

Tutor Competence and its Effect on Quality of Teacher Preparation in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges in Bungoma County- Kenya.

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Abstract

Teacher quality is critical in the provision of quality education. Teachers are a country's determinant of competitiveness and capacity to create more jobs and growth. They are important means of passing on values, skills, knowledge and attitudes required for democracy, citizenship, intercultural dialogue and personal development. Research has shown that teacher effect is much larger than the effect of school organization, leadership and financial conditions. The purpose of this study was to investigate the competence of tutors as a resource in effective teacher preparation. The research was carried out in eight private teacher training colleges in Western Province in Kenya. The study sample was selected through simple random and purposive sampling techniques. The sample size comprised of eight college principals and 43 tutors. Data was collected through questionnaires, interview and document analysis. The Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized in the analysis of descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The research established that incompetent teaching staff in the emerging private primary teacher training colleges had a negative impact on quality of teacher preparation. This factor continues to have negative effect on the quality of graduates produced. The study therefore recommended that, regular monitoring and evaluation audits should be conducted to ensure that these colleges conform to the set standards all the time. Furthermore there is need to constantly review and improve the quality of teacher training to be in tandem with the global trends. This will ultimately enhance preparation of teachers' and minimize the quality inconsistencies in the private primary teacher training colleges.

Key Words: Teacher Competence, Teacher Preparation, Teacher Quality

1. Introduction

The topic of teacher education has seen a plethora of literature that has arrived at a general consensus of what makes "good" teacher preparation (Smith, 2005). Effective teacher education incorporates an abundance of content knowledge, pedagogical and didactical methodologies. Proficient teacher education thus incorporates a range of subject knowledge content, an understanding of learning styles and methods, and how to translate such knowledge into effective instructional methods while developing an ability to comprehend and nurture the unique person that is every child and student (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Kennedy, 2006; Korthagen, 2004).

Reflection and (self) assessment are also acknowledged elements of professional teacher education and practice (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Labrie, Brdarevic and Russell, 2000; Smith and Van der Westhuizen, 2000). With such an array of necessary teacher skills, there is an emerging consensus that teacher quality makes a significant difference in children's learning and in overall school effectiveness (Cochran-Smith and Zeichner, 2005). Teacher education is an important component of education. It influences all aspects of education and beyond. Like other components of education, teacher education is influenced by social, political, economic and technological developments in a society (Kafu, 2006). Normally, it is ostensibly designed, developed and administered to produce school teachers for the established system of education (Kafu, 2003).

Today there is confusion over what teacher education really means. There are those who regard it as mere training of teachers. That is, an education programme that equips the teachers with pedagogical content only. Then there is another school of thought that regards teacher education as preparation of teachers or training and teacher development process (Karanja, 1995). This concept of teacher education focuses on preparing school teachers in pedagogical content as well as academic content. Here, the emphasis is laid on equipping a school teacher with adequate competencies in both pedagogical and academic content that prepares the teacher for challenges of modern life. This unclear definition of teacher education has tended to affect the preferred modes (approaches) of training teachers today and the quality of teachers produced to serve an education system (Kafu, 2006). Further, this tends to affect the "identity" of this programme of education and the teaching profession

leading to questioning whether these two things are necessary today! Perhaps the present attitude of the government towards this programme is a reflection of this confusion (Obonyo, 2006).

Importance of teacher education in human life has been recognized for a long time. For example, Limboro (2004) asserts that teacher education is the main pillar of any established system of education and the custodian of the society's culture. The Kenya government echoed the same view in the Sessional Paper No. 6 of 1988 when it said that "there is urgent need to develop and promote teacher education programme if the administration of education in the country is to succeed and national development is to be accelerated" (Republic of Kenya, 1988).

Teacher education is therefore the imparting of the desired knowledge, attitude and skills to people who will become teachers (Limboro, 2004). In Kenya, teacher education and training is one of the most crucial components for improving education. Current teacher training arrangement is generally ineffective, producing not only few teachers but failing to make them effective and able to use learners' friendly strategies, including interactive, communicational, and transformative methods that take into account the learners' knowledge and experience (Kafu, 2006).

A recent review indicates that there is a very focus in teacher education, as well as lack of effective integration of academic, foundation, pedagogical and experience component of training (Digolo, 2003). The Ominde report of 1964 and subsequent educational reports and policy documents reiterated the importance of adequate and properly trained teachers. Research has shown that when effective learning does not take place in schools, parents are more likely to withdraw children from schools early or not send them at all. Therefore, improving quality of teacher preparation is essential to achieving one of the 2015 millennium development goals in regard to universal access to and completion of primary education (UNESCO, 2003).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Competence of Teaching Staff

Good teaching is perhaps the most critical part of a solid education. In fact, the deleterious effects of just one ineffective teacher may jeopardize the entire educational success of a young person; regardless of how many effective teachers he/she might subsequently have (Wright, Horn and Sander, 1997). Goodlad (1994:1) asserts that:

We are not likely to have good schools without a continuing supply of excellent teachers. Nor are we likely to have excellent teachers unless they are immersed in exemplary colleges for significant portions of their induction into teaching. But, this poses a dilemma. What comes first, good schools or good teacher education programs?

As Goodlad poses this argument, it is evident that whereas both good schools and quality teachers are directly related, good schools are a product of excellent and quality teaching staff. Kiskoi (2011) further advances that good teacher education comes before good schools because quality teachers make good schools. Quality teachers greatly contribute to students' achievement and they are the system's principal resource. The teachers' effect and influence on learning is much greater than the effect of school organization, leadership and financial conditions as teachers are an important means of passing on knowledge, skills, values and attitudes required for democracy, citizenship, intercultural dialogue and personal development (UNESCO, 2005).

Teaching is more than picking up a bag of instructional tricks at the schoolroom door or learning to mimic the actions of another educator—even a very good one (Imig, 1996). Good teachers are thinkers and problem solvers. They know when children aren't learning and can adjust instruction appropriately; they know how to design and use a variety of assessment techniques—not just paper-and-pencil tests; they know how to work with parents to bring out the best in a child; they know that teams of professional educators can transform schools and expect to go about doing it. Farooq and Shahzadi (2006:40) notes:

The trained teachers can use their ability to impact and influence pupils to perform and know different teaching styles. Students studying under the guidance of untrained teachers remain deprived from the latest pedagogical supports due to unawareness of their teachers in pedagogical skill areas.

They further advocated for appointment of professionally trained teachers in the educational institution both in public and private. The quality of teaching/learning in schools is largely dependent on the subject knowledge and vocational competence of the teachers. Continuous training and re-training are considered essential to create a cadre of highly motivated, disciplined and professionally competent teachers. Moreover, an increase in teachers' productivity and commitment to practicing specialized knowledge will depend not only on the number of teachers that are trained and on the selection of the best candidates, but also on the quality of the training which teachers receive and the provision of sufficient support for this training. Florian and Rouse (2009) stated that the task of initial teacher education is to prepare people to enter a profession which accepts individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all learners.

Teachers play an essential role in quality education, thus quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers (Savolainen, 2009). Similarly, Sanders and Horn (1998) and Bailleul (2008) suggests that the quality of the teacher contributes more to learner achievement than any other factor, including class size, class composition, or background. Reynolds (2001) says that it is the knowledge, beliefs and values of the teacher that are brought to bear in creating an effective learning environment for pupils, making the teacher a critical influence in quality of education .

The quality of education and training depends largely on the quality of teachers in terms of academic qualification, professional training, their commitment, dedication, conducive working environment and appropriate terms of service (Republic of Kenya, 1999). The most important measure of the success of teacher preparation programs is the academic success of the students. Leibbrand (2000) offers several examples of the positive impact of well prepared teachers on student outcomes: A 1996-97 study conducted by UT-Austin showed that Texas students performed better on state exams when their instructors were well prepared and fully licensed in the subjects they teach. In America a report by the National Education Association (NEA, 1999: 32) indicated that:

Fully prepared teachers are more highly rated and more effective with students than those whose background lacks one or more of the elements of formal teacher education—subject matter preparation, knowledge about teaching and learning, and guided clinical experience.

Furthermore, Darling Hammond (2005) similarly found out that teacher quality is significantly and positively correlated with learners' attainment. Sanders (1998) also confirmed that the single largest factor affecting academic growth of a population of students is differences in effectiveness of individual classroom teachers. Professional training enables teachers to impart knowledge more efficiently and effectively than those who are not trained, and teachers experience has been reported as having a possible effect on scores of different standardized tests (Bowman and Anderson, 1971). Ochanda (1987) did observe that the quality of the teaching staff is often said to be the main determinant in achievement of students in examinations in Kenya. Kinyanjui (1979) reiterated that the quality of teaching staff is an important index of the quality of education provided and therefore the caliber of the teacher in any school or school system can have a tremendous impact on social outcomes.

Prosser and Clark (1972), Fafunwa (1972), Mulira (1978), Mathur (1980), Anderson (1991) and Ayodo (2003) agrees that, any meaningful improvement in the quality of education that students receive is highly dependent on the quality of instructions that teachers provide. One reason for teacher emphasis is that there is an increasing awareness that teachers have immense power over innovation and change even in the most highly centralized systems of education. For effective implementation of any curriculum innovations, teachers' performance is important, for it is the teacher who would in the ultimate analysis be interpreting and implementing these innovations. One of the conditions required for the generalization of innovation is the initial training, orientation and re-orientation of staff responsible. Attempts to institutionalize any curricular innovations should therefore be preceded by organizing in-service teacher training programmes and also effecting necessary changes in the content and methodology of the pre-service programmes (Carroll, 2003). From the literature review, it is apparent that teachers play an important role in the provision of quality education. Therefore, quality teacher preparation during initial teacher education is a critical determinant to meet the challenges that they will encounter in schools and hence quality education which forms a country's engine of development.

2.2. *Qualification and Experience of Teaching Staff*

Teacher quality can be defined in terms of teacher qualifications. Qualification of a teacher has a direct bearing on his /her mastery of content and hence ability to effectively impart knowledge to his learners. Cochran-Smith and Zeichner (2005) argue that the characteristics of teacher preparation that enhances student achievement should be identified and policies tailored towards them. A good teacher in mastery of content should therefore be able to pass subject matter to his students and hence enhance good performance.

According to the World Bank (1980), internal efficiency is an aspect of education of teachers in terms of what could be influenced by qualifications of the teacher. Examination scores and cognitive tests normally measure internal efficiency. The belief that investment in teacher training will improve the quality of schooling by increasing the level of learners' achievement influenced the World Bank to emphasize teacher training facilities in lending for education projects during 1960s and 1970s.

Teacher training levels were found to have a significant effect on learner's performance in Philippines (Lockheed et al 1993) and Zimbabwe (Fuller, 1987). In addition, Hanusheck's (1989) in Malaysia concluded that the length of teacher experience was associated to learner's performance, but this was only significant amongst highly qualified teachers. In a study done earlier by Thias and Carnoy (1972) in Kenya, they found out that teacher's experiences showed significant relationship with student's performance.

Sifuna (1982) in a study on quality of education in Kenya concluded that the distribution of teachers is an important determinant in educational quality and their level of training influences student's performance. In the same line, Eshiwani et al (1988) found out that training of teachers has a bearing on learners' performance in examinations. Kathuri (1986) noted that qualified staffs were an asset to their schools if they were committed to academic achievement. Similarly, Maundu (1986) in his study on student's achievement found that teacher qualification had significant effect on learners' performance. From the literature review, it is imperative that teacher's qualification and experience is a critical ingredient in the provision of quality education. This study therefore is set out to assess the quality of teacher preparation in emerging teacher training colleges.

2.3. In-service of Teachers

The in-service training is understood as a tool to professionalise teaching, improve quality and efficiency of the new educational systems and promote the scientific and technological advances and innovations. If we also keep in mind the characteristics of present day society, with present transition, with continuous changes and adaptation to new technological, social and cultural changes, in-service training turns to be the only tool to face this changes, as well as to democratize people's access to culture, to information and work (Murillo, 1999).

Churning out quality teacher professionals does not end with graduation ceremonies. Rather, the ceremonies mark the beginning of an endless process of professional advancement and capacity building. This post-graduation process is aimed at making them more effective and efficient, so that they can live up to the expectations of the society Anangisye (2011). For teacher professionals to continue functioning efficiently, productively and contribute meaningfully towards quality education, they must be given training opportunities to keep them up-to-date and, hence, be able to face new professional, academic, and global society challenges.

In this regard, quality teacher professional development programmes are meant to empower teachers in line with changes taking place in the world. The late Julius Nyerere (an education icon of the philosophy and policy of Education—Education for Self-Reliance—in Tanzania) once said that any educational policy needs well-trained professional cadres who are continually updated for it to succeed (Nyerere, 1988). Consequently, teacher professional development programmes must be geared towards keeping teachers in all capacities abreast of new professional, academic, pedagogical and global society challenges. Much of the available literature worldwide generally acknowledges the sensitive character or lack of consensus associated with any attempt to address matters relating to quality issues in education (Sifuna and Sawamura, 2010).

Quality teachers in schools are products of quality teacher education and re-education programmes. In this respect, developing quality teacher professionals is about empowering them in affective, cognitive and psychomotor domains. After all, developing quality teacher professionals and building their capacity is instrumental to the development of not only education but also society. As Hansen and Simonsen (2001), stated development and improvement of education is dependent on the professional development of teachers. Similarly, Ishumi (1988) underscored the place of teachers in the society as the mother of all professions. Inevitably, developing quality teacher professionals for a quality education and society is indispensable (Komba and Nkumbi, 2008).

In summary, the concept of quality teacher professional development is therefore about the process that entails empowering teachers with the potential or professional qualities enough to undertake, on a regular basis, the teaching enterprise. It is a course of action destined to making teachers professionally (cognitively, affectively and pedagogically) alive. In Kenya in-service training for teachers has been delivered under a variety of titles such as refresher course, upgrading courses and induction course (Ministry of Education, 1994; Olembo, Wanga and Karugu, 1992). Therefore, in-service training is vital to professional growth for teachers and consequently has a direct bearing on provision of quality education.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Design

The study was carried out using a descriptive research survey design. Best and Khan (2000) say that descriptive research survey is an appropriate design for evaluating the effectiveness of policy guidelines for implementing educational programmes as it uses quantitative and qualitative information to identify, analyze and interpret conditions that exist in relation to set organizational policy guidelines.

3.2 Target Population

Borg and Gall (1996) define the target population as all the members of a real or hypothetical set of people events and objects to which a researcher wishes to generalize the results of study. The target population in this study was 43 out of 85 tutors (50% of the tutors in each of the 8 colleges) and 8 principals out of 11 principals from colleges with second year-teacher trainees.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Tutors' Academic Qualification in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges.

Table 2. Results on Academic Qualifications of Tutors

Tutor's Academic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
P1	03	6.9
Dip. Ed	01	2.3
B.Ed	09	20.9
B.Sc	17	39.6
B.A	05	11.6
M.Ed	08	18.7

The findings in table 2, indicates that 18.7% of the tutors had Masters in Education, 20.9% Bachelors degree in Education and 2.3% Diploma in Education certificate holders. Whereas they were qualified personnel to prepare teachers, during the interview with the principals, it was noted that most of them were either retired teachers from public institutions or part-time tutors. Gappa and Leslie (1993), observes that part-timers are in most cases disconnected from the mission and spirit of the institution and therefore making them lack purpose and focus. Furthermore, McGuire (1993) noted that teaching can suffer due to unclear roles of part-time teachers as colleges fail to integrate part-time teachers into their institutions. Supporting the above arguments, Schneider (2003) observes that part-time teachers are less effective than full-time teachers.

Equally, from the above findings 6.9% of tutors were P1 certificate holders. This is likely to affect the quality of the graduates because of low qualifications of tutors. The findings are in agreement with World Bank (1980) which indicates that internal efficiency is an aspect of education that could be influenced by qualification of the teachers. A review of more than 200 studies that examine teacher qualifications established that teachers who are well grounded in their content areas and have greater knowledge of teaching and learning are more highly rated and more successful with students' achievement (Darling-Hammond, Berry and Thoreson, 2001; Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin, 1999). In addition, Prosser and Clark (1972) noted that the success of any programme depends on the type of teachers recruited. Maundu (1986) established that teacher qualification had significant effect on students' achievement.

Some tutors may not have had professional training; the findings indicated 39.6% of the tutors qualified with Bachelor of Science degree and 11.6% with Bachelor of Arts degree. These findings were similar with those of Omariba (2005), World Bank (1980), Haddad (1978), Kinyanjui (1974), Smith (1970) and Beeby (1966). In all the studies, the findings indicated that it's quite possible to find people trained in other fields working as teachers, but trained teachers do make a difference in students' achievements. Onguti (1987) did observe that a trained teacher adds more value to a school. He /She is an asset to the institution in which he is an instructor. Moon (2004) observed that trained teachers have more capacity of understanding others and coping with situations more aptly and appropriately.

Farooq and Shahzadi, (2006) notes that trained teachers use their ability to impact and influence pupils to perform and know different teaching styles, thus students studying under the guidance of untrained teachers remain deprived of the latest pedagogical supports due to unawareness of their teachers in pedagogical skill areas. The latter therefore advocate for appointment of professionally trained teachers in the educational institutions in both public and private. Zeichner (2006) indicated that professional competencies are seen by many as the core of the development of quality teaching. Therefore teacher trainers should be competent in order to prepare and produce quality teachers. Indeed quality effective teaching is the chief instrument in provision of quality education (UNESCO, 2008).

4.2 Tutors Teaching Experience in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges.

Table 3. Tutors Responses on Teaching Experience

Length of Service	Frequency	Percentages
Below 10years	23	53.5
10- 20years	08	18.6
Over 20 years	12	27.9

From the table 3, the findings indicate that 53.5% of the tutors in emerging private T.T.Cs have a teaching experience of less than 10 years. Upon further interview with the principals, they acknowledged the fact that most of their tutors were fresh university graduates since the government had not absorbed them immediately; they sought alternative/part-time jobs in T.T.Cs as they await employment. This clearly shows that the tutors lacked the necessary experience and expertise in two aspects; first, as classroom teachers and secondly as teacher

trainers. The experience of a teacher has a direct bearing on his /her mastery of content and hence ability to effectively impart knowledge to his learners and teacher's experiences has significant relationship with students' performance. These results corroborated well with the findings of Adeyemi (2008) who said that teacher experience is the prime factor for quality education. It also agrees with the findings of Birgen (2005) who noted that the experience and qualification is the best asset for handling a task.

Findings also show that 18.6% of tutors had been in the teaching profession for a period of 10 to 20 years. During the interview with principals, it was noted that most of the tutors were not professional teachers as majorities were untrained graduates. However, Zeichner (2006) assert that professional competencies are the core of the development of quality teaching. Guo, (2005) notes that lack of professionalism in teacher- trainers have led to teacher education programs neglecting to educate their student teachers in actual teaching skills, with many teachers arriving in the classroom with little teaching experience.

The findings further indicate that 27.9% were tutors who had a teaching experience of over 20 years. From the interview with the principals, it was noted that most of the tutors were both primary school and secondary school retirees. Whereas they had the qualification and experience gained overtime while in active service, they tend to lack the passion and the drive as either were teaching because they had nothing to do or teaching for money. Similarly, Cline (1993) raises the question of whether retirees would want to teach for the sake of teaching or just for the money. More so, Shakeshaft (2002) indicated that the institution has no commitment to retirees and retirees are less apt to having a long-term commitment to the institution. Teaching is one of the duties that require both qualification and experience for better delivery hence recruitment of competent teachers is a necessary measure in improving quality of education.

4.3. Tutors' Attendance of In-service Courses in Emerging Private Primary Teacher Training Colleges.

Tutors were asked to give the number of times they had attended refresher courses in the past 3-years (2008-2010). Their responses are summarized in the Figure1 below.

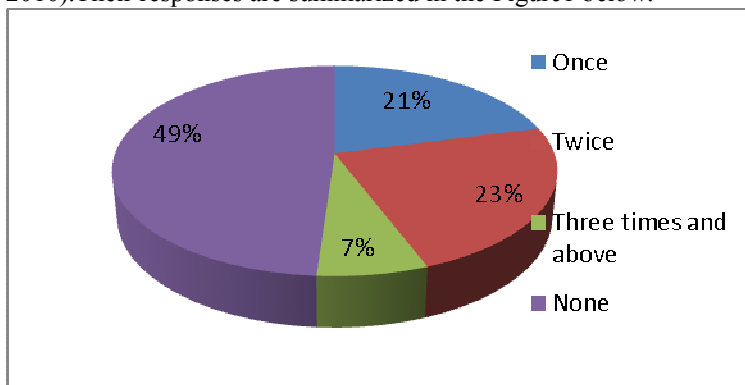


Figure 1. Attendance of in-service courses within duration of 3 years.

From figure 1 above, 49% of the tutors in these emerging colleges had never attended any refresher course in the last three years, while 21% had only attended once. World Bank (2007) reported that teacher professional development is critical. Research has shown that teachers' success in professional development enhances the results of students' learning (UNESCO, 2008). The findings concurred with those of KIPRA(2007) which indicated that teachers in private institutions hardly go for in-service training, despite the fact that some private schools have untrained teachers. Similarly, Kathuri(1986) indicated that in-service courses are important because they give teachers fresh ideas on how to handle new concepts or the syllabi. Further, poorly inserviced teachers feel incompetent and threatened by new innovations. Shiundu and Omulando (1992) underscore the importance of in-service training for qualified teachers.

The findings further reveal that 23% of the tutors had attended refresher courses twice within a period of 3 years and 7% had attended atleast three times. These figures: 23% and 7% are relatively low implying that very few tutors attend in-service courses. From the interviews with the principals, it was clear that in-service courses had financial implications and most of the institutions could not afford to sponsor tutors to such courses. This automatically affected quality of teacher preparation since very few tutors attended in-service courses. Kelly (2008) argues that quality professional development is indisputably central to building, improving and sustaining the quality of teacher professionals. A study conducted by Pomuti (2000) found significant effects of in-service training on the performance of teachers. Therefore continous teacher development is very important in the delivery of quality education services. More-so, in-service helps teachers improve their teaching methods and

interaction, equips the teachers with more effective means of getting feedback by the students which is ultimately related to the removal of errors and improvement of students' achievements.

Conclusion

It is clearly evident that emerging private primary teacher training colleges lacked competent teaching staff which is a major determinant in preparation of teacher trainees. These colleges use tutors who have inadequate experience, part-time tutors and retirees who have no commitment to the institution, tutors with low academic qualification and untrained tutors to serve as teacher-trainers, this engagement compromises the quality of the prepared and produced school teachers, consequently tainting the image of teacher education.

Recommendations

Teacher quality has long been and will continue to be an important issue to parents, educators and policymakers and to that extent therefore, there will be need for a legislation framework to be enacted to act as a watch dog over the teacher preparation programmes across the nation. In the light of the findings and conclusions of this research, it was recommended tutors in private primary teacher training colleges should be encouraged to attend seminars, workshops and sandwich programmes to update their knowledge for efficiency and effectiveness in their jobs. Furthermore the Ministry of Education should have a standardized system of recruitment of tutors, to avoid incompetent tutors being recruited in private primary teacher training colleges.

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