

APPRAISSING TEACHER CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATIVE SKILLS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MUMIAS EAST SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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ABSTRACT

The current research was necessitated by teachers' job dissatisfaction and the consequent decline of pupils' performance in National examinations especially in Mumias East Sub County, Kenya. The focus has been on finding out whether there is any significant relationship between Creativity in teaching and learning and academic achievement. The research had two objectives and two research questions. Using descriptive survey research design the target population consisted of 53 primary schools with 53 Headteachers, 53 Deputy Head teachers and 512 teachers, all employed by the Teachers' Service Commission. Stratified sampling was used to select 30% of schools that participated in the study yielding a total sample size of 17 deputy head-teachers and 154 teachers as actual respondents. Data were collected using questionnaires and observation. The findings show that a majority of deputy head teachers viewed creativity in teaching as an opportunity for teachers to prepare and use teaching and learning aids in schools as they positively influence teacher's job performance. Whereas creativity may be enhanced by ICT teachers viewed integration of ICT in teaching as an expensive exercise and not quite helpful especially in an environment that lacks the necessary resources to support digitization. Creativity in teaching involves use of innovative approaches, strategies and pedagogical methods in classroom and collaborative skills. A significant number of teachers viewed participations in community based activities as a waste of time which may lead to poor performance by learners and the schools at large.

Keywords: Public Primary Schools, Creativity in Teaching, Collaborative Learning, Teacher Performance Appraisal

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Kusek, & Rist (2004) point out that Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems are powerful public management tools that can be used to achieve the objectives of institutions within the government. These systems can help the government to build and foster political and financial support for policies, programmes and projects in addition to building a dependable knowledge base. This in turn enables the production of changes in the way an institution operates, leading to improved performance, accountability, transparency, learning and knowledge. It is in this spirit that the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) designed a way of conducting appraisals for teachers in Basic Education institutions in Kenya. Teacher Performance and Appraisal Development (TPAD) tool was therefore introduced in the year 2016 in all public educational institutions at the Basic Education level. The tool was intended to help to improve teacher performance. However, resistance of the appraisal tool has been quite pronounced especially from the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT). This has raised the question 'Why the widespread dissatisfaction of this approach to teacher appraisal?'

Teacher Performance Appraisal is a Result Based Management tool designed to give critical information for rational, effective and efficient decision making regarding how teacher's performance can be improved by identifying training needs and setting the standards of rewards. Yet the literature suggests that many studies which have been done in various parts of the country and the world at large about the performance appraisal for teachers are cautionary. For instance, Flores (2010) in Portugal cautions that implementation process of a given policy is complex especially, when it is a new policy for teachers' appraisal. Thus, the views of teachers are important, and must be taken into consideration since the appraisal process targets improved working performance among them.

Monyantisi et al (2006) in Botswana, noted that an effective performance appraisal system is that which is improvement oriented, because it would enable them gain more knowledge, skills and confidence required for proper service delivery. However, the study revealed that there was negative perception due to its perceived attitude related to the checking of teachers' competencies, having them paid in accordance to performance and disciplinary measures determined by the appraisal instrument. Further, Tilahun & Shanbel (2014) in Ethiopia noted that the appraisal process changed its intention of enhancing teacher's performance. According to their study, it would be right to conclude that the role of teacher performance appraisal was just rhetoric. The process indicated that there was a wide gap between the theory and practice of teacher performance appraisal.

In Kenya, a study by Nyatera (2011) revealed that head teachers were not competent enough to conduct the appraisal process for their teachers. The manner in which the exercise was done so demoralized teachers that the process was perceived negatively. The study recommended thorough training of the appraisers to enable the appraisee change to positive perception of the process. The current research was necessitated by teachers' job dissatisfaction and the consequent decline of pupils' performance in National examinations especially in Mumias East Sub County. The focus has been on finding out whether there is any significant relationship between Creativity in teaching and learning and academic achievement. Do teachers in Mumias East sub county, Kenya have creativity and collaborative skills? How does that affect their job performance?

1.1.1 Creativity in Teaching and Learning

Creative teaching is an approach to integrate new teaching strategies and methods in the classroom. The use of innovative methods in educational institution is not only to improve education, but also to empower students 'knowledge. Through the implementation of creative teaching and learning

and innovation in the curriculum, teachers can help learners to develop a skill set that includes ideas generally not fostered within traditional setting and at the same time can improve their academic performance. A study by Narayanan (2017) in Malaysia reveals that creative and innovative teaching methods make a given concept clear to the students. They develop interest to know the concept and create long lasting memory. He adds that there is positive relationship between creativity/innovation and student academic performance. Igbafe (2014) in Nigeria notes that students who have grown up in a digital environment can easily adapt to ever-changing technology but the teacher must learn the use of educational technology like the computer and internet before he or she can integrate technology into the curriculum and into the classroom.

A study by Kanyi (2011) on the digital content utilization on teaching and learning in secondary schools in Kenya reveals that there are both positive and negative effects on teaching and learning from use of digital content. Positive effects include learner participation, motivation, stimulating content, self-directed discovery and enhanced understanding of concept. Inadequate content, shallow coverage of concepts and lack of infrastructure were the negative effects of digital content utilization. Kiseku and Kwasira (2015) add that ICT negates the academic performance of students possibly due to its inappropriate use. They recommend that it is important to have the requisite ICT facilities, as well as having stakeholders taken through the importance of such facilities and how they can use them to enhance the students' academic performance.

According to the TSC (2016) in the performance and appraisal tool, innovation and creativity in teaching is demonstrated by preparing/use of appropriate teaching and learning aids and integrating ICT in teaching and learning. This research wanted to find out the extent to which teachers use of ICT and other teaching/ learning materials enhances their job performance in Mumias East Sub County.

1.1.2 Collaboration with Parents/Guardians and the Teachers' Job Performance

Many researches in the area of family involvement have time and again supported the fact that children of concerned parents have a much greater chance to develop into healthy, knowledgeable, responsible, and caring adults. According to Wilder (2013) a study of parental involvement in academic achievement in USA indicated that the relationship between parental involvement and academic achievement was positive, regardless of a definition of parental involvement or measure of achievement.

Another study by Kabarere et al (2013) in Rwanda states that parents of children in high performing schools are significantly more involved than their counterparts in low performing schools especially on the concern for having healthy children, support for learning, gender sensitivity, care and protection. UNICEF (2009) in South Africa reports that the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) has been involved in providing hygiene facilities such as sanitation facilities in schools. Obi (2003), adds that PTA ensures high moral standards and academic excellence in consultation with the school Board of Management in Nigeria.

TSC (2016) in the teacher performance and appraisal tool requires that the teacher should establish and maintain collaborative relationships with the parents/ guardians, local communities and educationists. In this study, we sought to find out the extent to which these collaborative relationships have enhanced job performance of teachers with reference to Mumias East Sub County, Kenya

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Government of Kenya is committed to implementing its educational commitments internationally, regionally and locally. Education policy documents in Kenya have provisions that

emphasize the importance of providing quality education. TSC Act (2012) mandates the commission to monitor the conduct and performance of teachers in the service. In compliance with the Result-Based Monitoring and Evaluation the commission was prompted to introduce Performance Appraisal System for teachers in order to strengthen supervision and monitor their performance in teaching at school level, for quality education.

Despite the effort by the government through the Teachers' Service Commission to ensure teachers deliver quality teaching services to the learners, some teachers seem to resist the monitoring tool provided by the commission. Generally teachers claim that TSC does not use TPAD to reward them appropriately.

In fact a KNUT (2018), report in Mumias claims that the TPAD programme in schools is only subjecting teachers into clerical activities more than allowing them to carry out their core duty of teaching. Another report by the District Quality Assurance Officer (DQASO :2018) on assessment in Mumias East Sub County reveals that there is inadequate curriculum supervision, ineffective teaching, wastage of time, child unfriendly schools and inadequate utilization of teaching/learning resources. The areas mentioned are addressed in the TPAD, yet performance is low according to DQASO report. Why is this? Consequently, the purpose of this study is to appraise teacher creativity and collaborative skills in relation to their job performance in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub-county.

2.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1.1 Research Design

This research study used descriptive survey research design. The focus was on the influence of the teacher performance appraisal on job performance of the teacher in Mumias east Sub County in Kakamega County, Kenya. Descriptive survey design was considered the most suitable since it made it easy for us to collect information about the opinion, attitude and habits of the respondents. It enabled us to gather data from the respondents and then describe opinions on the teachers' performance appraisal, without manipulating any variables.

2.1.2 Target Population

The research was conducted in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County, Kakamega County, Kenya. The sub county has 3 administrative units; East Wanga, Lubinu-Lusheya and Malaha-Isongo-Makunga Divisions. At the time of the study the region had 53 primary schools with 53 Head-teachers, 53 Deputy Head teachers and 512 teachers, all of whom were employed by the Teachers' Service Commission. The 512 teachers included 152 from East Wanga, 173 from Lubinu-Lusheya and 187 from Malaha-Isongo-Makunga Divisions.

2.1.3 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) recommend that a sample between 10 to 30 percent is adequate enough for a study. Stratified sampling was used to select 30% of schools that participated in the research on the basis of the divisions, within Mumias East Sub County. All deputy head teachers from the sampled schools were considered. As for the teachers, simple random sampling was ideal for selecting 30% from every division. Table 1 shows a summary of sample size

Table 1 : Summary of Sample Size

Division	No. of schools	Sampled schools	Sampled D/Head teachers	Total No. of teachers	Sampled teachers
East Wanga	16	5	5	152	46
Lubinu-Lusheyaya	18	6	6	173	52
Malaha-Isongo-Makunga	19	6	6	187	56
Total	53	17	17	512	154

2.1.4 Research instruments

Questionnaires were used to obtain data from the respondents. The questionnaires were designed and issued basing on the categories of the respondents; Deputy Head teachers and teachers. The design had two sections. In section A, demographic information was captured. Section B included part 1; the teacher job performance, part 2; teacher professional knowledge, part 3; teacher professional development, part4; teacher collaboration with the parents/ guardians and part 5; the teacher creativity in teaching.

In addition observation schedule will be used by the researcher to collect data on the availability and used of certain records and programmes in the sampled schools.

2.1.5 Research Objectives and Research Questions

The objectives of this research study were, to:

1. evaluate the influence of creativity in teaching on the teacher's job performance in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County
2. assess the extent to which collaboration with the parents/guardians influences the teacher's job performance in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.

In order to achieve the said objectives, the following research questions were formulated :

1. What is the relationship between teacher's creativity in the classroom and his or her job performance public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County?
2. How does collaboration with the parents/guardians influence the teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.?

3.1 RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of the 17 questionnaires administered to the deputy head-teachers, 15 of them were duly completed and returned giving a questionnaire return rate of 88% In addition, 150 questionnaires were presented to teachers and 140 of them were duly completed and returned demonstrating a 93% response rate. Inability to attain a 100% return rate was highly attributed to the fact that some teachers were very busy with day to day school activities, bench making programmes, seminars and workshops. Some were planning academic documents and others have a negative attitude towards research generally because they associate research with politics and would not want to participate in it. However, this return rate was considered representative enough and adequate for analyzing and reporting results.

3.1.1 Research Question 1 : What is the relationship between teacher's creativity in the classroom and his or her job performance?

Creativity in teaching involves use of innovative approaches, strategies and pedagogical methods in classroom. The first research objective was interested in establishing whether creativity in teaching has positive or negative effects on teacher's job performance. Questionnaires with evaluative statements were given to the respondents to get their opinions. During the coding of data the scale used was as follows; S.A -strongly agree was presented by value five (5), A- Agree coded as four (4), U- Undecided coded as three (3), D-Disagree coded as two (2) and SD- strongly Disagree coded as one (1) Analysis of the data was done using inferential statistics. Finally, data was computed and presented in various forms.

3.1.1.1 Deputy Head teachers' responses on Creativity and Job Performance

Table 2 shows the views of the deputy head-teachers with regard to whether creativity in the classroom has any relationship with job performance.

Table 2: Responses of creativity in teaching by deputy head teachers : N-15

Creativity in teaching	SA F	%	A F	%	UN F	%	D F	%	SD F	%
Preparation and use of T/L aids improves teacher performance	9	64.3	5	35.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
ICT training for teachers improves their performance	3	23.1	7	53.8	1	7.7	2	15.4	-	-
Integration of ICT in teaching improves teachers performance	5	35.7	5	35.1	1	7.1	1	7.1	2	14.3
Access of online educational resources improves teacher performance	3	21.4	8	57.1	2	14.3	1	7.1	1	7.1

From Table 2, it is clear that majority of deputy head teachers agreed that preparing and use of teaching and learning aids improves their job performance. This is indicated by 100% response rate summed up by the fact that 64.3% of deputy head teachers strongly agreed while 35.7% of them agreed with the statement. The results also demonstrate that 80% of deputy head teachers agreed with statement that ICT training for teachers to improves their job performance. This implies that creativity in teaching should incorporate technological innovations with teachers. The responses were marked by 70.8% agreed with the statement that integration of ICT in teaching improves teacher's performance whilst 14.3% strongly disagreed with it.

Their responses to the statement on access of online educational resources improving teacher performance were illustrated by 78.5% agreed whilst 14.3% remained undecided. Nevertheless, majority of deputy head teachers were in agreement that access to online educational resources has

positive influence on teacher performance. What is of interest is that these findings contradict Kiseku and Kwasira (2015) who opined that ICT negates the academic performance of students possibly due to its inappropriateness. Nonetheless, these findings are in line with the Teacher Service Commission (2016) which pointed out at the inception of the performance and appraisal tool, that, innovation and creativity in teaching is demonstrated by preparing teaching/ learning aids and ICT integration in teaching and learning. As such this study concludes that appropriate teaching and learning aids and integrating ICT has positive influence on teacher's job performance for primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.

3.1.1.2 Teachers responses on Creativity in Teaching and Job Performance

The teachers were required to provide their views on whether creativity in teaching has a direct or indirect influence on teacher's job performance. Their responses to the relevant items in the questionnaire are as computed and reported in Table 3

Table 3 Responses of Creativity in Teaching by Teachers

Creativity in teaching	SA F	%	A F	%	UN F	%	D F	%	SD F	%
I prepare and present for approval appropriate teaching/learning aids to improve my job performance	33	24.4	67	49.6	6	4.4	15	11.1	14	10.4
I use appropriate teaching and learning aids during my lessons in class to improve my job performance	39	29.3	69	51.9	8	6.0	10	7.5	7	5.3
I integrate ICT in teaching my lessons to improves my job performance	15	11.2	42	31.3	22	16.4	31	23.1	24	17.9
I use appropriate ICT teaching/learning materials to improves my job performance	11	8.2	41	30.6	21	15.7	40	29.9	21	15.4
I access teaching/ learning materials online to improve my job performance	10	7.8	49	36.6	18	13.4	20	14.9	37	27.6

N=140

The results in Tables 3 show that majority of teachers agreed with most statements on creativity in teaching that involves the use of appropriate teaching and learning aids as well as integration of ICT and use of ICT in the classroom. For instance, the statement that teachers prepare and present for approval appropriate teaching/learning aids improves their job performance was marked by 74% summed up by 24.4% on strongly agree and 49.6% of teachers agreed with the statement. This implies that such preparations regularly enhance teacher's performance. However, in order for the deputy head teachers to approve these documents they should be in line with the policy guideline.

Responses to the question of whether teachers use appropriate teaching and learning aids during class and whether this improves their job performance are illustrated by 81.2% of teachers who were in agreement. This is an indication that teachers embrace the use of pedagogical methods which enhance teaching; thus, making the learning process more effective for the learners.

The teachers' responses to the statement on whether teachers integrate ICT in their teaching were actually in the negative. Majority of teachers disagreed with it as marked by 45.6% disagree and 15.7% undecided. A further probe revealed that there is a general lack of facilities in primary schools in Mumias East Sub County because ICT materials are expensive. These findings concur with those of Kanyi (2011) who asserted that inadequate content, shallow coverage and lack of infrastructures were negative effects of digital content utilization in secondary schools in Kenya. . The responses on whether or not teachers access teaching and learning materials online and whether it improves their job performance was demonstrated by 42.5% of teachers agreed with the statement, 13.4% of teachers remained undecided and 44.% disagreed with the statement.

3.1.2 Research Question 2 : How does collaboration with the parents/guardians influence the teachers' job performance in public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.?

Education is a system that involves stakeholders and literature from school administration is filled with examples of how such collaboration – especially of parents - play a critical role in school processes. This factor prompted this research to establish whether collaboration of parents has influence on the teacher's job performance or not. Questionnaires with evaluative statements were given to the respondents to get their opinions on the same. Coding of data was as follows; S.A - strongly agree was presented by value five (5), A- Agree coded as four (4), U- Undecided coded as three (3), D-Disagree coded as two (2) and SD- strongly Disagree coded as one (1)

3.1.2.1 Deputy Head teachers' responses on Collaboration and Job Performance

Table 4 shows the views of the deputy head-teachers

Table 4 Responses of deputy head teacher on Collaboration with the Parents

Parents Collaborations	SA F	%	A f	%	UN F	%	D F	%	SD F	%
Teachers participation in PTA meetings improves their job performance	2	14.3	9	64.3	1	7.1	2	14.3		
Teachers involvement in community based activities improves their job performance	-	-	7	50	4	28.6	3	21.4		

Development of linkages with parents improves teachers job performance	-	-	9	64.3	2	14.3	3	21.4
Involvement in exchange programs/ national initiatives like tree planting improves teachers performance	1	7.1	4	28.6	4	28.6	5	35.7

N=15

It is clear from Table 4 that deputy head teachers had varying perspectives on the relationship between collaboration of parents and job performance. For instance, responses to the question of whether teacher’s participation in PTA meeting improves their performance was marked by 78.6% indication that they confirmed and agreed that such meetings did occasionally provide useful insights on the performance of the school.. The responses on the benefits of community engagement by the school were not so positive. Responses to the question touching on school involvement in community based activities were indicated as 50% and 28.6% of deputy head teachers who disagreed or were undecided respectively. There was a suggestion, though, for the schools to be involved in such activities as education to create environmental awareness. Moreover, there was a hint the schooling should propagate a sense of responsibility and address societal problems such as deforestation and land degradation.

Responses to the statement on if development of linkages with parents improves teacher’s job performance are marked as 64.3% on agreement and 21.4% of them disagreed and 14.3% of deputy head teachers were undecided. No doubt parents’ linkages in school play an integral role in school administration and more efforts should be increased in the realization of positive performance by deputy head teachers. In contrast responses to the idea of Involvement in exchange programme such as tree planting were not so positive. 35.7% of the deputy head teachers disagreed with the statement whereas 28.6% of them were undecided. These findings are of same view with the Teacher Services Commission (2016) which suggested that a teacher’s performance and appraisal tool be set up so as to maintain collaborative relationships with the school stakeholders and the society at large. As such the study concludes that collaboration of parents has a positive influence on teacher’s job performance.

3.1.2.2 Teachers responses on Collaboration with Parents and Job Performance

Table 5 shows the views of the teachers with regard to whether collaboration of parents influences their job performance

Table 5: Responses of teachers on collaboration with parents

Parents Collaboration	SA F	%	A F	%	UN f	%	D F	%	SD F	%
I participate in PTA meetings to improve my job performance	31	22.8	39	28.7	16	11.8	28	20.6	22	16.2
I participate in educational community based activities that involves learners to improve my job performance	27	19.4	44	31.7	19	13.7	28	20.1	21	15.1

I organize for meetings with individual learners parents to improve my job performance	22	16.3	58	43.0	10	7.4	28	20.8	17	12.6
I have developed educational linkages with parents to improve my job performance	21	15.8	45	33.8	12	9.0	36	27.1	19	14.3

N=140

Table 4 shows that majority of teachers agreed with most statements on the influence of parent collaborations on school performance. For example, their responses to the statement on whether teachers' participation in Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings improves their performance are marked by 51.5% agreed. This is an indication that PTA meetings enhance teacher performance which in turn enables them to create a conducive environment for students to learn eventually leading to improved academic performance of the entire school. Teachers responses on whether participating in community based activities that involve learners was beneficial was indicated by 81.2%.agreed. However, the findings show that 10% of teachers were undecided and 12.8% of them disagreed with the statements

Responses to the statement on whether organizing meetings with individual learner's parents improves teacher's job performance were marked by 60% who agree and 20% of teachers who disagree with it. Further probing revealed that majority of teachers were in agreement that organizing meetings with individual learner's parent was beneficial to both the teachers and the learners. As such meetings call for teacher's to be accountable and responsible for learners' academic achievement. These meetings reduce laxity among the teachers and keep them on their toes *ipso facto* enhancing positive performance by teachers. These findings concur with those of Obi (2003) who observed that PTA ensures quality standards and academic excellence through engagements with school board of management in Nigeria.

4.1 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1.1 Conclusion

The majority of deputy head teachers viewed creativity in teaching as an opportunity for teachers to prepare and use teaching and learning aids in schools as they positively influence teacher's job performance. Whereas creativity may be enhanced by ICT some teachers viewed integration of ICT in teaching as an expensive exercise and not quite helpful especially in an environment that lacks the necessary resources to support digitization. However, based on the data analyzed, it is clear that creativity in teaching enhances the quality of education for public primary schools in Mumias East Sub County.

Collaborations with parents/ guardians was considered as an important aspect in school performance. The involvement of teachers in community development activities was also encouraged with the aim of enabling schools to act as a medium of environmental awareness and water conservation. On the other hand there are a significant number of teachers who viewed teachers participations in community based activities as a waste of time and it may lead to poor performance by learners and the schools at large.

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