

Competence of Head Teachers in Primary School Management in Kenya: An Evaluation of Capacity Building

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of capacity building on head teachers' competence in primary schools Management in Bomet County. The ministry of education in collaboration with the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) rolled out a one year diploma programme on school management for all the head teachers in public primary schools in Kenya in 2011. The aim of the programme was to upgrade the competency of head teachers on school management. The research randomly selected a total of 378 head teachers from a population frame of 610 head teachers in the county. Quantitative data was collected by use of self-administered structured questionnaires. Analysis of data using correlation showed that capacity building is highly correlated to head teachers' competency in primary school management. The correlation of the capacity building to managerial competency variables were: Resource management, $r = 0.389$; Result based management, $r = 0.496$; Procurement process, $r = 0.394$; Finance management, $r = 0.567$; Strategic leadership, $r = 0.567$; Project planning, $r = 0.547$. The correlation matrix obtained from Spearman's rank correlation showed similar results at 0.05 percent level of significance. The results were $r = 0.00$ $p < 0.05$; showing that capacity building is significantly related to competency in primary school management. It was recommended that training needs should be conducted periodically for improving knowledge and skills for the administrators.

Keywords: Capacity building, evaluation, competency, school management

INTRODUCTION

Kiayiapi cited in Republic of Kenya (2011) asserts that the children of Kenya deserve quality service delivery and education resources should be managed in an efficient and effective manner. Kiayiapi said that education managers must lead in promoting sound leadership and good governance of public schools. The ministry of Education established the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI) to continually upgrade the core competencies (knowledge, skills and attitude) of education managers. The capacity building helps the head of schools to implement management policies, procedures and reforms in the education sector and utilize modern management tools in education institutions (David, 2007).

The one year Diploma programme in Education management was developed by KEMI with the support of United Agency for International Development (USAID). The programme was conducted through distance learning approach with the aim of imparting knowledge, skills and attitudes on crucial areas of management such as resource management, leadership and good governance, results based management, procurement and financial management, conflict resolution and disaster management, mainstreaming cross cutting issues among others.

Owens (2006) asserts that training is regarded as a tool that can assist organizations built committed and productive workforce. Employees consider training as an investment, updating of skills, and enhancing competence to handle tasks (Meyer et al, 2004). This perspective encourages reciprocity to organization, identification, involvement and low turnover thus giving the organization a competitive advantage. There is a consensus that employee commitment focuses on processes by which employees establish relationships with their organization through professional development, identification, involvement, participation, acceptance of goals and values and loyalty to the organization (Newstrom, 2002).

Silverthorne (2004) argues that employee competence influences organization performance and its delivery of services. Training has the potential to predict work outcomes such as extra role behaviour, withdrawal, performance and absenteeism. (Somers, 2009; Naicker, 2008; Kuvaas, 2006). The KEMI programme was designed to allow the participants to study in a flexible manner through distance and work-based learning thus sharing of experiences among the head teachers were enriched.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Barry, et al (1999) asserts that managers should adapt existing resources to fit their needs. Barry et al said that budgeting and control are tools which help managers to invest money wisely and to avoid waste. Frazis and Spletzer (2005) studied training for social identity and found that training helps employees identify with the organization while new and current employees acquire the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs. The findings also found that employees who enhance their skills are more likely to engage fully in their work because they derive satisfaction from competence in mastering new tasks, thus enhancing commitment to the organization.

Karia, et al (2000) studied the importance of training for continual updating and improvement in Malaysia and found that one source of human motivation at work was intrinsic motivation; desire to grow; learn and develop oneself. The findings further noted that employees view general training as a gift, this leads to a sense of debt to the company which the employee strive to repay (reciprocate) by increasing commitment, exerting more effort and increasing productivity.

Marlyn et al (2000) argues that empirical studies have provided extensive evidence that training facilitate the updating of skills, and lead to increased commitment, well-being, and sense of belonging, thus directly strengthening the organization's competitiveness (Acton and Golden, 2000; Karia and Ahmad, 2000). Bartlett (2001) studied the association between employee attitudes towards training, and feelings of organizational commitment. The findings found that perceived access to training, social impact of training, motivation to learn, and perceived benefits of training are positively related with organizational commitment.

Greensburg, et al (2008) and Lawson, et al (2003) argue that barriers to elicit employee commitment to organization arise from lack of training to update job performance skills as well as encourage a sense of belonging, thus lowering efficiency and reduced productivity in the organisation. This view supports a study by Cole (2003); Kadavil (2008) and Bartlett (2001) who found that training is an investment that may offer a greater pay off at a later date through reciprocity. This research aimed at evaluating training for gaining new skills, provision of opportunities to learn, provision of learning resources, gaining competence to handle tasks through training and encouragement to learn that would result in increasing head teachers' commitment to their administrative roles.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Stakeholders in education are concerned with the low quality of education being offered in Public primary schools in Kenya. There have been many reports (Uweso Kenya, 2013) on the concern of teachers' absenteeism, literacy and numeracy skills of pupils. Effective and efficient management of schools is of great concern to the public as it affects the performances of the pupils. There is little empirical study on correlation between capacity building and competency of head teachers in primary school management in Bomet County. This underpinned the need to carry out an evaluation of the KEMI capacity building programme to fill the gap.

Hypothesis

HO₁: Capacity building is not significantly related to head teachers' competence in primary school management in Kenya.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on Herzberg's two-factor theory cited in Armstrong (2009). This theory states that certain motivators of a job are consistently related to satisfaction while hygiene factors are related to dissatisfaction. Hygiene factors operate independent of motivational factors hence an individual can be highly motivated in his work and be dissatisfied with his work environment. This theory notes that hygiene factors or dissatisfies are extrinsic to a job such as the job itself produce dissatisfaction. While job motivators are intrinsic to the job such as achievement, recognition, opportunities for growth and personal life which produce job satisfaction.

The basic tenets of the two-factor theory provide insight into areas the managers can increase the satisfaction and thus gain commitment and loyalty to organization. The proponents of this theory are achievement, recognition, work itself, advancement and growth. This study considered capacity building of head teachers to providing skills to handle work, advance and grow through promotions and achieve targets as a result of gaining competence.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative research that has been defined as a type of research that explains phenomena by collecting numerical data which is analyzed using statistics (Cohen et. al, 2000). This study sought to explain the correlation between capacity building and head teachers' competency in primary school management.

Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Simple random sampling technique was used to select 378 head teachers from a population of 610. The Sample size represents over 50% of the population which is adequate to make generalisation of the entire population. Simple random sampling was used to select the head teachers so as to give an equal chance of being selected.

Research Instruments

Information on head teachers' competency after undergoing the training on school management conducted by KEMEI was solicited using questions of likert-type scale containing 5 response alternatives. Namely Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) these questions were rated 5,4,3,2 and 1 respectively. The weight of 5 was allocated to the response that was hypothesized to have the most positive influence on head teachers' competency while 1 was allocated to the most negative.

FINDINGS

The research showed that the programme provided a general understanding of school management to the head teachers. The mean of the head teachers' responses are as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Summary of head teachers' responses on capacity building variables

<i>Training Variables</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>mean</i>
Effective resource utilization and management (ERUM)	376	1403.75	3.7334
Results based management (RBM)	375	1267.88	3.5810
Procurement process of goods and services (PPGS)	377	1514.40	4.0170
Financial records and management (FRM)	377	1387.83	3.6813
Strategic leadership and good governance in school (SLGG)	377	1379.64	3.6924
Project planning and management (PLM)	376	1413.75	3.7874
<i>Overall Managerial Competence (MCP)</i>	<i>376</i>	<i>1394.89</i>	<i>3.6930</i>

The statistics showed that head teachers got opportunity to acquire new skills to handle tasks as the all the capacity training variables were above a mean of 3.500. The highest learned variable was procurement process that has been a challenge to many head teachers. Project planning was rated second because most of the procurement processes involves projects so head teachers could have been keen to learn. However, Results based management was rated the lowest due to poor results in many primary schools and involve many stakeholders.

Testing of hypothesis

H_{01} : Capacity building is not significantly correlated to head teachers' competence in primary school management in Kenya.

To establish whether there existed statistically significant relationship between Capacity building of head teachers and managerial competence, a correlation matrix was generated at 0.05 percent level of significance. The results were as shown on table 4.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of capacity building variables and managerial competence of head teachers

	<i>ERUM</i>	<i>RBM</i>	<i>PPGS</i>	<i>FRM</i>	<i>SLGG</i>	<i>PLM</i>	<i>MCP</i>
ERUM	1						
RBM	0.567**	1					
PPGS	0.648**	0.626**	1				
SLGG	0.402**	0.538**	0.423**	1			
FRM	0.401**	0.537**	0.424**	0.613**	1		
PLM	0.823**	0.839**	0.821**	0.708**	0.734**	1	
MCP	0.389**	0.496**	0.394**	0.562**	0.567*	0.547**	1

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

Table 2 indicates that there is a statistically significant relationship between all the capacity building variables and the managerial competence in schools. Analysis of data using correlation showed that capacity building is highly correlated to head teachers' competency in primary school management.

The correlation of the capacity building to managerial competency variables were: Resource management, $r = 0.389$; Result based management, $r = 0.496$; Procurement process, $r = 0.394$; Finance management, $r = 0.567$; Strategic leadership, $r = 0.567$; Project planning, $r = 0.547$. The correlation matrix obtained from showed similar results at 0.05 percent level of significance. The results were $r = 0.00$ $p < 0.05$; showing that capacity building is significantly related to competency in primary school management hence the hypothesis H_{01} : capacity building is not significantly related to managerial competence in primary schools management was rejected. Thus, the alternative hypothesis was accepted; capacity building is significantly related to competency in primary school management.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of capacity building on managerial competency of head teachers in primary schools in Kenya. Inferential statistics of Chi-square (χ^2) showed that training had a significant relationship with head teachers' competence in school management. This view concurs with (Owens, 2006) who argued that training influences employee commitment depending on employee perceptions. Therefore a well-planned training that achieves reciprocity in the staff will foster an individual's competency and commitment.

This view is further supported by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (cited in Armstrong, 2009), which states that the underlying needs for all human motivation are organized in a hierarchical manner. According to this theory a satisfied need is not a motivator of behavior to the extent that lower order needs become satisfied, the next higher order level of needs determine behavior. Effective training programs caters for esteem needs as well as actualization which commits employees to organizational goals.

CONCLUSION

1. This study has revealed that professional development has a significant relationship with head teachers' competency in primary schools management.
2. The training provided adequate opportunity to the head teachers to acquire new knowledge and skills on school management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Appropriate timing of training programmes to motivate and updating skills of staff should be designed.
2. Management should foster an environment where participants are given incentives through promotion and remuneration.

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