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TEACHING AND LEARNING MATERIALS, TEACHER PUPIL'S RATIO AND ITS INFLUENCE ON PUPILS' PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES, THE CASE OF KIBWEZI ZONE, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to find out the explore the classroom learning environment on lower primary school pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone in Makueni County, Kenya. The paper determines the availability and use of teaching and learning materials and the influence of teacher - pupil ratio on pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone, Makueni County Kenya. The paper is guided by ecological model by Urie Brofenbrenner (1979) which focuses on child development within context of systems of relationship that form the child environment into five layers. Descriptive survey design was used. The independent variable was classroom learning environment while dependent variable was pupils' academic performance in social studies. The study targeted all pupils and teachers in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone. Purposive sampling was used to select location of the study while stratified random sampling and simple random techniques were used to select categories of schools and lower primary school teachers to be involved in the study. The sample comprised of all lower primary school pupils in the sampled schools. Data was collected using questionnaires and observation schedules and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results showed that lower primary school classroom environment in Kibwezi zone were not conducive for pupils to learn Social studies effectively. Availability and use of teaching and learning materials in social studies was below average and there was a huge number of pupils to be handled by one teacher. Pupils' performance in social studies was below average. It was recommended that parents be sensitized to participate in forums which could help primary schools get funded for teaching /learning materials and facilities such as CDF and county Government. It was also recommended that TSC should employ more qualified teachers to reduce pupil-teacher ratio. More so, the Government should increase the Free Primary

Keywords: Classroom environment; Pupils performance; lower-Primary Schools

1. INTRODUCTION

Learning environment consists of many factors such as teaching and learning materials such as text books and charts and physical facilities such as classrooms, library, resting rooms, and playground among others. According to Janet, (2008) an effective classroom is attributed to its physical appearance or layout which encourages social and emotional needs of the students and therefore for a primary school teacher to protect the coherence of her social studies lessons there should be provision of conducive environment with provision of enough instructional teaching learning materials.

Conducive Classroom learning environment enables learners to learn different subjects such as social studies effectively. According to Jennifer, (2007) social studies is a process of education that gives children an opportunity to interact with other people and the society in their environment. Learning environment is the physical environment in a school setting such as school facilities, equipment's, school practice such as making facilities available, allocation of staff to teach primary education and strategies to promote participation Bary,(2005). In this research study learning environment is defined as materials and facilities or equipment found in school or areas of study and that which help teachers and pupils to improve the acquisition of social studies knowledge, skills and attitude.

Globally, studies suggest that for social studies to be well performed teachers should build interest of their students in the environment around them. Study on Learning environmental carried by Linda, (2007), suggest that teachers should know the subject matter and then engage students in the learning process through variety of instructional strategies. Social studies subject require meaningful teaching, reflective planning, instructions, and assessment. Okojie, (2005) reported that safe and orderly classroom environment and school facilities were significantly related to student academic performance in Canadian Schools. Adayemi, (2008) noted that small classes and teacher quality improves learning environment.

In Africa, primary schools in Nigeria have been attributed to inadequate instructional materials in social studies (Igu, 2012). He farther states that social studies is an activity based subject and therefore depends on instructional

materials utilization for effective teaching. Omabe (2006) asserts that instructional materials are the most important while teaching-learning social studies regardless of efficiency and the effectiveness in lesson delivery by the teacher. Umameh, (2011) Bristol and Van der berg, 2009 in South Africa observed that availability or scarcity of key school resources were linked to better educational outcomes in mathematics. Research done by Hienno, (2005) and Dadzie, (2010) in Ghana explained that uneven sharing of resources in schools and poor educational infrastructures negatively affect the quality of education. Makori (2003) points out that there was overcrowding and congested classrooms due to Free Primary Education in Kenya which also brought about shortage of teachers and teaching-learning materials. The report farther states that Kenyan schools are seriously hit by lack of teaching resources. There are big class sizes of more than 80 pupils which a single teacher cannot handle. Kibwezi zone which is in Makueni County has been performing poorly in social study subject, with most primary schools in the zone scoring below 50% (Makueni County Quality Assurance KCPE Reports, 2012-2016). Therefore, it was important to explore the classroom learning environment on lower primary school pupils' performances in social studies in Kibwezi Zone primary Schools in the zone because lower primary is the level where young children acquire basic study skills.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Social study content equips pupils with knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes to help them to become active and responsible citizens. It inculcates critical values in children and develops understanding and appreciation and respect for their culture which helps them to be useful citizens. The subject also provides pupils opportunities to understand and appreciate their environment and how human beings depend on the environment. When children learn social studies they get opportunity to interact with other people in the society in which they live and hence making them useful citizens (Jere, 2009; Zhao, 2005; & Jennifer, 2007).

Social Studies academic performance in Kibwezi zone Makueni County for the past five years has been below average. An average score for a primary school pupil in social study subject tested in both KCPE and the lower primary level is believed to be at least 50%. Majority of primary schools have not or in rare occasions attained an average score. The studies which have been done in Kenya to establish the causes of poor performance in KCPE examinations appeared to have focused more on other subjects like mathematics, languages and science while social studies had been given very little attention especially in elementary classes. The studies to understand causes of poor performance in KCPE examinations in Kenya and in the county had also focused more on teacher related factors and less on classroom learning environment. This emerging trend is the insight that led to this current study to ascertain to what extent does the classroom learning environment influence academic performance in social studies in lower primary schools and come up with possible solutions that can reverse the same. Asuga,(2014) carried a study on influence of school learning environment on pupils enrolment in public primary schools, in Kenya Hamis Sub-county and recommended that a study need to be done on influence of school environment on academic performance. This study seeks to fill the gap that exists in classroom which is within the school environment. According to Katana, (2010) public primary schools in rural areas are characterized by lack of adequate teaching and learning materials, poor school buildings, small and overcrowded classrooms among others. Kenya has few empirical studies that have directly examined how classroom environment influences teaching and learning of social studies in lower primary school setting.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- i. To determine the influence of availability and use of teaching learning materials on pupils' performance in social studies in lower Primary schools in Kibwezi Zone.
- ii. To find out the influence of teacher - pupil ratio on pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi Zone.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive survey research design was used in this study. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) states that research design helps the researcher to determine the immediate status of population so as to come up with conclusion about the facts discovered. According to Orodho (2004), descriptive survey design allows the use of instruments like questionnaire which the research used in this study during data collection. The target population of this study was all primary school teachers and lower primary school pupils in Kibwezi zone. Kibwezi zone had 16 public and 5 private primary schools. The lower primary enrolment in public primary schools was 1006. The enrolments in the private schools in lower primary were 120. The teachers who taught lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone in both public and private were 21 (Kibwezi Education Office, 2015). The research used purposive sampling technique to select Kibwezi Zone. Lower Primary school Pupils were also purposively sampled. Creswell (2002) stated that purposive sampling is used by researchers to select subjects in their local area so as to understand a phenomenon. Stratified random sampling was used to select primary schools in the zone to be involved in the study. According to Kothari,

(2004) stratified sampling is used where the population is divided into several sub-populations that are individually more homogeneous than the total population. 7(30%) of primary schools in the zone were selected to be involved in the study. Gay (1992) spelt that a sample size of 10% to 30% of the total population is representative enough in descriptive research. Questionnaire was used to collect data from teachers who taught social studies in Kibwezi Zone lower primary schools. An observation guide was used as check list on class learning environment. It was used to determine the availability of resources in lower primary schools. The researcher focused on contents of this study as per the research objectives. According to Kothari (2004) content validity is the agreement among experts that an instrument logically is accurately measuring what it is supposed to measure. The researcher used test –retest technique in order to test the reliability of the instruments. The statistical package for social science (SPSS) was used to make descriptive analysis. . Data was reported by use of tables and the researcher explained the meaning of the captured data using text then made conclusion.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

These were discussed under the following sections

i. Availability and use of Teaching Learning Materials and Pupils Performance in Social studies

The first objective of the study wanted to determine the influence of availability and use of teaching learning materials on pupils' performance in social studies in lower Primary schools in Kibwezi Zone. It was aiming to answer the question: How does the availability and use of teaching learning materials influence Pupils performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone?

To determine pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools, mean scores were calculated using end of term scores in social studies and the results were presented in table 4.2

Table 4.2 pupils' mean scores in social studies in lower primary schools

Category	Mean score in social studies		
	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3
Public schools			
1	59.10	60.30	50.51
2	60.20	56.80	57.65
3	49.54	55.58	54.67
4	61.45	52.45	53.87
5	58.54	64.32	63.45
Private schools			
1	82.67	76.45	78.78
2	72.45	69.64	81.43

Table 4.2 shows that pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools was slightly above average in most of public primary schools. However, results for private primary schools were far above those of public primary schools. This variance in performance could be explained by different classroom environmental factors such as teaching learning materials, pupils- teacher ratio, availability of physical facilities and strategies used by lower primary school teachers to improve social studies performance in lower primary. The availability and use of teaching learning materials was interpreted and the results are presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Availability and use of teaching learning materials in lower primary

Most important resource for effective teaching in social studies	Response in all lower primary schools			
	Available	%	Not available	%
Course books	3	42.86	4	57.14
charts	4	57.14	3	42.86
Syllabus	5	71.43	2	28.57
Chalkboard	5	71.43	2	28.57
Pupils exercise books	5	71.43	2	28.57
Teachers guide	6	85.71	1	14.29

The table shows that only 42.86% of the lower primary schools had social studies course books. Majority of the schools (57.14%) lacked course books. Guloba, (2010) observed text books as teaching aids that improve performance. The above report shows that the available text books did not meet the required standard which is 1:3. This was the reason for low academic performance in social studies in Kibwezi Zone lower primary schools. Ministry of education, (2003) on Task Force on FPE targeted equipping all primary schools with learning materials. According to MOE it was expected that the ratio of course books to pupils was to improve to 1:1 by 2012 (GOK, 2007) due to grants distributed by GOK. Mutai (2006) stated learning is strengthened when there are enough reference materials such as course books and teaching aids. The above teaching resources were not adequate in Kibwezi zone lower primary schools hence influencing school learning environment which contributed to low performance in social studies.

The current study findings concurred with Deogun (2001) who discovered that a very strong positive significance relationship exists between instructional resources and academic performance. His study farther states that institutions with more resources perform better than institutions that are less equipped with teaching learning materials. This is not in line with Kibwezi zone which had inadequate course books in lower primary schools.

Concerning the use of teaching aids and pupils performance in social studies it was observed that 51.14% of the lower primary schools had charts while 42.86 lacked the same. Lack of charts in teaching social studies contributed to pupils comprehending many things in social studies. This is against the view of UNESCO (2008) which explains that object well-handled practically impresses itself more firmly in the mind than the object merely seen from a distance. This is also contrary to Maicibi, (2003) who stated that adequate use of charts in teaching make management a success.

It was noted that many of lower primary schools had syllabus. The researcher concluded that the schools without syllabus did not teach the right content of social studies because specific objectives and the right content to teach must be derived from the syllabus which was lacking. The study also established that most of the lower primary schools had chalk boards where teachers could write pupils assignment. It was observed that some chalkboards were very small and badly worn out so learners had difficulties seeing what was written on the board. This study observed 28.57% of lower primary schools lacked chalkboard. However, teachers in these schools used small portable boards where they only pinned play cards while teaching. This was a difficult task because the boards did not have big space to pin all play cards at a go.

Most of pupils in lower primary schools had exercise books for social studies while a small percentage did not have exercise books and therefore, they lacked anywhere to write their homework or teachers' assignment. By use of exercise books, teachers were able to mark pupils work and correct pupils' mistakes in social studies. Teachers explained that they had difficulties in evaluating pupils who lacked exercise books.

On availability and use of teachers guide, majority of lower primary schools had adequate of them. Teachers used the guides with the syllabus to derive the required social studies content. Teachers without the social studies guide stated that they were unable to teach the right content. This did not provide a conducive environment for teaching and learning of social studies in classrooms. This was opposed to Mutai (2006) who stated that provision of conducive classrooms can make the subject very interesting. The researcher compared performance of test scores in schools where teaching learning materials were available and where they were not and presented the results in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Availability and use of teaching learning materials in lower primary and pupils' performance in social studies

Most important resource for effective teaching in social studies	Response in all lower primary schools			
	Schools where materials were available	Mean score in Social studies	Schools without materials	Mean score in Social studies
Course books	4	60.30	3	50.51
charts	4	82.67	3	52.45
Syllabus	5	60.20	2	53.87
Chalkboard	5	64.32	2	54.67
Pupils exercise books	5	63.45	2	49.54
Teachers guide	6	61.45	1	60.20

Table 4.4 shows that performance was high in schools where course books were available. The researcher also observed that teachers in the same schools were also using supplementary social studies text books other than the course book so as to boost pupils' performance. The results were also boosted by use of other teaching techniques such as use of remedial as extra time teaching. Schools that did not have charts had low performance. The researcher observed that teachers and pupils in such schools lacked good classrooms with good walls to hung charts. The researcher learned that they were using other teaching aids such as real objects and exploration of the immediate environment to elevate their social studies performance.

Schools that had syllabus were the majority and they scored high scores as compared to those without. On availability of chalk board schools that had well maintained boards and of good size performed better as compared to those which did not have adequate. Pupils who had adequate exercise books for social studies performed well as compared to those without adequate and whose scores were less than average. Majority of lower primary schools had adequate teachers guide and their performance was higher than those without adequate. This margin of high percentage in many schools could be explained by the fact that teachers had other supplementary textbooks for teaching social studies. Generally, the results of this study imply that test scores in lower primary schools were greatly and positively influenced by availability of teaching learning materials.

The findings of this study are supported by Zachariah, (2011) who sought to find out the adequacy and the extent to which teaching learning resources availability and use affected performance in mathematics in secondary schools in Kenya. The study had found that availability and use of teaching learning materials had positive results among students in mathematics in secondary schools. Likewise, this study sought to find out the availability of teaching learning resources in lower primary schools and it concluded that they had significance in social studies. More so, Lillian, (2015) carried study on classroom environment on pupils' academic performance in public primary schools in Bungoma South Sub-county. The study found that schools that lacked teaching materials performed poorly as compared to those which had enough teaching materials hence supporting the findings of this study.

ii. Teacher Pupil Ratio and Pupils Performance in Social studies

The second objective was to determine how pupil teacher ratio influenced pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone. This aimed at answering the research question: How does pupils' teacher ratio influence pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone.

The following were results on the pupil-teacher ratio in lower primary schools performance in social studies.

Table: 4.5 pupils'- teacher ratio and pupils' performance in social studies in lower primary schools
Pupil-Teacher Ratio

Schools	Class 1		Class 2		Class 3	
	Pupils	Percentage performance	Pupils	Percentage performance	Pupils	Percentage performance
1	1:126	49.54	1:96	55.58	1:84	54.67
2	1:40	58.54	1:68	64.32	1:50	53.87
3	1:25	72.45	1:35	69.64	1:30	81.43
4	1:60	59.10	1:55	60.30	1:68	50.51
5	1:24	82.67	1:36	76.45	1:39	78.78
6	1:91	61.45	1:76	52.45	1:85	53.87
7	1:54	61.45	1:74	52.45	1:80	53.87

As indicated in table 4.5, majority of the schools 5 out of 7 did not meet the recommended ratio of 1:40 pupils per class. This was 71.43% of the total sampled lower primary schools. The rest 2 out of 7 schools which was 28.57% met the required recommended pupil teacher ratio of 1:40. The researcher through observation established that the schools that met the requirements were private schools. The study established that schools with high enrolment performed poorly as compared to schools with low enrolment. The study concluded that all public lower primary schools had very high enrolment hence a challenge for public primary school teachers in meeting needs of every pupil in class.

. This statement is supported by Blatchford, (2011) that big enrolment hinders teacher pupil interaction. The government of Kenya acknowledges that high pupil teacher ratio especially in the highly populated areas was affecting Free Primary Education (Republic of Kenya 2005). This statement is evident in this study because most of the primary schools within Kibwezi zone had big enrollment in lower classes and for instance some schools had more than 120 pupils handled by one teacher as indicated in table 4.5. Study carried out by Katunzi, (2004) on the influence of pupils-teacher ratio found that big student enrolment was difficult to handle and manage. Tessa, (2010) carried study on Free Primary Education and how it impacted enrolment Performance and accountability. The study found that free primary education had brought about big enrolment which teachers could not manage hence supporting this study. Kaloki, (2012) carried study on pupil-teacher ratio and its impact on academic performance in public primary schools in central division Machakos, county, Kenya. The study found that big classroom enrolment impacted pupils' negatively.

The study also established that teachers with a big work load and with a big enrolment could not cover fully the syllabus thus leading to low social studies performance in lower primary schools. This is supported by UNESCO, (2005) that FPE in Kenya was a challenge to teachers. The study observed that the few available teachers were given many subjects to teach and sometimes failed to teach all of them. Maicibi (2003) explained that right quantity and quality of human resources influence other resources so as to realize institutional goals and objectives. Katunzi (2004) in their study on significance measure of quality in education observed that ratio 1:40 and below gives quality results in education. This study therefore concluded that high enrolment and big work load contributed to pupils' poor performance in social studies in Kibwezi Zone lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The first objective was to determine the availability and use of teaching/ learning materials on pupils' academic performance in social studies in Kibwezi Zone lower primary schools. The findings indicated that classroom learning environment in many lower primary schools was being influenced by lack of enough course books. Classrooms in lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone were overcrowded with pupils who shared a social studies course book. Lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone that had few course books performed poorly as compared to those who had and used course books.

The second objective was to find out the influence of teacher-pupil ratio on pupils academic performance in social studies in lower primary schools in Kibwezi. The findings revealed that lower primary schools in Kibwezi zone had very high enrolment. The implication was that it was difficult for one teacher to control such a big class enrolment. Parents whose economic status was high opted to transfer their children to private schools where the classroom enrolment was low and performance was high.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations were made for key stakeholders based on the study findings

The following recommendations were suggested by teachers in lower primary schools who were respondents of this study:

i. Ministry of Education

On availability and use of teaching/learning materials the government should increase the funding to schools so as to cater for the essential teaching/learning aids. This may help to create a generation that is well educated in the future community.

ii. Parents and the Community

Parents should cost share buying of school materials so as to supplement materials supplied to school through Free Primary Education. The parents should ensure their public participation during County Government rally consensus so as to mobilize school resources. The parents through the school BOM should mobilize school resources from CDF kit so as to build standard school libraries and classes hence improving classroom learning environment.

iii. Teachers Service Commission

As for pupil-teacher ratio the Teachers' Service Commission needs to employ more teachers to curb shortage of teachers in lower primary schools. Proper balancing of teachers needs to be done where there could be over staffing. This may help to enhance pupil teacher ratio thus improving pupils' performance.

Teachers Service Commission should take the advantage of the many teachers that graduate every year and employ them to improve performance in lower primary schools because they are necessary in improving performance. Moreover, teaching training institutions should equip every trainee with current knowledge, skills and attitude that can enable them effectively and efficiently perform their duties.

iv. Lower Primary Teachers

Teachers need to use variety of teaching methods that enable them to handle big enrolment such as exploration, discussion and use of immediate environment where they can acquire teaching/learning materials for social studies .This will enable them improve classroom learning environment in lower primary schools hence acquire good performance in social studies.

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