

TITLE: Differential schools' performance in KCPE: cause and their significance in Gitugi education zone, Murang'a county Kenya

Karongo Violet Wanjiru – M.Ed.

Department: Educational Management Policy & Curriculum Studies

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Norbert Ogeta
2. Mr. Daniel Wesonga

Abstract

Performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) is a major concern for candidates, parents, teachers, schools and the government. In Gitugi Education Zone, Murang'a County, the performance has been poor. Differences among the 15 primary schools in the zone are repeated every year implying either a difference in the schools or in the learners. This study sought to identify the factors that influence the differences in performances. The purpose of this study was to test for any significance between the factors, and the differential performance in KCPE among the schools. The research was guided by five objectives including to determine the degree of variation in KCPE performance among the schools and, to find out the significance of formative evaluation, school characteristics, school orderliness and in-school and out-of- school expectations, on performance in KCPE. The human capital theory proposed by T.W. Schultz in 1961 and applied in education production function by E.A. Hanushek in 1979 provided the thrust for the research. Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The target population includes all the fifteen schools in the zone and the community that feeds the schools. A sample size of 10 schools was used from which 226 respondents were involved. Systematic sampling was used to select the 10 schools. Classes 7 and 8 were picked purposively and respondents were picked from the two classes using systematic sampling. Teachers, opinion leaders and two parents from each school were chosen purposively. Data collection instruments included questionnaires for head teachers, teachers and pupils; interview schedules for opinion leaders and parents and a check list for assessing resource availability. Document analysis was done for both formative evaluation and KCPE. Piloting was done in one school from the zone. The data collection instruments were tested for validity through the expert judgments of the supervisors and, for reliability through the split-halves method which gave a value of 0.86. The data collected is presented in tables and graphs and, analyzed using descriptive statistics involving standard deviation and z-scores and, inferential statistics using Spearman's Rank correlation coefficient. Performance in most schools is positively skewed; expectations through setting of targets, formative evaluation and orderliness of school programs and parents and community involvement were found to have high levels of significance with performance in KCPE. Material and physical resources were mildly significant; while number/qualification of teachers and learners were not. It is recommended that targets be set in all schools, programs be effectively run, resources be better managed and parents become more involved in their children's learning. More detailed research needs to be done to help explain and improve the positively skewed performance in most of the schools in the zone. This will be the first critical step towards the realization of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for this education zone.

