



ISSN NO. 2320-5407

Journal homepage: <http://www.journalijar.com>

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL
OF ADVANCED RESEARCH

RESEARCH ARTICLE

School Factors Influencing Students Achievement in History and Government in Secondary Schools in Kenya

Omari M. Imbundu¹, Poipoi W. Moses²

1. Department of Curriculum and Instructional Technology, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.
2. Department of Educational Psychology, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History:

Received: 11 April 2013
Final Accepted: 10 May 2013
Published Online: May 2013

Key words:

Enrolment,
Experienced teacher,
External variables,
experienced teachers

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

KCPE: Kenya Certificate of Primary Education.

KCSE: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education.

KIE: Kenya Institute of Education.

KISE: Kenya Institute of Special Education

KNEC: Kenya National Examination Council

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out the school factors influencing students' achievement in History and Government in secondary school in Sabatia District. Specifically, the study sought to identify the academic and professional qualification of History and Government teachers in Sabatia District; ascertain the teaching methods and strategies used in the teaching of History and Government; establish the availability and suitability of teaching and learning; and find out the support given by education office. A total of 211 respondents participated in the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design. Using purposive sampling stratified sampling and simple random sampling techniques, 30 teachers of History and Government and 180 Form Four students of History and Government from 30 secondary schools were selected. One District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer was also selected. The study established that although teachers were professionally trained and qualified to teach the subject, they were experiencing difficulties in the teaching of subject due to inadequate time. It was recommended that in-service courses for teachers of History and Government should be stepped up.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2013., All rights reserved.

Introduction

According to the New Secondary School Syllabus Volume IV developed in 2002, the national goals of secondary education in Kenya are to: foster national unity and patriotism; promote socio-economic, technical and industrial needs for national development; promote individual development and self-fulfillment; promote sound moral and religious values; promote social-equity and responsibility; promote respect for and development of Kenya's rich and varied cultures; promote international consciousness and foster positive attitudes towards other nationals, and promote positive attitude towards good health and environmental factors.

The Ominde Commission Report of 1964 stressed on the need to establish an education system that would play a key role in unifying the Kenyan people and creating sufficient man-power to replace the departing British officials. It was also aimed at enabling Kenyans to appreciate each others' cultural

values. The history subject was used as the main vehicle through which to achieve this. History topics were written with contents that enlightened Kenyans on the need to live as a united people. The Session Paper Number 1 of 2005 "Framework for Education Training and Research" illustrates the commitment of Ministry of Education (MoE) to improve accessibility, retention, equality and relevance through better management of service delivery to all learners. Tyler (1969) noted that Education is the process of changing behavior of people. This is using behavior in broad sense to include thinking and feeling as well as action.

In United States of America, Tanzania, India, Swaziland and Britain history is compulsory to learners in Primary and Secondary schools as well as university levels because the understanding of history broadens ones intellect. Runaku (1996:36) notes that in developed countries history has been made the

foundation of all other subjects. He observes that an African scholar who thought that history is a useless subject and pursued science to the level of first degree in England is compelled to join an undergraduate history class in order to sharpen his mind to be able to understand advanced sciences.

In the New Secondary School History and Government Syllabus of 2002, the government, through Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) came up with the following History and Government objectives; to recognize and appreciate the importance of studying History and Government; to acquire knowledge, ability and show appreciation for critical historical analysis of socio-economic and political organization of African societies; promote a sense of nationalism, patriotism and national unity; to encourage and sustain moral and mutual social responsibility; identify, assess and appreciate the rich and varied cultures of Kenyan people and other peoples; to promote sense of awareness and need for functional democracy for Kenyan people; to promote an understanding and appreciation of intra-national and international consciousness and relationships; and derive through the study of History and Government an interest in future learning.

The situation, according to KNEC (2007) report, bears alarming implication to the country, taking into account that the world is competitive in terms of man power development needs. Better performance in History and Government would assist in catering for this demand. This is where the achievement in History and Government becomes a national issue, which should be tackled immediately. In view of this scenario, many school managers have remained conscious of the poor KCSE examination results to the extent that they have encouraged students to drop the subject in favor of others for fear that the poor performance in history may lower the school's overall mean grade in KCSE. Thus, this study sought to identify and examine the causes of this drastic drop in the subject's achievement. Suggestions were given in order to bring the subject to its best achievement. Since the inception of 8-4-4 system of education in Kenya in 1983, the number of students who register for History and Government in KCSE has steadily grown. Regrettably, students' achievement in this subject at national level has not been satisfactory. The mean score for the subject at the national level has consistently remained wanting thereby causing great concern among educationists. In Sabatia District, the students' performance in History and Government is even worse. For instance, in 2004, the subject recorded a mean score of 6.28 but dropped to 5.183 in 2008 (SDACR, 2008).

Methodology

This study was concerned with the factors that influence students' achievement in History and Government in Sabatia District, Vihiga County, Kenya for the period between from 2004 - 2008. The design for this study was descriptive survey. The target population was 30 secondary schools, 600 History and Government Form Four students, 72 teachers History and Government and the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer.

In this study, purposive sampling, stratified random sampling and simple random sampling were used to represent sample for study. 180 students were sampled out of the 600 History and Government student population. As for the teachers of History and Government, one teacher was selected from each of the 30 schools giving rise to 30 teachers of History and Government. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer in the district was also selected to augment information from students and teachers. Thus a total of 211 respondents were used in the study. Data was collected using two types of questionnaires namely; school History and Government teachers' questionnaires, History and Government students' questionnaire and interview schedule for the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. After a test-retest method was used, a reliability coefficient of 0.723 was obtained using Pearson's correlation coefficient. Two scholars with the experience in the area of study were requested to scrutinize and examine the relevance of the content used in the questionnaire in relation to the field and objectives of the study. The data collected was analyzed using Excel software program. Data was interpreted using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and presented in form of tables and bar graphs.

Results and Discussion

In this chapter, data obtained from the study was analyzed to determine the school factors influencing students' achievement in History and Government in secondary schools in Sabatia District, Kenya.

Teacher's Qualification

Qualification of teachers and their teaching experience were examined to assess the quality of teachers of History and Government in selected schools. The summary findings are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Professional Qualification of Selected Teachers of History and Government

Professional Qualification	N	Frequency	Percentage
Trained B.E.d Graduates	30	24	80%
Untrained graduates	30	6	20%
Total	30	30	100 %

Source: Field Data

Table 2: Teachers' Teaching Experience in Years

Class	F1	%	F2	%	F3	%	F4	%	Average %
Below 4 Yrs	3	10	6	20					20 %
Above 4 Yrs	24	80	24	80	24	80	24	80	80 %

Source: Field Data

From Table 1, it can be observed that 24(80%) of the teachers were trained graduates while 6(20%) were untrained graduates. From this analysis, it can be concluded that most secondary school teachers of History and Government in sampled schools were professionally trained graduate teachers, but very few. According to Cuttance (1980) both teacher qualifications and teaching experience influenced student's academic achievement in a given subject.

Those who had taught the subject for less than four years and had not had an opportunity to teach it across the four forms were categorized as not experienced enough. A large proportion of teachers 24(80%) were experienced as compared to only a few 6(20%) who had less than 4 years of teaching experience in the subject.

Many years of teaching accord a teacher a deeper understanding of the subject matter. Through broad exposure and further reading, a teacher becomes more experienced and effective at handling the subject. This is supported by Simon's (1975) study on teaching experience as a determinant of quality education.

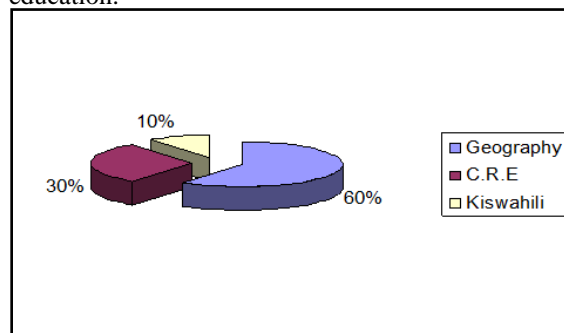


Figure 1: Teachers' Second Teaching Subjects

From this Figure 1, 18(60%) of the teachers of history teach history with geography; 9(30%) of them indicated that they taught CRE as the second subject and 3(10%) indicated that they taught Kiswahili. From this analysis, it can be concluded that a greater proportion of the teachers teach History and Government with Geography. The value of this sort of combination is that the curriculum areas have common information, both deal with the activities of man on the universe. This promotes transfer of learning information from one subject to the other, which further facilitates the teaching of both history and Geography.

Teacher of CRE on the other hand, has an added advantage when teaching History and Government because CRE also deals with personalities and their activities. It teaches how God made revelations to mankind. Likewise, teachers of Kiswahili find their teaching of history easier because of its interrelatedness in the subject matter and linguistics competence. It can therefore be concluded that most history teachers have appropriate integration of knowledge. These combinations therefore, enhance the teaching and learning of History and Government in secondary schools curriculum.

Table 3 Teachers' Teaching Loads per Week

Teaching Load per Week	Frequency	Percentage
17-20	6	20
21-24	9	30
25-30	15	50
Total	30	100

Source: Field Data

From the Table 3, 15(50%) of teachers indicated that their teaching load was between 25 and 30, while 9(30%) had between 21-24 lessons per week. The remaining 6(20%) of teachers had a teaching load of between 17-20 lessons per week. The recommended lessons per week for history by the ministry of education on the basis of CBE are 14 per week. A teacher who teaches forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 will teach a total of 12 lessons per week in a single stream but this figure increases with additional streams. Thus, lessons below the minimum mean the concerned teacher is underutilized while lessons above the maximum number means the teacher is overloaded.

The analysis above, therefore, indicates that the teaching load is within what the ministry of education recommendation. The teachers of History and Government are currently not overloaded. Normally, this overload leads to teachers' inefficiency and ineffectiveness in teaching. Students need to be taught at their own pace. When this happens they enjoy their learning and hence perform well. Teaching without such consideration will result into poor performance in the subject. From this table, it would appear that most of the teachers had minimum of between 17 and 30 lessons per week. This loading is within the ministry of education recommendation which states that a class teacher teaches a maximum of 27 lessons week, Head of Department 18-22 lessons per week, the deputy head teacher 10-20 and the head teacher 4-12 lessons per week respectively.

The teachers' teaching load is one of the factors that affect students' performance in History and Government in KCSE examination i.e. the number of lessons a teacher is expected to teach in a specified week. This factor has been overlooked for a long time mainly because of the assumption that staffing in schools is adequate. Recently, the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has been transferring teachers in an effort to balance teaching staff in schools. It has been claimed that some schools were overstaffed while others were understaffed. Teachers in understaffed schools are usually overloaded, that is they teach more lessons in a week than required. The understaffing phenomenon in schools has been enhanced by the TSC's practice of using the curriculum based establishment (CBE) criterion in teacher deployment rather than using subject offered by schools. Overloading tends to overburden the teachers and thus resulting in ineffectiveness in the teaching of History and Government, hence further leading to poor students' performance in KCSE History and Government examination. It is in view of this fact that this study examined the influence of teachers' teaching load in selected secondary schools.

Table 4: Teaching Methods used by Teachers of History and Government

Teaching Methods	N	Frequency	Percentage
Lecture	30	24	80
Discussion	30	12	40
Demonstration	30	9	30
Questions/answers	30	12	40
Assignment	30	21	70
Project	30	6	20
Field work	30	6	20

Table 4 shows that several teaching methods employed by teachers. Out of the 30 teachers surveyed, 24(80%) indicated that they use lecture method among other methods in teaching History and Government. This was followed by assignment at 21(70%), discussion and questions/answers methods both of which had support from 12(40%) while demonstration received the support of 9(30%) teachers. The least utilized method reported by 6(20%) teachers were project and field trips.

From the available data, it would appear that most widely used method is lecture method. Teachers cited time and financial shortage as the major hindrance in the use of discovery methods like field work, field trip and project work. They claimed that time factor was a problem when it came to out-of-class teaching approaches whether funds were available in schools or not. Out-of-class teaching leads to disruption of other lessons in the time-table. In most schools, lack of adequate funding restricted use of this out-of-class teaching methods. Most teachers said that they were allowed only one field trip yearly, which was not enough to expose students to all the practical experiences in history and government.

These constraints forced teachers to use more class room methods. According to the teacher of History and Government, the teaching method used depends on its influence on the teaching of the same. Teachers said they did their best to use student-centered method at their disposal so that students understand History and Government concepts. These methods included discussion, demonstration, question/answer method and assignment. In all these methods, clarity of teachers' presentation, their constructive criticism of the learner and the use of various questioning techniques were necessary in improving learning outcomes. One other important method beyond classroom cited by Fitzgerald (1970) included use of symposia. The method provides ideal situations for learning History and Government in secondary

schools without strain. This makes students enjoy learning History and Government.

When using such methods, students are able to discuss, share and exchange experience as well as ideas in history instructing. These methods tend to supplement the classroom teaching of the subject, and therefore increase students' enthusiasm in learning History and Government. To support this view, Beyer (1985) argued that ability to determine logical inconsistency in a line of reasoning is a demonstration of critical thinking.

All the above arguments are supported by the KNEC reports which suggest that teachers should combine both discovery method of teaching and expository method, sometimes using one and occasionally the other and taking the best to facilitate learning. The choice of the methods would vary depending on teaching materials, the competence of teacher in the topics being taught and other necessary requirement in the teaching process.

The study therefore established that teachers of History and Government use several methods of teaching at their disposal. These teachers are of the opinion that the use of the practical methods such as discovery and problem based learning would be more useful in the teaching and learning of History and Government. This is in support of multi-sensory-oriented methodology which states "we learn 11% through the sense of listening and retain 5.5%, 83% through sight and remember 50% of what we see and learn, 80% of what we say and 90% of what say and do" (Sampath *et al.*, 1985). This finding clearly demonstrates that students would remember more when they see and understand more when they do (Words Worth 1978). This is quite relevant to the teaching of history.

Table 5: The Adequacy of History and Government Textbooks in Secondary Schools

Textbooks in Schools	Frequency	Percentage
Adequate	24	80
Inadequate	6	20
Totals	30	100

Source: Field Data

Table 5 shows that the majority 24(80%) of the teachers felt that their schools were adequately equipped with relevant History and Government textbooks. Only 6(20%) of them indicated that History and Government textbooks were in short supply. Given the fact that adequate supply, proper utilization of History and Government textbooks is

expected to bring about improved performance in the subject, the shortage in the supply of these items in some schools explains the poor performance noted in secondary school system.

The teachers of History and Government also gave the titles and authors of History and Government textbooks used. Most of the books listed by teachers were relevant for teaching secondary schools History and Government. The most dominant textbooks listed by teachers were; Evolving world, History and Government by Oxford, History and Government by KLB, Test and fix it KCSE revision, Milestone in History and Government by Longhorn publishers, Golden grade revision series, High flyers series, KCSE Revision in history, and Gate way secondary revision, History and Government.

All of these textbooks and revision materials were locally published. However, students claimed that the language used in these History and Government textbooks was difficult for them and points given were not well explained in some of them. Perhaps the written language used in these textbooks is incomprehensible to secondary school History and Government learners in Kenya. This could partly explain students' difficulties in History and Government learning and in interpreting KCSE questions.

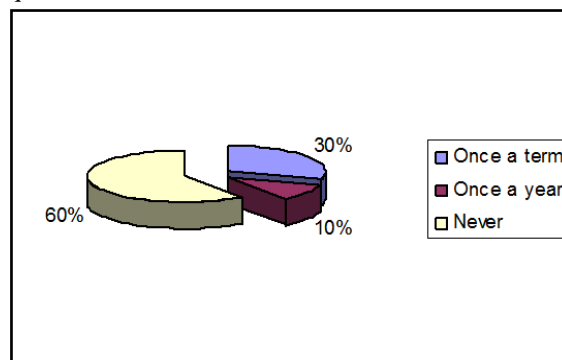


Figure 2: Frequency of History and Government Assessment in Secondary Schools

From Figure 2, a large proportion of teachers 18(60%) indicated that the school District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers have visited their schools and therefore they have been supervised, while 9(30%) of them said they have never been visited in a year, and the rest 3(10%) indicated that they have been supervised at least once a term. The role of Quality Assurance and Standards Office is vital in determining the implementation of History and Government syllabus and helps to cope with relevant challenges and demands of handling the subject. From the above data, it is quite evident that

the District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers conducted supervisory role as required of them.

Of the teachers who indicated that they had been supervised, majority of them reported that they found inspection service not useful because the officers were not specialists in History and Government. On the survey carried out the kind of inspection carried out on the kind of Quality Assurance and Standards Officers in the district, only one was found to have done History and Government. Most of officers said they rarely carried out supervisory services in schools largely because of shortage of personnel, transport facilities and shortage of funds. This is consistent with what Maranga (1977) established in a similar study.

Conclusions

Most secondary school teachers of History and Government in sampled schools were professionally trained graduate teachers except very few and had taught for four years and above. Although majority of the teachers like History and Government and would therefore continue teaching the subject, they were experiencing difficulties in the teaching of subject. Teachers claimed that they did not find enough time to teach History and Government using student-centered teaching method such as field work and field trip due to large content which needs to be covered. It was established that most widely used method is lecture method. The District Quality Assurance and Standards Officers have conducted assessment of secondary school and the teachers of History and Government. Concerning instruction methods, innovative methods such as field trip, that are likely to improve students' achievement in school should be promoted by school administration. The Government of Kenya in general and school administration in particular should endeavor to ensure that secondary schools have adequate physical facilities and teaching-learning resources. The ministry of education should identify and train more quality assurance and standards assessors who are subject specialists in History and Government and other subjects and deploy them to various districts and divisions to ensure that they do carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently.

References

Beyer, B. K. (1985). *Teaching Thinking Skills, In NASSP Bulletin, Vol.69 no.477,pg70-80.*

Cuttance, P.D.O. (1980). *Scewis Consistently Influence the Performance of Their Students, Sage Publication.*

Fitzgerald, M.W (1979). *Teaching Secondary Mathematics 3rd Year Book, Washington DC, National Council of Mathematics.*

K.N.E.C, (2007). *KCSE Report, Nairobi.*

Maranga, J.S. (1977). *The Roots of Inspectoral Tradition in Kenya . Nairobi, Bureau of Education Research , Kenyatta University College ,Nairobi.*

Republic of Kenya (1964). *Kenya Education Commission Report (Ominde Report), Nairobi, Government Printer.*

Republic of Kenya (1988). *The 8-4-4 System of Education, Nairobi. Government Printer*

Republic of Kenya (2008). *Sabatia Constituency Strategic Plan, Accelerated Development 2008 and Beyond.*

Runaku, J.B.R. (1996). *Study of African History, Matsapha. Greet Shoots.*

DEO (2009). *Sabatia District Secondary Schools Academic Reports (2004-2008), Unpublished Report.*

Samphath, K. et al. (1990). *Introduction to Education Technology, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, PVT.*

Simmons, J. and Alexander, L. (1975). *The Determinants of School Achievements in Developing Countries: The Education and Production Functions, Working Paper, 201. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development Staff, Washington DC.*

Simmons, J. and Alexander, L. (1978). *The Determination of Achievement in Developing Countries: A Review of Research In Economic Development and Cultural Change.*

Tyler, R. W. et al. (eds) (1969). *Educational Evaluation. New Roles, New Means. Chicago.*

Wadsworth, J.B. (1978). *Piaget for Classroom Teacher, New York, Longman Inc.*