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Analysis of Teacher's Perception on Instruction Practices in Public and Private Primary Schools in Kaptagat Division of Eldoret East Sub County, Kenya

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to establish the difference in teachers' perception on instruction practices in schools in public and private primary schools in Kaptagat division. This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The instruments used in the study were questionnaires, and interviews. The questionnaires were administered to 160 teachers (31 private and 129 public). Simple random sampling and purposive sampling were used to select the sample. The data collected analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used. Inferential statistics used a t-test. The teachers from private school (n=27, m=4.13) had a higher score of perception on instruction practices compared to public schools (n=124, m=3.70). There was a statistically significant difference $p < .05$ in instruction practices between private and public primary schools' teachers [$t(149) = -3.38, p = .00$]. From the study there was no significant difference on the use of learner-centered methods of teaching by teachers, continued practice of teacher-centered methods of teaching, pupils in the school working in groups and teachers' heavy reliance on textbooks during instruction which negatively influence KCPE performance. There was significant difference on good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school, English being used as a medium of instruction, individualized instruction given to pupils, active involvement of pupils in practical lessons and pupils being given homework on daily basis. The findings showed that instructional practices adopted in private schools were more efficient and effective in teaching and learning compared to those in public schools. The teachers used teacher-centered methods of teaching especially in public schools mostly due to high pupil population. Thus the government should employ more teachers to reduce teacher-pupil ratio and hence pupil-centered methods of instruction such as discussion, dramatization, demonstration, group work and individualized instruction should be used to enhance performances.

Keywords: Instruction, practices, public, private, Primary, schools

1. Introduction

The United Nation Convention on rights of the child (UNCRC) Article 26(1984) and millennium Development Goals no. 2, states that every child is entitled to quality, free and compulsory Primary Education (UNESCO, 2007). In United States, basic education is free and compulsory. Most African countries, including, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Malawi have also introduced free and compulsory primary education for all (Achieng, Akech & Simatwa, 2010). Much effort has been put in place by United States, Australia and most African countries to provide free and compulsory basic education. However, the academic performance in public or state schools has been poor compared to privately owned schools. According to study by Murname (2011), there is an indication that catholic and non-Catholic private schools were more effective than public schools in academic performance in United States. The difference in academic performance between state and private schools in United States is attributed to socio- status which is also linked to family structure. Considine & Zappala, (2002) argue that students from independent private schools in Australia are more likely to achieve higher end of school scores and thus private schools are more likely to have a greater number of students from higher socio- economic status because they have greater financial resources.

In Uganda free primary education was introduced by president Museveni in 1996 as a pledge to his presidential campaign promise (Bagunywa, 2006). The children Act (2001) number 8 creates a Kenyan law that provides similar provision as the United Nations and state that every child has a right to free and compulsory basic education. It is with these reasons, that the Kenyan government introduced free and compulsory Primary education in 2003 for all children of school going age. The Sessional paper No. 14 of 2012, also asserts that every child aged between four and 17 years should not only attend school, but also receive quality education (Machio, 2013). According to Machio (2013), academic performance in private schools, especially in Kenya certificate of Primary Education has been on the upward trend since 2003, while academic performance in public schools has been either stagnating below average or deteriorating with time. Research has shown that better Physical facilities and provision of adequate learning materials like textbooks is Key to improving academic performance. There has been an increase in the number of private schools in Eldoret East District since 2003. For instance only 3 private primary school registered candidates for KCPE examination in 2008, which rose to 11 in 2011 an increase of 266 percent. For this reason one logically may argue that there are aspects about private and public schools that cause the

former to perform compared to the latter. In 2010, 7 private schools were ranked among the top ten, while only 3 public schools appeared among the top ten. In 2009, the schools ranked top ten were all private schools and in 2011, 8 private schools and 2 public schools were ranked top ten. Similarly, in 2012 and 2013, 9 private schools were ranked among the top ten while only 1 public school appeared in the top ten.

KCPE analysis done by Education Watch between the years 2007-2012 clearly indicates that the top 1000 schools nationally are heavily dominated by private schools. The stunning performance by private schools is replicated in almost all the counties in the country. Similarly, private primary schools in Eldoret East Sub-county of Uasin Gishu County have also been performing exceedingly well in KCPE examinations. The same scenario is experienced in Kaptagat division of Eldoret East sub-county. However, public primary schools have continued to perform dismally in KCPE examinations despite intervention by the government to invest heavily in them to improve KCPE performance. The difference in KCPE performance between private and public schools is alarming and has raised a lot of concern to the educationalist and other stakeholders. It is against this background that a study determines the effect of instruction practices on performance of public and private schools in Kaptagat division.

2. Literature Review

2.1. School Instructional Practices in Primary Schools

Sadker and Sadker (2000) observe that in the current era of knowledge explosion, there is need for the schools to emphasize thinking skills, which are necessary in today's new information society. These critical thinking skills, they argue include; comparing, interpreting, observing, summarizing, clarifying, decision-making, creating and criticizing. These skills can only be learnt if appropriate teaching methods are used. However, UNESCO (2005) asserts that many commonly used teaching styles are too rigid and place emphasis on rote learning which place students in a passive role, and thus do not serve them well. Studies conducted in Togo showed that students were forced to memorize lessons in science without being shown how what they learn relate to the natural phenomena around them (Gitogo, 2006). This was because teachers attributed greater significance in classroom teaching to abstract text book-based information than the immediate surrounding and life experience of the pupils. In a paper that discussed problems that impact negatively on teaching of science subjects in Kenya.

According to Achieng' and Ayot (2009) to teach is to transform by informing to develop a desire for lifelong learning, to help pupils become students become mature and independent learners who are architects of an existing challenging future a kind of communication meeting and merging of minds. They further state that, to teach is to help or guide someone learning. Learning can be said to take place only where the learner reacts to what he or she sees, hears and feels. In other words, the learner has to be active to learn.

According to Achieng and Ayot (2009), instruction is the systematic actions that induce learning. It is the specific systematic process of setting conditions of learning either to an individual or a group of people. This study intends to establish the difference in instructional practices between public and private schools. Learners tend to work more intensely when involved in a group. Learning in a group leads to the ability to build their knowledge with, and through other learners. Learning is best attained in a learning group made up of members of a class, the entire school and the teachers. However, some learning must be of necessity being individual (Otunga *et al.*, 2011). Class assignments and homework boost students learning and can be seen to instill value to independent learning. In general, learner centered teaching methods that involve students active participation are recommended if critical thinking is to be achieved. These include case studies, role-plays, discussions, problem solving and instrumental team learning among others. However, most teachers use teacher- centered methods, of teaching that consists of lecturing and large-group instruction that place heavy reliance on textbooks and the chalkboard.

According to Workineh (2002), school quality determines the academic achievement of learners which he refers "school quality" as the character of instructional process experienced by each student and the school's efficacy in developing cognitive proficiencies. The teachers' continued use of inappropriate teaching practices is partly because many of them are not well equipped with the necessary skills, which as Curson (1990) observes, limits many teachers from using them. Learner- centered methods of teaching are time consuming and with the teachers overwhelming desire to complete the syllabus, they find these methods inconvenient. Large classes in public primary schools make it very hard for the teacher to use learner- centered approaches of teaching. Teachers also lack enough time to prepare pupil-centered lessons and are thus unable to prepare them even when they possess the required skills. Private primary schools are popular in practicing a method known as "drilling" to make their pupils pass examinations (MOEST, 2003).

This is in most cases done by giving the learners very many KCPE model examinations papers with answers and the learners thoroughly revise them with the assistance of the teachers. Such concentrated periods of practice in answering objective tests is thought to be capable of giving increased scores, with a resulting distortion of the pattern of grades in non-preferred objective tests (Curson, 1990). Pupils from public primary schools may be disadvantaged since they may not afford to buy the very many examination model papers that may improve their KCPE examination performance as those from private schools. In the light of the reviewed literature, this study endeavors to examine instructional practices in both categories of schools and how they influence academic performance.

Achieng and Ayot (2009) recommend a learner-centered classroom based on a highly interactive model of student learning which metaphysically puts students at the center of the classroom. The teacher is still very important to the classroom, but acts as manager, mentor and coach. It is assumed that when student work with other students each of them has something to bring to the knowledge table. Wasanga, Wambua and Ogle (2010) emphasized that lack of syllabus coverage is a major problem in Kenyan public primary schools. They also observed that schools that want their learners to do well in examinations must cover the syllabus adequately at

the end of the year so that they do not disadvantage pupils. Otunga and Nyandusi (2011) concur with the above authors by showing that syllabus can be a source of difference in achievement in countries where centralized curriculum is used such as Kenya. However their work did not show if syllabus coverage is linked to better KCPE performance in private schools and unlike public schools. The present study will endeavour to compare syllabus coverage in both categories of schools.

2.1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theory used in this study is the system theory advanced by Lunenburg (2010), who viewed a system as an interrelated set of elements functioning as an operating unit. The method which aims at discovering how this is brought about in the widest variety of system has been called General system theory as stated by Simuyu (2001). System theory can also be defined as the orderly combination of two or more individuals whose interaction is intended to produce a desired outcome (Mulnar, 2009). The theory is not restricted to one discipline, but takes into account the relationships between various specialized disciplines and their contributions to one another. It does not seek to replace other specialized theories of particular discipline but makes an attempt to establish interfaces between them. It therefore, relates to the structure, operation or functions of an entity as a whole. All the elements of a system work towards achieving a common goal.

For instance, a school aims at providing universal literacy for the students who are pursuing their studies in it. It also provides education for self-reliance to the students enrolled in the school (Mukwa and Too, 2002). The purpose of the systems approach is to ascertain that the behavior of an individual is controlled in a way which is consistent with the total demands of the environment and not by the skilled manipulations of one or a few individuals acting independently or in concert. As applied to this study, the theory should assist the researcher to establish the difference in the way head teachers, teachers and pupils in public and private schools work to solve problems and to enhance performance in KCPE examinations. This view is supported by Mulnar (2009) who says systems theory has been used for several decades as a framework for analyzing and solving problems in schools.

System theory maintains that a school does not exist alone. It does not only depend on its environment but also a part of the larger system such as the society or the economic system of the country to which it belongs. The theory lays emphasis on unity and integrity of the organization and focuses on the interaction between the component parts and the interaction and the environment (Simiyu, 2001). The theory holds that the component parts of a system interact with each other and the environment thus help the researcher to determine the influence of supervision, teaching and learning resources, instructional practices and teacher characteristics, which are the variables in this study. Schools are open systems, hence they respond to external influence as they attempt to achieve their objectives. The introduction of free primary education in 2003 is an example of a change from the outer environment. The environment surrounding the school includes the social, political and economic forces that impinge on the organization (Lunenburg, 2010). As applied to this study the variable instructional practices form the transformational process and KCPE performance is the feedback which indicates the effectiveness of the school as a system.

3. Research Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design to establish the teacher's perception on instruction practices in public and private primary schools.

The target population consisted of head teachers, teachers and standard eight pupils from both private and public primary school in the division. The total number of schools targeted is 54 (42 public and 12 private). The respondents targeted in the study was 54, headteachers, 533 teachers and 1541 pupils. The respondents of the study have been selected on the basis that they provided the required information regarding the objectives of the study. This study employed purposive and random sampling techniques. Simple random technique will be used to select schools from lists of public and private primary schools which were obtained from the Assistant Education Officer (AEO). Purposive sampling was used to select head teachers from the selected schools. The teachers and standard eight pupils were randomly selected from each category of schools. A Sample of 30% as recommended by Kerlinger (1983) was used.

The study used questionnaires, for teachers to collect information. The questionnaires were administered to the respondents and picked upon completion. Data from questionnaires were organized, collected and coded according to study objectives and variables. The data was coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential statistics used include t-test and descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were used.

4. Results

4.1. Teachers Perception on Instructional Practices in Public and Private Primary Schools

The teacher's view on perception on the difference of instructional practices in public and private primary schools was sought using descriptive statistics an independent sample t-test. From the study it showed that the teachers had varied mean scores on the statements regarding school instructional practices that influence KCPE performance in private and public primary schools as summarized in table 1. From the study most of the teachers in private school (n=27, m=4.7) compared to public schools (n=124, m=4.5) agreed that they use learner-centered methods of teaching. There was a no statistically significant difference between the public and private school used learner-centered methods of teaching $t(149) = -1.191, p = 0.236 (p > 0.05)$. There was no statistically significant difference on using learner-centered methods of teaching. Majority of the teachers in private school (n=27, m=3.56) compared to public schools (n=124, m=3.71) agreed that they Continued practicing teacher-centered methods of teaching. There was a no statistically significant

difference between the public and private school Continued practicing of teacher-centered methods of teaching $t(149) = .572, p = 0.568$ ($p > 0.05$). From these results there was no statistically significant difference on continued practice of teacher-centered methods of teaching.

Most of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.85$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=4.26$) agreed that pupils in the school work in groups. There was a no statistically significant difference between the public and private school pupils working in groups $t(149) = 1.93, p = 0.056$ ($p > 0.05$). From these results there was no statistically significant difference on Pupils in the school working in groups. Majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.15$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=2.81$) agreed that heavy reliance on textbooks by teachers during instruction negatively influences KCPE performance. There was a no statistically significant difference between the public and private school heavy reliance on textbooks by teachers during instruction $t(149) = 1.282, p = .202$ ($p > 0.05$). There was no statistically significant difference on heavy reliance on textbooks by teachers during instruction negatively influencing KCPE performance.

Majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.22$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=4.40$) agreed that there was good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school. There was a statistically significant difference between the public and private school on good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school $t(149) = -4.71, p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). From these results there was difference on good mastery of instructional language by pupils between public and private and schools. Most teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.85$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=4.26$) agreed on use of English as a medium of instruction. There was a statistically significant difference between the public and private school on use of English as a medium of instruction $t(149) = -2.82, p = 0.006$ ($p < 0.05$). From these results there was difference on use of English as a medium of instruction between public and private schools.

Majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.27$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=3.82$) agreed on individualized instructions given to pupils in the school. There was a statistically significant difference between the public and private school on individualized instructions given to pupils in the school $t(149) = -2.30, p = 0.023$ ($p < 0.05$). From these results there was difference on individualized instructions given to pupils between public and private and schools.

	School Status	N	Mean	Std. Dev	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
The use of learner-centered methods of teaching by teachers in school contributes to good performance in KCPE examination.	Public	124	4.5000	.86014	-1.191	149	.236
	Private	27	4.7037	.46532			
Continued practice of teacher-centered methods of teaching by teachers in the school lead to poor KCPE performance.	Public	124	3.7097	1.25442	.572	149	.568
	Private	27	3.5556	1.33973			
There is good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school which influences KCPE performance.	Public	124	3.2258	1.27412	-4.707	149	.000
	Private	27	4.4074	.57239			
I use English as a medium of instruction and this has an influence in the scores of KCPE.	Public	124	3.8468	1.06721	-2.817	149	.006
	Private	27	4.4444	.57735			
Pupils in the school work in groups and this enhances better performance in KCPE examination.	Public	124	3.8468	1.06721	-1.928	149	.056
	Private	27	4.2593	.65590			
Heavy reliance on textbooks by teachers during instruction negatively influences KCPE performance in the school.	Public	124	3.1532	1.23660	1.282	149	.202
	Private	27	2.8148	1.27210			
There is individualized instructions given to pupils in the school contribute to better KCPE performance.	Public	124	3.2661	1.16248	-2.298	149	.023
	Private	27	3.8148	.92141			
Active involvement of pupils in practical lessons improves KCPE performance in the school.	Public	124	4.0161	1.11883	-2.938	149	.004
	Private	27	4.6667	.55470			
Pupils are given homework on daily basis and this improves achievement in KCPE performance.	Public	124	3.6532	1.34976	-3.042	149	.003
	Private	27	4.4815	.89315			
Instruction practices	Public	124	3.6909	.65137	-3.380	149	.001
	Private	27	4.1276	.33716			

Table 1: Teachers perception on instructional practices in primary schools

Majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=4.02$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=4.67$) agreed that active involvement of pupils in practical lessons improves KCPE performance in the school. There was a statistically significant difference between the

public and private school on active involvement of pupils in practical lessons $t(149) = -2.94, p = 0.004 (p < 0.05)$. From these results there was difference on active involvement of pupils in practical lessons improves KCPE performance in the school. Majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=3.70$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=4.48$) agreed that pupils given homework on daily basis. There was a statistically significant difference between the public and private school on pupils given homework on daily basis $t(149) = -2.94, p = 0.004 (p < 0.05)$. From these results there was difference on pupils given homework on daily basis so as to improve achievement in KCPE performance.

Overall majority of the teachers in private school ($n=27, m=4.13$) compared to public schools ($n=124, m=3.70$) had significant difference in instruction practices between them $t(149) = -3.38, p = 0.01 (p < 0.05)$. From these results there was significant difference in instruction practices between public and private and schools. From the study there was no significant difference on the use of learner-centered methods of teaching by teachers, continued practice of teacher-centered methods of teaching, pupils in the school work in groups and teacher's heavy reliance on textbooks during instruction negatively influences KCPE. There was significant difference on good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school, English was used as a medium of instruction, individualized instructions given to pupils, active involvement of pupils in practical lessons and pupils given homework on daily basis and this improves achievement in KCPE performance.

From interview schedule results on the head teachers opinion on the influence of school instructional practices on KCPE performance were varied between public and private schools. The public school headteachers identified that most teachers used teacher centered methods due to population such as talk and chalk method. Other instructional practices include; lecture method, the use of group work despite being not active, field trips though occasionally and debates are not active. The teaching aids were available though not adequate. Sometimes there used resource persons to teach and homework was given occasionally. There was also morning and evening preps. The private school head teachers identified that most teachers used discussion groups that are very active especially in standard 7 and 8, also strong debating and mjadalas full participated by all teachers. Homework used and strictly followed by teachers and head teachers. Private schools have developed a reading culture advocate for child centred method. Pupil's centred methods are used and very minimal teacher centered method used. Syllabus is strictly completed by the end of 2nd term and sometimes 1st term because standard 8 syllabuses are begun in standard 7.

From the results it indicated that the instructional practices adopted in private schools were more efficient and effective in teaching and learning process compared to those in public schools. This may contribute to the differences in performance in both public and private schools. Also in private schools, there was core teaching, inter-class competition, and active guidance and counseling programme and thus helped to improve discipline. This concurs with Sadker and Sadker (2000) that in the current era of knowledge explosion, there is need for the schools to emphasize thinking skills, which are necessary in today's new information society. UNESCO (2005) asserted that many commonly used teaching styles are too rigid and place emphasis on rote learning which place students in a passive role, and thus do not serve them well. According to Achieng and Ayot (2009), instruction is the systematic actions that induce learning. It is the specific systematic process of setting conditions of learning either to an individual or a group of people. This concurs with Sadker and Sadker (2000) that in the current era of knowledge explosion, there is need for the schools to emphasize thinking skills, which are necessary in today's new information society. It also concurs with UNESCO (2005) that many commonly used teaching styles are too rigid and place emphasis on rote learning which place students in a passive role, and thus do not serve them well.

The research hypothesis stated that there was no statistically significant difference in the extent to which instructional practices in private and public primary schools in Kaptagat Division. The independent sample t-test was conducted to explore the difference in instructional practices between private and public primary schools as shown in (Table 2). There was a statistically significant difference $p < .05$ in instruction practices between private and public primary schools [$t(149) = -3.38, p = .00$]. This indicated that there is much difference between the two means; public (3.69) and private (4.13), resulting in a significant difference ($t = 3.38; Sig. = 0.001$) and this means that H_0 is rejected.

	School Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Instruction practices	Public	124	3.6909	.65137	.05849	-3.380	149	.001
	Private	27	4.1276	.33716	.06489			

Table 2: Independent Samples Test

This showed that the teacher perception on instructional practices in both private and public schools is different. It agrees with Workneh (2002), that school quality determines the academic achievement of learners which he refers "school quality" as the character of instructional process experienced by each student and the school's efficacy in developing cognitive proficiencies. Since the effects in instruction practices were found to be significant, it implies that the means differ more than would be expected by chance alone and despite reaching statistical significance, the actual difference in mean scores between private and public primary schools was quite small. Wasanga, Wambua and Ogle (2010) emphasized that lack of syllabus coverage is a major problem in Kenyan public primary schools. Otunga and Nyandusi (2011) concur with the study that syllabus can be a source of difference in achievement in countries where centralized curriculum is used such as Kenya.

5. Conclusions

From the study there was no significant difference on the use of learner-centered methods of teaching by teachers, continued practice of teacher-centered methods of teaching, pupils in the school working in groups and teachers' heavy reliance on textbooks during

instruction which negatively influence KCPE performance. There was significant difference on good mastery of instructional language by pupils in the school, English being used as a medium of instruction, individualized instruction given to pupils, active involvement of pupils in practical lessons and pupils being given homework on daily basis. The findings showed that instructional practices adopted in private schools were more efficient and effective in teaching and learning compared to those in public schools.

6. Recommendation

The teachers used teacher-centered methods of teaching especially in public schools mostly due to high pupil population. Thus the government should employ more teachers to reduce teacher-pupil ratio and hence pupil-centered methods of instruction such as discussion, dramatization, demonstration, group work and individualized instruction should be used to enhance performances.

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