The School Prefects', Responsibilities and Academic Work Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Nakuru District, Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract

Prefects are student leaders elected or appointed and assigned administrative duties in schools. Besides their school responsibilities, prefects are expected to perform their academic work well and attain good grades in class tests and national examinations like other students. According to reports in Nakuru District Education Office, achievement in examinations of public secondary school students decline when they take up prefects' responsibilities. Perhaps this may be due to the influence of school responsibilities on their academic work. This study sought to investigate the influence of school responsibilities on prefects' academic work performance in public secondary schools in Nakuru District. The study used the descriptive survey research design. Purposive sampling was used to select the 15 secondary schools that participated in the study. A sample of 15 deputy principals, 45 class teachers and 150 school prefects were selected using purposive and simple random sampling techniques. Three instruments; Deputy Head teachers' interview guide (DHTIG), Class teachers' (CTQ) and Prefects' questionnaires (PQ) were used to collect data. The three data collection tools were validated by a team of four experts from the Department of Curriculum, Instruction and Educational Management, Egerton University. The reliabilities of CTQ and PQ were estimated using the Cronbach Alpha method. Their reliability coefficients were 0.70 and 0.73 respectively. Data were analyzed with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.2. The study established that there were significant differences on prefects' academic work performance by school responsibilities performance category. The study recommended that the teachers provide remedial teaching and academic counseling to prefects so that they can attain good grades in national examinations for entry to higher education.

Keywords: Academic work performance, Prefects, School responsibilities

Education is a fundamental human right, a key to sustainable development, peace and stability within and among countries (Wolfenson, 2000). It ensures an individual a productive future, helps in making decisions and bolsters confidence. Education also provides a ladder for achieving success in life and enables one to utilize skills and caliber in a constructive way. It is a welfare indicator, a key determinant of earnings, an important exit route from poverty and can reduce social and economic inequality (Government of Kenya [GOK], 2005). The role of education is not just to impart knowledge and skills that enable the beneficiaries to function as economies and social change agents in society, but also to impart values, ideas, attitudes and aspirations important for natural development (Nsubuga, 2003).

According to Boit, Njoki and Chang'ach (2012), the purpose of education is to equip the citizenry to reshape their society and eliminate inequality presented in levels of primary and secondary education.

Secondary education is regarded as the most important stage in the educational cycle of a child in Kenya. It is the level at which learners are expected to acquire proficiency in both academic and applied subjects. Secondary school education is important because it is the foundation for further education, training and work (Koech, 2006). It is expected to provide for an all round mental, social, moral and spiritual development and ensure balanced development in cognitive, psycho-motor