

Quality Primary Education in Kenya: Implications of Teachers' Characteristics.

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Abstract

This paper provides a critical appraisal of influence of teachers' characteristics on learning achievement in primary schools in Kenya. The main objective of the study is to analyze the influence of teachers' characteristics on quality education in primary schools. The paper examined the role played by pedagogy in influencing learning achievement. The paper also assessed the role played staff development in promotion of quality primary education. The paper further investigated the influence of class size in promotion of quality primary education. Particular attention is given to the crises in inputs and processes that affect the output of quality primary education. This study uses the systems theory. Systems theory was advanced by Ludwig von Bertalanffy (1968). He emphasized that systems are open and interact with their environments to acquire qualitatively properties. Systems theory focuses on the arrangement of relations between the parts which connect them into a whole. It further provides an analysis of an organization. It recognized the influence of personnel in an environment on organizational structure and function. It focuses on environment and how changes can impact on the organizations. The study analyzed challenges that arise due to upsurge of enrolment in primary schools and how they affect quality education in primary schools in Kenya. Particular attention is given to the crises in inputs and processes that affect the output of quality primary education. These crises are reflected in class size, teacher establishment and physical resources that influence quality education. The paper adopted document analysis method. This is drawn from international and local legal instruments on quantitative and qualitative education. Local analysis of the basic education policies and the legal framework in Kenya was conducted. Studies conducted in Kenya on quantity and quality primary education was examined. The study further adopted mixed method approach. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to research were used. Descriptive survey design was used to collect data from one set of questionnaires. The target population comprised of head teachers and teachers in primary schools. Using the sampling guide developed by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), a sample size of 36 head teachers and 144 teachers was selected. The total sample size for the study was 180. This conformed to the confidence Interval of 0.05, confidence level of 95 percent which is a Z-score of 1.96 and standard of deviation of 0.5. The reliability was estimated through use of Cranach's Alpha Coefficient using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19.0. Findings of the study are significant to Kenya in particular and sub Saharan Africa in general, as they would assist to redress challenges of quality education arising from learners characteristics. The findings might help the policy formulators formulate education policies and the legal framework which are skewed towards teachers' characteristics. The policy implementers would understand

and appreciate education policies within which they are supposed to operate in providing effective pedagogical and teacher development practices in the implementation of quality education at primary level. The study is significant to the field of comparative and International education, since it provides data on what the Kenyan government is doing in promoting the development of quantitative and qualitative primary education. The entire education stakeholders would understand how to redress quality issues which arise due to teachers' characteristics. This study is significant to the field of comparative and International education, since it provides data on how teachers' characteristics influence quality education in primary schools in Kenya.

Keywords: class size, pedagogical practices, primary education, teachers' characteristics, learning achievement

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