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INFLUENCE OF TEACHERS' LESSON ATTENDANCE ON LEARNERS' ACADEMIC PROGRESS

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ABSTRACT

Performance appraisal is one of the most effective ways of ensuring high standards of service delivery in learning institutions or business organization, but since its introduction, academic progress of learners' is still below the expectations of the key stakeholders in the Luanda Sub County. The objective of the study was to assess the influence of teachers' lesson attendance and the pupil's academic progress, in public primary schools in Luanda Sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted mixed method approach by using the descriptive survey research design. This survey was anchored on the Professional Support Personnel model (PSP). The target population was 588 teachers in public primary schools in Luanda subcounty. The sample comprised of 233 teachers selected by cluster and simple random sampling techniques. Data was collected using document analysis guides and observation checklists. A pilot study was carried out two weeks to the actual survey in two schools which were not included in survey, but they were within the

research area. This was done to assess the suitability of the research instruments for collecting the required data. The instruments' validity was determined by using Rasch model, while their reliability was determined by the use of test re-test method. The collected data was analyzed both descriptively using frequencies and percentages while the hypotheses were tested inferentially at 0.05 alpha level, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results indicated a significant positive correlation between lesson attendance and pupils' academic progress. Findings from this study was meant to help primary school administrators, teachers, CSOs, and MOE to improve on the appraisal procedures in schools for purposes of ameliorating the current dismal performance in national examinations.

Keywords: Lesson Attendance, Academic Progress, Pupils

INTRODUCTION

(Resource, 2021), states that the practice of appraisal is mostly a very ancient art; but as a formal management procedure, the appraisal surely dates back from the era of Second World War which is not more than six (6) decades. Whenever there is absence of a carefully structured appraisal strategy, men/women tend to judge their workmates performance including subordinates, naturally, informally, and arbitrarily. Performance appraisal systems began as simple methods of income justification. If an employee performance was found to be less than ideal, a cut in pay would follow and vice versa.

Performance appraisal has been proven as one of the most effective strategies of ensuring high standards of service delivery in any learning institution or business organisations (Elliot. 2015). Around the world, learning institutions that have fully adopted performance appraisal, have reported enhanced academic progress of their learners as well as to quality education experiences to all learners (UNESO, 2004).

Evidence from some researches has shown that "Teacher Quality" is one of the most essential school variables that can influence learner outcomes (OECD, 2005; UNESCO, (2004), defines "teacher quality" as those educators with good mastery of subject content, be equipped with appropriate teaching methodology, and the one who is dedicated to their duties.

Ealing Grid for Learning (EGfL, 2012) stated that teacher appraisal is a thorough and yet a supportive and development process which is geared towards ensuring that all educators have the support and skills they require to play their role effectively. It makes sure that those teachers have the ability to improve on their professional practice as well as to develop them as educators.

(James Cook University, 2019), looks at academic progress as the maintaining of a satisfactory level of achievement in every one's teaching/learning period for each one's course of learning. It emphasized the importance of maintaining a satisfactory academic progression since it is an indicator that one is achieving the minimum required learning outcomes or objectives for each stage of one's course. This means that if teachers carry out their duties effectively, we shall have a scenario where all learners will achieve the

learning outcomes at each level and this will have an impact on policy variables such as transition to the next levels, curbing vices such as truancy, and literacy levels in the country will increase.

The current Teacher Performance Appraisal and Development (TPAD) which was introduced by the Teachers' Service Commission, in conjunction with the Ministry of Education, had the good intention of improving the teaching and learning standards at both secondary and primary school levels in the country. Scholars agree that if well utilized, teacher appraisal has the potential of promoting academic progress of their learners since it ensures that teachers perform their duties as required, given that incentives in the form of job promotions are also pegged on good appraisal reports. In Luanda Sub County, a gloomy picture surrounds primary schools in this region as their academic performance in KCPE is still very dismal, despite the fact that teachers in this area are religiously filling their TPAD forms and uploading on the TSC website. This implies that very little policy action can be put in place to ameliorate this situation; due to lack of current research with accurate facts and figures. Therefore, the current survey is purely based on the above-mentioned facts.

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of teachers' lesson attendance on pupils' academic progress, in public primary schools in Luanda Sub-County, Kenya

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research reveals that good education is a function of good teachers; i.e. good teachers should have good mastery of the subject content, be equipped with appropriate teaching methodologies therefore he/she should; be dedicated to their work (UNESCO, 2004).

In the survey carried out by the National Council on Teachers Quality (NCTQ) of USA in 2014, it was found out that "No matter how engaging or how talented teachers may be, they can only have an impact on student learning if they are in the class room". This means that student cannot learn if and when their teacher is absent. The same researchers continue by stating that, "As common sense suggests, teacher attendance is directly related to student's outcomes: the more their teachers are absent, the more their student's achievement suffers".

They further stated that notoriously absentee teachers are a big hindrance for the district's education standards. Educators who miss their class for at least 10% of the academic calendar, with or without genuine reasons, are bound to affect their students' academic performance negatively. According to them; their research had shown that a noticeable negative impact on learners' outcomes in classrooms was experienced where the educator was absent for more than ten days. This survey entitled "Roll Call: The importance of teacher attendance", was carried out in the USA by NCTQ team. Their main research question was "How often are the teachers in the classrooms and what factors influence their attendance"? The mean attendance rate for districts sampled was 94.17.

The implication is that in this Country, we have more teachers attending to their lesson, while only 5.83%

comprise of teachers who don't attend to their duties. Secondly, 16% of all educators were categorised as chronically absentee because they missed at least 18 days in the academic year, which is almost a third of these absentees. Their recommendations were that to improve teacher's attendance, it needs more attention whereby attendance records are monitored by both school heads together with their central office. There is need for teacher's attendance to be higher, therefore more priority for school district is to be complemented by school culture that expect excellent teachers' attendance. The survey could not be ideal for the Kenyan circumstance where TPAD is in use.

(Rop, 2013) in his study on the performance appraisal, as used by the Kenya TSC in Bomet Constituency stated that 78% of the respondent agreed that it does have an effect on performance of duty by teachers in this constituency. But there is need to streamline them. (Dorothy and Bon, 2017), in their study on Performance Management in Kenya public schools: Implications and challenges. Its objective was that one of appraising processes from previous procedures for ascertaining the existing rate of use and the satisfaction experienced, and to find out if performance management can be an effective strategic tool in assessing workers competencies. Their conclusion was that the said policy has failed and there is need to streamline the tools for this policy to work.

In its survey; (Uwezo, 2014), entitled "Are our children learning"? Literacy and Numeracy in Kenya 2014: Twaweza East Africa. The said research group noted that teacher daily attendance in the Sub County was 89% slightly higher than National rate of 88. This means that teachers in this Sub County exceeded the national rate by 1%. The implications are that 11% of the teaching staff in the Sub County are always absent from school on any given day. This means 65 teachers of the 588 are always absent from schools on any given day in this Sub County. They also further stated that only 17% of grade 3 learners can read grade 2 English narratives, 22% of grade 3 can read grade 2 Kiswahili narratives and 20% of grade 3 learners can do grade 2 Dividing operations in arithmetic.

These findings are a clear pointer that even though percentage duty attendance is high, minimal work is taking place hence minimum outcomes are achieved in this S. County. However, the following shortcomings are found in this: - It was carried out while Emuhaya and Luanda Sub Counties were still one; the survey was only based in class 3 while other classes were not included in it. This does not give a clear picture of the whole Sub County; and the survey was done at the time when TPAD was not in force. Teachers' attitude towards their duty may not have changed much since the time frame is not significant, hence the need for this research.

The proponents of PSP theory were Strange and Helm who published it in the year 1991. PSP has six distinct steps: these being Identification of system needs; relate program expectations and job evaluation; selecting performance indicators; setting standards for job performances; document job performance; and evaluating performance. These steps are in line with the steps that have been outlined in the performance management policy in public schools in Kenya. These steps are taken and followed at various levels by different TSC agents to ensure that teacher's appraisal is done efficiently and effectively to maximize

output from the teaching staff at a given cost.

This theory, has the advantage of making the work of the supervisor easy since the employees will commit themselves by setting their own performance targets. At the same time, it makes the employer and his/her agent to commit themselves on how they will reward the employee for job performed. The results are that supervisors are spared the time for running up and down to ensure that workers are discharging their duty and the workers are sure that rewards will follow once the job is done. Therefore, it creates a good working relation between employers and employees.

Possible disadvantage being that in most public sectors where this policy has been in force very little has been achieved, as is reported in Kenyan daily newspapers. This is because lack of seriousness among the supervisors and workers even where the appraisal policy is in full force; workers are still doing things in the same way they used to do before the said policy was put in place. TSC in its circular No. 12/2017, dated 5-06-2017 on evaluation of PC for Head Teachers and TPAD for teachers, stated that the whole policy was a success; however, the standard newspaper dated 17-03-2018, had a story in it titled “Shocking details of inaccurate teachers reports and official’s laxity”. This story which was extracted from a TSC report in a survey that was done by the commission agent which showed that teachers are not complying with the TPAD policy and the officials concerned are sleeping on their jobs. Therefore, if the said laxity is still going on, the theory will be of great help if applied. Its application will ensure due steps are followed and the impediments will be identified and eliminated to ensure that things are moving on well. Therefore, academic progress in all public schools in the said sub county will improve and complains from the stakeholders will not exist. However, since the problem of poor academic progress is still on. This theory, is ideal for consideration since if applied, it can be used to point to us what we have not done to achieve our goals.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

To actualize this research, it was important to adopt a descriptive survey research design. This design was appropriate in the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999) stated that the surveys aim is to obtain information that describes the existing phenomena by asking individuals on their perceptions, attitudes, behaviors or values. (Kothari, 2009), states that this design describes the current status of a phenomenon, and determines the nature of the prevailing conditions, practices, attitudes and seeking accurate descriptions. (Gay, 1981), defines descriptive research as a process of collecting data in order to test hypothesis or to answer questions concerning the current status of the subjects in the study.

This survey was done in public primary schools within Luanda Subcounty; these schools were 58 in number with a staffing establishment of 588 teachers with head teachers included. This was one of the five sub counties in Vihiga County. It had two administrative divisions in the name of Esiembero and Ekwanda divisions. Other Sub Counties in the Vihiga County include Sabatia, Vihiga, Hamisi and Emuhaya.

This area was preferred since the appraisal tools have been in force from the year 2016 but the Sub County still records poor performance in national examinations. The place has been selected because it had adequate staff but this does not match with the results it posts in the national examinations. Lastly, most of the research done in the Sub County concentrated on factors influencing poor performance in national examinations and teachers job satisfaction. So far nothing had been done on influence of teachers' appraisal tools on their learners' academic progress.

The target population consists of all teachers working in the public primary schools in Luanda Sub County. This Sub County had a total of 58 public primary schools. The study targeted all their 588 teachers.

The Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula was used to determine the number of respondents needed for this survey. 588 was the surveys target population. The same was used as the value of N in the above-named formula, 233 was worked out mathematically to find the value of s, this sample size was definitely sufficient for use as the survey's population. Any value equivalent or more than this should therefore have been worthy to use for generalizing the research findings to the whole population (Masinde, 2023). The survey utilized 233 teachers as respondents.

The LADAG was used to assess the lesson attendance of teachers in the selected schools. The instrument has 5 indicators of lesson attendance, whose values were extracted from the lesson attendance sheets, obtainable from the deputy principals of the sampled schools. Each value was rated and coded accordingly.

The Academic Progress Document Analysis Guide (APDAG) was used to collect data about the academic progress of learners in the sampled schools. Data that was used to populate this APDAG was extracted from existing teacher's performance appraisal reports for the last three years and computing the average annual mean score for each of the sampled teachers.

To determine how suitable the research instruments will be in capturing the much-needed data accurately, a pilot survey was done within two weeks to the actual study, in 2 public schools within Luanda Subcounty. These institutions which participated were excluded from the actual study, in order to prevent halo effect and pre-conceived findings during the study.

Gall, (Gall and Borg, 2007) defines validity as the degree to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure. The researcher assessed content validity of the instruments by employing Rasch model, while doing so, researcher supplied copies of the research instruments to three research experts to critique them. To implement this, researcher gave the three experts in the School of Education in MKU with a rating scale and scoring guide so as to achieve this goal. These experts were required to scrutinize and evaluate content validity of the two instruments and fill the validity score sheet in table 1 thus:

Table 1: Validity Score Sheet

Instrument	VALIDITY SCORE <i>(On A Scale Of 1 - 10)</i>			
	Expert 1	Expert 2	Expert 3	Average
LADAG	74	72	79	75
APDAG	82	84	77	81

Source: Adapted and modified from (Masinde, 2018)

A threshold of 60% was used as the minimum score for the instruments to deemed valid and fit for collecting data, as stipulated by (George & Mallery, 2003). Instruments whose average validity score was less than 60% was modified and re-assessed for the same measure.

As the table shows, all the instruments used in this study were valid, as they surpassed the minimum recommended validity scores.

Reliability is the ability of a research instruments to produce consistent results when administered several times (Neuman, 2003). Reliability of the study's instruments was assessed using the test-retest method, where the instruments was administered twice and the responses of each instruments correlated for the two administrations, using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. Instruments whose Cronbach's alpha was equal to or greater than 0.6 was deemed to be reliable (George & Mallery, 2003). Those that did not meet this threshold had to be modified to enable them to be suitable in data collection in the actual survey.

The moment the proposal was approved by the relevant Graduate school of MKU, the author obtained a permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). A copy of the same permit was simultaneously delivered to the research area's county commissioner and County Director of Education (CDE). Those schools which had been sampled were there after pre-visited in order to notify their administrators about the impending survey. In the pre-visit, the author made necessary arrangements with educators through their respective school administrators about finer details of the study. Thereafter, the researcher had to train his research assistants on their various roles they were to play in the course of executing the survey. Induction had to be carried out within a time frame of two days for these research assistants.

This was a mixed methods survey, whereby both quantitative and qualitative data was obtained by the said research instruments. In order to analyze, raw data had to be coded in SPSS version 23, and analyzed descriptively for the generation of percentages and frequencies. These descriptive measures were used to give explanations that would delineate the proportional amount of lesson attendance and academic progress.

Quantitative data, obtained was analyzed quantitatively, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Inferential statistics was therefore not stand alone, but was supplemented by the observed descriptive statistics for all the five variables under investigation. Table 3.3 presents a summary of the data collection instruments and data analysis procedures for each objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected by all the five research instruments were analyzed descriptively by computing frequency counts and percentages as presented in the following subsections.

The objective of this survey was meant to assess effect of teachers' lesson attendance upon pupils' academic progress. Data on lesson attendance was collected by the lesson attendance document analysis guide (LADAG). Responses to all items in the LADAG were analyzed descriptively by computing frequency counts and percentages, whose results were as presented below.

Table 2: Lesson Attendance

Rating	Frequency	Percent
91 - 100 (Excellent)	173	74.0
81 - 90 (Good)	44	18.3
71 - 80 (Average)	12	5.0
<71 (Poor)	4	1.7
Total	233	100.0

In the above table, there were 233 respondents' out of which 173 (74%) had excellent lesson attendance, 44 (18.3%) had good, 12 (5%) average and 4 (1.7%) had poor lesson attendance. The implication is that most teachers 173 (74%) attend to their lessons on daily basis which is a good indicator for curriculum implementation.

The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of teachers' appraisal tools on pupils' academic progress in public primary schools in Luanda sub-county, Kenya. The dependent variable for the research objectives was learners academic progress, whose data was collected using the Learners Academic Progress Document Analysis Guide (LAPDAG). The learners' academic progress was analyzed by computing frequencies and percentages, where the results were as displayed in the table below.

Table 3: Learners' Academic Progress

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Excellent)	12	5.2
Good	72	30.9
Fair	103	44.2
Poor	22	9.4
Very poor	24	10.3
TOTAL	233	100.0

The table indicates that of the 233 teachers sampled, 12 (5.2%) had excellent learners' academic progress rating while 72 (30.9%) were rated good. The table further indicates that 103 (44.2%) of the teachers had fair rating, 22 (9.4%) poor while 24 (1.3%) were very poor in terms of their learner's academic progress. To establish whether the observed descriptive statistics with respect to the independent variables had any significant influence on pupils' academic progress, the data collected by the two research instruments were analyzed inferentially by performing Pearsons Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at 0.05 alpha level of hypothesis testing.

The objective of this study was to assess the influence of teachers' lesson attendance on pupils' academic progress. Data concerning teachers' lesson attendance and their pupils' academic progress was obtained using the LADAG and APDAG respectively. The two instruments were administered to sampled teachers according to the research design. The null hypothesis was developed from the said objective as follows; HO1: Teachers' lesson attendance has no statistically significant influence on their pupils' academic progress

This hypothesis was tested inferentially by employing Pearson's Product Moment correlation Coefficient so as to establish the strength and direction of association between these two variables in question. The results are as per the Table below.

Table 4: Correlation between Teachers' Lesson Attendance and Academic progress

VARIABLE	LESSON ATTENDANCE	ACADEMIC PROGRESS
LESSON ATTENDANCE	-	0.728*
ACADEMIC PROGRESS	0.728*	-

* $p < 0.001$, $\alpha = 0.05$

From table 4 above, it was clear that there was a strong positive association between teachers' lesson attendance and learners academic progress scores [$r=0.728$, $p<0.001$ at $\alpha=0.05$]. This is because the Pearson's correlation coefficient was found to be closer to 1 than to zero, hence the description of the association as 'strong. In addition, it can be ascertained from the table that the sign of the correlation coefficient (r) is positive, which implies that a teacher's high lesson attendance scores also transform to high academic progress marks for their learners and the other way around. These disclosures are contrary to the affirmation of the null hypothesis, which was therefore rejected because the research evidence which was arising from data that was collected by the LADAG and APDAG suggested differently. It can alternately be affirmed that there is a very strong positive correlation between teachers' lesson attendance and learner's academic progress.

In this survey that had been carried out by the National Council on Teachers Quality (NCTQ) of USA in 2014, it was found out that "No matter how engaging or how talented teachers may be, they can only have an impact on students learning if they are in the class room." The implication being that students mostly learn when a teacher is in classroom. It was observed that overwhelming majority of teachers in this Sub County are seriously attending to their lessons.

(Kimeli, 2016), observed that most of educators believed that reducing teachers work load could enhance students' academic achievement in secondary schools. The same author believed that smaller classes in secondary schools could enhance students' academic performance. From the above statements it is clear that these large classes have an effect on academic performance. The implication is that, TPAD tools used to monitor teacher's lesson attendance are able to compel teachers to attend to their duty, but quality teaching cannot be achieved under poor teacher staffing conditions that are existing currently, because overworked teachers cannot implement the curriculum effectively, and large classes could be contributing to teachers' fatigue, hence poor service delivery. Hence the chronic low academic progress in our public primary schools.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the results of this study that learners whose teachers attend to their lessons regularly have better academic progress than those whose teachers attend to their lessons less frequently.

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