the overall school academic performance (Too, Kimutai and Kosgei, 2012). In addition, studies have found out that high achieving schools are positively correlated with strong instructional leaders (Tyagi, 2011) who affect the quality of individual teacher instruction, the height of pupil academic achievement and degree of internal and external efficiency within the institution (Khan, Saeed and Fatima, 2009). It is on the head teacher that we largely rely for bringing about a considerable improvement in the standards of primary education and in the professional conscience of teachers (Republic of Kenya, 1964) therefore, the head teacher as an instructional leader is the pivotal point within the school who affects the quality of individual and the degree of efficiency in school functioning through performance instructional supervisory roles (Ugboko and Adediwura, 2012).

According to Bell and Rhodes (2002) a head teacher's instructional supervisory roles includes; originating the curriculum statement, commissioning subject coordinators to write policies and schemes of work for those areas over which they have responsibility and monitor the effectiveness of what happens to children in classrooms . Atkinson 2001 as cited in Sindhvad (2009) opine that a head teacher is expected to create a climate that is conducive to teaching and learning; work towards improving pupils achievement and be accountable for results; support and supervise teachers' work in instructional and classroom management; supervise the use of the curriculum and its localization to ensure its relevance to the school; and ensure effective staff development programmes are operational in the school and that teachers improve their professional competences. In Kenya, head teachers are the immediate Quality Assurance Officers at school level (Mwita, 2010). Their instructional supervisory roles entail: checking teaching standards by reference to schemes of work, lesson notes, records of work done, and pupils' exercise books; also by carrying out actual visits to the classroom to see the work of individual teachers (A Manual for the Heads of Secondary Schools in Kenya (Ministry of Education, 1987). Reviewed studies carried out in the division were destined to address the issue of dismal performance in national examinations and had focused on students' discipline, school environment, school leadership and parental involvement as determinants that have a significant bearing on the level of pupils' performance in schools (Gusii Education Taskforce, 1993; and Gusii Educational and Advancement Resources [GEAR] Conference Report 2009). However, this study was to investigate head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division which was not the centre of focus. The objectives of the study were;

- (i) To investigate the level of teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division.
- (ii) To find out head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division.

2. TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL WORK

Musungu and Nasongo (2009); and Mobegi, Ondigi and Oburu (2010) contend that teachers' instructional work included preparation and utilization of professional records such as lesson books, schemes of work, records of work covered and class attendance register. Kavisi 2002 as cited in Mabonga (2009) whose purpose of study was to examine the perceptions held by head teachers of their role in the management of school – based change in Western Kenya, indicates that teachers' instructional duties entail preparation of schemes of work and development of appropriate instructional materials especially teaching aids; regular marking and checking appropriately pupils' exercise books, projects, practical work, assignments and continuous assessment scripts; teaching lessons on the school timetable; keeping records to learning sessions in classrooms, laboratories and workshops; and ensuring that students are adequately prepared, and presented for

internal assessments and national examinations. A gap existed in the study in respect to head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards preparation and use of teaching/learning instruments in public primary schools in Kegogi division. Ayeni (2012) carried out a study on assessment of principals' supervisory roles for quality assurance in secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. The findings of the study indicated that teachers performed instructional roles such as ensuring preparation of lesson notes, scheme of work, and monitoring of students' attendance. However, the current study was to find out head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards preparation and use of teaching/learning instruments in public primary schools in the division. A study conducted by Yunus, Yunus, N.J., & Ishak, (2011) on the school principals' roles in teaching supervision in selected schools in Perak Malaysia found out that the head teachers' instructional supervisory roles were correlated with curriculum implementation, teaching material preparation and the improvement of teachers' professionalism. Mwasindo (2010) conducted a study entitled effect of head teachers' instructional supervision practices on pupils' performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Kilifi District, Kenya. Findings of the study also revealed that checking of teachers records of work did not have an effect on pupils' academic achievement. A gap existed to establish head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in the division.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study utilized mixed research design. The design was appropriate because each data gathering procedure had its own particular weaknesses or biases hence there was need to use both quantitative and qualitative approaches to complement each other in order to get a better understanding of the problem under study (Best & Kahn, 1989). Quantitative approach focused on producing specific numerical assignment to the phenomena under study, whereas qualitative approach generated narrative or textual descriptions of the phenomena under study (Scott & Deirdre, 2009). The target population was 29 head teachers' and 145 teachers in public primary schools in the division. Purposive non-random sampling method was used to ensure that both high and low performing schools in class eight mock examination were selected as members of the sample (Orodho, 2009). In this case 9 head teachers and 45 teachers out of 29 head teachers and 145 teachers respectively which represented 30% of target population were selected. Structured closed-ended questionnaire and interview schedule were used as data collection instruments. Content validity was used to ensure that test items covered all objectives and variables in regard to language use and subject matter of the study. Internal consistency technique was used to establish reliability of teachers' questionnaire and it yielded a high Cronbach's coefficient alpha value of 0.97 and thus the questionnaire was considered reliable data collection tool to be for this study. Data was analysed and results were presented in form of tables, figures and text form.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The purpose of this study was to investigate head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division. To realize the study objectives, teachers' morale mean score was foremost established by school then class eight mock examination mean was also generated by school. The head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work (preparation and use of schemes of work, lesson plan, teaching and learning aids, in-service training, and teachers' classroom assessment) was as well determined.

Teachers' Morale Means Score by School:

To achieve the objective of establishing teachers' morale mean score in the division, items related to instructional duty were constructed in form of statements and grouped into two namely; management of teaching and learning activities and management of classroom (Ayeni and Afolabi, 2012). The categorization was done to ensure balance of items in each cluster. The items were placed against a Likert scale of five to one and teachers were required to respond about how they perform their instructional duties. To measure teachers' morale level, each item score was added up and an average was sought by dividing by the total number of items in each of the sub-sections. The computed outcomes ranged from 1.00 – 5.00. Whereby 1.00 – 1.99 (very low morale), 2.00 – 2.99 (low morale), 3.00 – 3.99 (moderate morale), 4.00 – 4.99 (high morale) and 5.00 (very high morale). The respondents marked against statements which best expressed how they carried out their duties in the spaces provided in the items continuum. The highest score in the continuum was five and the lowest score was one. The overall morale mean scores of teachers in each school were calculated and the results have been presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Overall mean score of teachers' morale in regard to performance of instructional roles by school

School	N	Teachers' morale Mean Score
A	5	4.6607
B	5	2.0857
C	5	1.5429
D	5	1.5714
E	5	1.7000
F	5	4.7571
G	5	1.5286
H	5	1.4857
I	5	1.4143
Total	45	2.3059

Table 1 points out that majority of the teachers had a mean less than 2.1 out of maximum 5.0 and overall mean of 2.31. This result signifies that teachers' morale was low.

Table 2 Overall mean scores of teachers' morale in regard to performance of instructional roles and class eight pupils' academic achievement in mock examination by school

School	N	Teachers' Morale Mean Score	Pupils Academic Achievement Mean Score
A	5	4.6607	331.00
B	5	2.0857	231.32
C	5	1.5429	200.04
D	5	1.5714	200.86
E	5	1.7000	214.32
F	5	4.7571	336.58
G	5	1.5286	168.47
H	5	1.4857	191.83
I	5	1.4143	204.35
Total	45	2.3059	230.97

Table 2 indicates that when the mean of teachers' morale towards instructional work was high, the mean score of pupils' academic achievement was also high and vice versa. The overall pupils' academic achievement mean score was 230.97 marks out of possible 500 marks.

A study by Houchard (2005) on principal leadership, teacher morale, and student achievement in seven schools in Mitchell County, North Carolina agrees with the results since he established that majority of teachers (77.5%) scored a morale mean of 3.05 and thus had moderately high morale and there was high students' achievement. From Table 1 it can also be inferred that the higher teachers scored in the morale Likert scale the higher was the overall mean by their school and vice versa. Also, low morale scores among the teachers affected their overall morale mean.

The results of this study are also comparable with Lou (2007) who used a three point morale Likert scale and found out that teacher morale mean score was 3.19 and student mean score was 60.6 marks and thus concluded that when teacher morale was high, their productivity in terms of pupils' academic achievement was also high. Similarly, Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu and Nthinguri (2013) identified low morale of teachers as a critical factor that inhibited effective implementation of basic education curriculum and led to low pupils academic achievement. Equally, Rauf, Akhtar, Iqbal and Malik (2013) utilized Pearson coefficient of correlation and established that there is a statistical significant relationship between teachers morale and productivity $r = 0.811$, $p = 0.000$ ($< \alpha = .01$).

Head Teachers' Perception on Teachers' Morale towards Instructional Work:

The results from the interviews conducted with head teachers had revealed what they perceived as reasons to why the teachers' morale was high or low towards performance of instructional work. One head teacher commented:

“Teaching-Learning aids are not available in this school though they are crucial for good performance. This is because of inadequate resources and no time is allocated for their preparation. In standard eight we do not have

time for developing teaching-learning materials. As a teacher you are expected to prepare schemes of work, lesson plan and notes. Sincerely there is no time and we do not have enough teachers to assist. ’’

Another head teacher remarked:

“We occasionally make teaching and learning aids. If we go round the classrooms, you will see that the walls are not well finished for teaching and learning aids to be hung. The doors and windows are not lockable. Some teachers also have negative attitude towards making of these learning resources, some do not have the required skills to make the resources. In short, teachers don’t like this activity! ’’

One head teacher also made this statement:

“Most teachers have low opinion towards assessment carried out by the head teacher. Teachers feel that classroom assessment is a fault finding exercise destined to fix them. They seem not to want to move away from their comfort zone. Rarely QASOs visit this school to see the extent to which teaching and learning process is being implemented. Consequently, we are experiencing low teachers and pupils productivity. ’’

Similarly a head teacher from another school stated:

“Lesson plans are not prepared regularly in our school but teachers consult the schemes of work as they teach. Sometimes teachers become uncomfortable when we insist that they should not go to classrooms without duly prepared and endorsed lesson plans. This has led to poor preparation of records of work covered and delay in syllabus coverage by the teachers. ’’

Another head teacher had to emphatically state this:

“Teachers do not record the work covered though they should do it. They know what they have covered from the schemes of work. I am also aware they should record work covered. When I try to request for record of work covered books, teachers say that I am bringing problems here. I end up using subject panels to ensure that work is done by teachers. ’’

One head teacher from a school with high teachers’ morale had pointed out:

“Above average mean standard score you see in our school is due to sheer hard work from teachers. For instance, in regard to preparation of schemes of work, I give the dates during staff meetings when the schemes of work should be ready and submitted. In this case I normally give two weeks. I keep a record of those who have submitted. After the two weeks lapse, the teachers are again reminded to complete the work within seven days failure to meet the deadline, action is taken. I endorse submitted schemes of work then return them to teachers for use. ’’

Equally an alternative perception was commented by a head teacher of a school with high teachers’ morale:

“In my school, schemes of work are prepared regularly by teachers as per syllabus coverage in T/L process. We have a scheme format which entails objectives, lesson content as stipulated by lessons per week and per term. The format also contains some resources which the teacher uses to teach and reference materials as the syllabus demands. The lesson must be carried out as per the experience of the teacher and the level of the pupil. The scheme of work is child centred and the content to be covered in that class. The teachers also use the format they were given at the Teachers Training Colleges they attended. ’’

Another head teacher from a school with high teachers’ morale had also said:

“In this school it is a must that teachers prepare teaching-learning aids. We have the manilla papers to be used in this case. There are also locally available materials used to prepare teaching-learning aids for science. We believe this helps our pupils to perform better. It is not the work of the teacher to buy the resource materials. The school procures all the resource materials required. After preparation of the teaching-learning aids, they are hung for a specified period and then removed at the end of each topic. It is also required that the teachers give the children a chance to draw the charts. By all standards, this is a child centred institution! The subject panels assist in the checking on the preparation of teaching learning aids. As a head teacher, I also supervise this work twice a week. ’’

Correspondingly, another head teacher from a school with high teachers' morale had commented:

“In my school, we organize for the in-service training. If there is a new teacher in our school, he/she has to undergo this training so that is inducted to the culture of this school. The training should entail, setting of examinations and lesson preparations. The publishers also organize for seminars/workshops. The school facilitates the teachers to attend the seminars/workshops. When the teachers come back, they have to report to their respective subject panel what they learnt and what changes have emerged if any in the syllabus.”

From the verbatim results, it shows that there was a relationship between teachers' morale and head teachers perception towards teachers' performance on instructional work. Consequently, it appeared that head teachers of schools with high morale teachers had positive perceptions towards teachers' performance of instructional work than head teachers of schools with low morale.

A Study conducted by Regina (2010) supports the qualitative results of this study by indicating that there is a positive correlation between availability and usage of teaching materials and teachers' productivity. Thus, it implied from the results that the higher teachers scored in the Likert scale type in regard to their morale towards instructional work, the positive were head teachers' perceptions on teachers' morale and vice versa. Reche, Bundi, Riungu and Mbugua (2012) also established that teachers' who inadequately prepared teaching-learning resources, had large workload, and irregularly assessed by head teachers, had their pupils post low output in regard to pupils' academic performance. In the same vein, Matoke, Okibo and Nyamongo (2015) found out that teachers' capacity building on teaching and learning processes had a significant effect on teacher morale. Head teachers verbatim also pointed out that inadequate preparation of teaching-learning resource materials and in-service training of teachers had an impact on execution of their instructional work. This means that schools where teachers were not expediting teaching-processes their morale and productivity towards instructional work was low. Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae (2013) reported that irregular teacher assessment in schools hampered effective quality teaching-learning process. Similarly head teachers perceptions indicated that teachers were not willing to be assessed by them. It was revealed from verbatim that assessment of teachers by head teachers was not welcome by teachers hence lowered their morale towards instructional work.

5. CONCLUSION

The study was to establish head teachers' perception on teachers' morale towards instructional work in public primary schools in Kegogi division. The results of the study revealed that teachers' morale towards instructional work was low with an overall mean of 2.31 out maximum 5.0. The head teachers from schools with low teachers' morale revealed that teachers were not keen in preparing teaching and learning resources and did not appreciate classroom assessment to be conducted by head teachers'. This led to low performance of teachers' instructional work. In schools with high teachers' morale, the head teachers pointed out that teachers prepared teaching and learning resource materials and attended in-service training to enhance their instructional work performance.

6. RECOMMENDATION

Basing on the results of study this study, it is recommended that head teachers should ensure that teachers prepare teaching-learning resources for better instructional results. It was revealed from the study that in schools where teachers did not adequately prepare for teaching-learning resource their morale and productivity was low. The head teachers should as well be encouraged to assess teachers regularly and bring out constructive counsel geared towards improving teachers' instructional work performance.

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